THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF AL-JĀḤĪḍ
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE
QUESTION OF KHILĀFA (IMĀMATE):
A CHRONOLOGICAL APPROACH

(VOLUME II)

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CHAPTER EIGHT

al-Wāthiq's Period I: (227-229)

1. Kitāb Faḍl Ḥāshim ʿalā ʿAbd Shams.

1-Note on Nomenclature:

al-Jāḥiz in his famous preface to Kitāb al-Ḥayawān\(^{868}\) refers to Kitāb Faḍl Ḥāshim as "Kitāb Faqr mā bayn Ḥāshim wa ʿAbd Shams". The difference in nomenclature does not alter its authenticity, and seems to have been accepted by the leading experts on al-Jāḥiz.\(^{869}\)

al-Ḥājirī in his analysis of this work suggests that it belongs in the same religio-political setting as al-Nābita.\(^{870}\) He adds that he is not sure of the relation between this work and a similar one quoted by Yāqūt in his bibliography of Jāhiz's writings. This work - according to the authority of Yāqūt - is named "Kitāb al Fakhir mā bayn ʿAbd Shams wa Makhzūm", and since it has not reached us, there is no point of making any further comment on it.\(^{871}\)

As regards the relation between Kitāb Faḍl Ḥāshim and the series of works known as al-Ḥāshimiyyāt, mentioned by Jāḥiz himself in his preface to Kitāb al-Ḥayawān, as distinct from Kitāb Faḍl Ḥāshim, one may say here that there is obviously a common Ḥāshimite theme that runs through these writings, in the constant attempt of al-Jāḥiz to raise the two wings of the Ḥāshimite stock against their Umayyad opponents, and in his no less eager efforts to undermine and marginalize the Umayyads by pointing out that as regards their relation to Quraysh, which then provided the socio-genetic pool for all political leaders - it was a very poor relation and not as central as that enjoyed by the Ṭālibites and ʿAbbāsids.

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\(^{868}\) al-Jāḥiz, Kitāb al-Ḥayawān, ed. Hārūn, vol 1: 6-7


\(^{870}\) al-Ḥājirī, pp. 288-289. But his linking it with the early works on Imāma is not convincing as this treatise contains a reference to al-Wāḥiq and not to Māʾmūn.

\(^{871}\) Ibid., p. 289.
2. The Hāshimiyyāt's relation to Kitāb Faḍl Hāshim:

By comparing this treatise, "Faḍl Hāshim", with its related pro-Hāshimite works, of which only excerpts have survived, one can easily find that al-Jāḥiz does not mind acknowledging the virtues of the Alid component of Banū-Hāshim in his political attempt to blemish the record of the Umayyads by scoring more points against them.

Of these Hāshimiyyāt, two essays have reached us, only one of which is believed to be authentic. It is given two titles: "Risāla fi Taḍīl Bani Hāshim ʾalā man siwāhum" or "Risāla fi ʾAlī wa-Ālīhi min Bani Hāshim." The reason for these variable titles is that they have been edited by different persons in different periods, but both editors agree on the authenticity of the text and give us the same text that does not exceed seven printed pages.

As regards the authenticity of this work, Dr. Muhammad al-Ḥājiri adds that the Shiʿite poet al-Irbilli has probably given himself the liberty of abridging the original text, and perhaps has omitted certain parts of it that bear significance for the literary and cultural history of the Arabs. Nevertheless, the treatise remains a Jāḥizian one despite al-Irbilli's Shiʿite stamp on it as reflected in the way he affixes to ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib the epithet "Alayhi Al-Salām", a term - Ḥājiri rightly observes - which does not appear in al-Jāḥiz's style outside this treatise.

al-Ḥājiri's observation on the Shiʿite flavour of this treatise is not far fetched, as al-Jāḥiz himself has admitted in the preface to al-Ḥayawān that readers of his

872 Both editors of these essays depend on a manuscript written by Ṣā bi al-Irbilli (7th C. A.H scholar), entitled: "Kashf al-Ghumma fi-Maʿ rifat al-Aʿimmät". The first editors were Faḍl Allāh al-Zanjānī and Dr. Dāwūd Beg al-Jalabı, and the letter Is jointly published in Lughat al-ʿArab, vol 6, 1931, pp. 413-420.

873 The same work was later edited by Muhammad Ṭahā al-Ḥājiri, in "Majmūʿ Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiz", (Beirut: Dar al-Nahḍa al-ʿArabiyya, 1983), pp. 47 ff. Dr Ḥājiri believed that the other treatise mentioned by al-Irbilli and entitled "Risāla fi Iḥbāt Imāmat Amir- al- Muʾminin, Ṣā bi Abī Ṭālib" (which is published in Maṣāʾil Lughat al-ʿArab, 1931, vol 7, pp. 497-501), is highly dubious in its attribution to al-Jāḥiz. This notice makes sense as we shall see below that al-Jāḥiz's conception of the house of the Prophet was not confined to the house of ʿAlī but equally contained Ṭālibites and Ḥāshimites. One should therefore distinguish between the explicit actual historical breadth of the House of the Prophet during al-Jāḥiz's time, and between the implicit and hidden motives of al-Jāḥiz behind rehabilitating the charisma of the Hāshimites as a whole, without necessarily having to share the fruits of the ʿAbbāsid revolution with their Hāshimite fellows.

874 M .al-Ḥājiri, Ibid., p.48.
Hāshimiyyāt have complained of his excessive pro-Alid approach, thus allowing them to say "al-Jāḥīz has left the Muʿtazilite circles to the Zaydite ones, and moved from upholding a moderate respect for ʿAli", *al-Iʿtidāl fl-al-Tashayyuʿ* to an extremist position, "*Saraf wa-Ifrāt." But as al-Ḥājirī has rightly pointed out, al-Jāḥīz's pro-Alid approach was simply one that could simultaneously accommodate respect for the family of the Prophet as well as for his Companions.⁸⁷⁶

The significance of this representative Hāshimite treatise is twofold. First, it shows that during the time of al-Jāḥīz the pro-Alid affection was not something peculiar or unique to the later fully developed group of Shiʿites as Sunnites appear to have maintained such an affection and respect alongside moderation, in what is later known as "*al-Tashayyuʿ al-Ḥasan*" versus "*al-Tashayyuʿ al-Qabiḥ*" to which al-Jāḥīz refers to as "*Saraf*" and "*Ifrāt*". The second point to be inferred here is the collective meaning of Banū Hāshim. The family of the Prophet is collectively referred to as such, but in all such references it is pointing to the virtues of Banū Hāshim, or the virtues of ʿAli and his relatives from the stock of Hāshim, though thus one notices that at no point does the charismatic reference exclusively contract to the side of the Alids or to the ʿAbbāsids. On the contrary, Banū Hāshim, or the house of the Prophet, (* İlrat al-Rasūl*), includes the respective descendants of all the sons of Hāshim b. ʿAbd Manāf. i.e., the Tālibites (thus ʿAli, Jaʿfar, ʿAqil and their descendants) on the one hand, and the ʿAbbāsids; al-ʿAbbās and his descendants on the other. Such was the broader definition of the house of the Prophet, in which al-Jāḥīz includes all close relatives to the Prophet, including his other uncle, Ḥamza,⁸⁷⁷ his aunt Ṣafīyya⁸⁷⁸ and his grandchildren, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn. Furthermore, against the later Shiʿite definition of the house of the Prophet that confines it solely to the Fāṭimid descendants of ʿAli Ibn Abī. Tālib, al-Jāḥīz's notion of *ahl al-Bayt* seems to include the non-Alid and non-Fāṭimid descendants, i.e., the descendants of ʿAli ʿAli's brother, Jaʿfar al-Ṭayyār (ʿAli b.ʿAbd Allāh b. Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib⁸⁷⁹) and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya,⁸⁸⁰ the son of ʿAli from a wife from the tribe of Ḥanifa.

Quick comparison between the two treatises.

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⁸⁷⁵ See al-Hayawān, 1: 7.
# Quick comparison between the two treatises

## the Similarities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risāla fī cAli wa-Álihî min Bānî Ḥāshîm</th>
<th>Faḍl Ḥāshîm</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1-</strong> The flexible notion of the house of the Prophet/Ḥāshîmite includes: Uncles of Prophet (al- Ḥabbās, Ḥamza), Prophet's Aunt (Ṣafīyya b. Ṣâbîn al- Muṭṭalib) grandfather (Ṣâbîn al- Muṭṭalib) wife (no mention) daughter, (Fāṭima) son in law, (Ṣâbîn), grandsons (Ḥasan, Ḥusayn), martyrs (Ḥamza, Ja'fâr b. Abî Ṭālib) cousins (Ṣâbîn b. Abî Ṭâlib, Ja'fâr b. Abî Ṭâlib, Ṣâbîn Allâh b. Ja'fâr, Ṣâbîn Allâh b. Ḥabbâs) great grand sons: Zayd b. Ṣâbîn b. al- Ḥusayn), second cousins (Ṣâbîn Allâh b. Muṭṭalib b. Ṣâbîn Allâh b. Ja'fâr).</td>
<td><strong>1-</strong> Almost identical position (adding Khadija, Ṣâhîha, + several Ṭâlibite and Ḥabbâsid figures)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2-</strong> Acknowledgment of those equally charismatic in: worship, tolerance, generosity, eloquence (namely the 3 Ṣâbîn's: grandson of Ḥabbâs, of Ṣâbîn and Ja'fâr b. Abî Ṭâlib).</td>
<td><strong>2-</strong> Ditto, among other virtues expounded.</td>
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## the Differences

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<tr>
<td><strong>1-</strong> Stress on the Ṭâlibite line, namely on Ṣâbîn as the central charismatic Ḥāshîmite figure with his descendants and relatives (Ja'fârîds, Ḥusaynids and Ḥāshîmites)</td>
<td><strong>1-</strong> Emphasis on the line of al-Ḥabbâs to be superior to the rest of Ḥāshîm, Ḥabbâsid caliphs and Ḥabbâsid blessings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2-</strong> highlighting the difference between Ṣâbîn and Abû Bakr</td>
<td><strong>2-</strong> no reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3-</strong> Ḥāshîmite sons of the three Ṣâbîns not mentioned except that Ṣâbîn is openly emphasized as superior to all the Companions of the Prophet.</td>
<td><strong>3-</strong> the sons of the 3 Ṣâbîns acknowledged as fit Imams, together with recommending the Ḥusaynids Imams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4-</strong> A stricter sense of the house of Ḥāshîm.</td>
<td><strong>4-</strong> wider sense of the house of Ḥāshîm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5-</strong> no reference.</td>
<td><strong>5-</strong> polemic attitude against the Umayyad grandfather and descendants.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1- see op. cit. 2- Ibid., p. 418. 3- Ibid., p. 414.
Given the identical points mentioned in Kitāb Faḍl Ḥāshim and the one edited by Dr. M. al-Ḥājiri (referred to above as "Risālat fi Ālī wa Ālihi min Bani Ḥāshim") and benefiting from al-Ḥājiri's suggestion that the latter text has been undeniably altered by the 7th century Shiʿite poet and copyist ʿĪsā al-Irbilli, it is - I believe - quite likely that a similar copyist of Shiʿite background has given himself the freedom of mentioning positions that do not match ʿAbbāsid policy as revealed in the above quotations, and it is quite probable that he was not very versed in Islamic history, or Shiʿite genealogy. The probability of Shiʿite intervention in the Jāḥizian text of "Faḍl Ḥāshim" should not hence differenciate it much from the somewhat similar treatises "Tafṣīl Bani Ḥāshim/Risāla ft Ālī wa Ālihi min Bani Ḥāshim." In addition to the mentions of Imāmi figures, there exist other explicity Shiʿite anecdotes that we do not usually find in al-Jāḥiz’s works, such as the claim that the title of Muḥammad al-Bāqir was bestowed on him by the Prophet before Muḥammad was born.881

Faḍl Ḥāshim ʿalā-ʿAbd-Shams:

3 Religio-Political setting

If Muʿāwiya could not be publicly cursed - as al-Maʿmūn was advised not to - the political programme of the pro-ʿAbbāsid Muʿtazilites could find other ways out of that difficulty. al-Jāḥiz could continue blemishing Muʿāwiya's record by moving our attention to the Islamic and pre-Islamic eras thus aiming to destroy any possible virtue of the Umayyads by pointing the vices of their grandfathers, and hence completing the task started in "al-Nābīta" during the time of al-Maʿmūn. This treatise contains some highly problematic chronological markers. The direct time reference in this work indicates that it was written during the caliphate of al-Muʿtasim's successor, i.e., al-Wāthiq882 (227/842-232/847) who respresented the last Muʿtazilite oriented caliph, before the wheel of Muʿtazili fortune was checked in the couple of years following the coming of al-Mutawakkil (232-247/847-861).

The Charismatic Banū-Ḥāshim.

In our survey of the religio-political setting of the Maʿmūnid era that gave rise to the work studied earlier entitled "Maqālat al- Zaydiyya", we have briefly

881 Faḍl, p. 108.
882 See al-Jāḥiz, Kitāb Faḍl Ḥāshim ʿalā-ʿAbd Shams (thereafter referred to as Faḍl Ḥāshim or Faḍl) in Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiz, ed. H. Sandūbī (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Raḥmāniyya, 1933,) p. 76.
touched on the political significance of the stock of Hāshim in the eyes of al-Ma'mūn. One should not be surprised at the observation that fondness for the charismatic Banū-Hāshim did not end with al-Ma'mūn's reign; rather, the belief in Banū Hāshim's religio-political prestige was strictly followed by his successors, not to forget the semi-official apologist, al-Jāḥiz, who is said to have shared al-Ma'mūn's own attachment to the stock of Hāshim. No wonder al-Jāḥiz had attracted royal recognition since the time of al-Ma'mūn, and is rightly described as being "al-Ma'mūn's own apologist," and it was quite fortunate for him that he found himself on the same wavelength with al-Ma'mūn's successor, al-Wāthiq, who was equally fond of the political charisma of the stock of Hāshim. In fact al-Wāthiq is described by al-Yaʿqūbī as distributing many grants to the Hāshimites. This step should be seen as a constant ʿAbbāsid tactic to prevent the Umayyads from competing with the ʿAbbāsids on the same political scene, by insisting that only "through Hāshim (plural), can the well being of the faith and safety from discord among the Muslims be hoped!" This insistence on Hāshim under whose umbrella the Umma should be guided is significant, for the ʿAbbāsid authorities are not gaining or openly claiming legitimacy from al-ʿAbbās, but rather stretching the ʿAsaba line (agnates) historically to the figure of Hāshim, as if it had appeared for them a less problematic name than al-ʿAbbās, since Hāshim - on whose behalf al-ʿAbbās and the ʿAbbāsids were then functioning as rulers, by the same charisma that Hāshim had enjoyed and passed on to al-ʿAbbās - would encompass a broader number of sub-Hāshimites, and would - hopefully - remove from the political scene any other Hāshimite or non-Hāshimite claimants to the caliphate.

By stressing Hāshim's faḍl, al-Jāḥiz is therefore aiming at two goals: firstly if Hāshim could be presented as having been the unique figure in Pre-Islamic times to enjoy faḍl and charisma, then his outweighing of ʿAbd Shams and the other Qurayshites would prove fruitful, as the grandfather of the Umayyads and all the other Qurayshite members have shown their socio-political failure, something that al-Jāḥiz intends to extend to his present time. Secondly, if Hāshim's charisma is believed to extend to the future, and if it is solely concentrated in al-ʿAbbās, then the ʿAbbāsids can boast of the fact that no other Hāshimite has the right to question their

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883 See al-Jāḥiz, Kitāb al-Bayān.
885 al-Yaʿqūbī, Tārikh, 3: 216.
established right to rule (an argument probably against the Tālibites and the rest of the Qurayshite claimants).

It can also be argued that al-Wāthiq, who is reported to have "treated the ālids with great benevolence,"887 could have played on the figure of Hāshim to serve the above conclusion. In other words, one of the likely motives for concentrating on the contemporary and historical virtues of Hāshim (which combines as a collective name the ʿAbbāsids and the Tālibites or ālids), was to try to eliminate or erase from the memory of the masses any trace of Umayyad virtue, by stretching the scope of attack from the Umayyad rule to the pre-Islamic and Islamic eras. Acknowledgement of the ʿAbbāsids' fellow brothers in the charismatic Hāshimiyya (i.e., the ālids) was tactfully presented because of the obviously extra enhancing charisma that mention of the Tālibites can add to the concept of Banū Hāshim, against their common enemy, the Umayyads. Conversely, if it can be proved that Hāshim's faḍl goes back in history since Hāshim (singular) was born, and if it can be proved that his brother (ʿAbd Shams, the greatgrandfather of Banū Umayya) was devoid of such a faḍl, then it can be argued that the present ʿAbbāsid/Hāshimite faḍl is unquestionable and irrefutable as it has always been accompanying one but not both brothers, i.e., Hāshim and not ʿAbd Shams, thus serving the ʿAbbāsid propaganda - as al-Jähiz's work clearly echoes below - in making up for their historical absence by magnifying their historical superiority (which the Tālibites happen to share with them) by adding to the present legitimate ʿAbbāsid status (as fit caliphs) a flavour of historical authentic validity, and a hint of everlasting attractiveness.

4 Analysis:

A quick reading of this treatise shows that the same religio-political conditions that were dominant when al-Jähiz wrote his works, al-Nābita and the theological works (fi-Khalq al-Qur'ān, radd ʿalā-al-Mushabbiha) were still dominant. The commonly prevailing pro-ʿAlid, pro-ʿAbbāsid and anti-Umayyad positions could be explained by the fact that these works belong to an identical historical era that witnessed the political triumph of Fitūzāl (from al-Maʿmūn to al-Wāthiq). The only difference, however, between these works was a matter of detail and emphasis, i.e., whether the policy of the authorities was to concentrate more on the veneration of ʿAlī (in order to win the 'Alids to their sides) or on the

887 E.I. S.v. "al-Wāthiq"
condemnation of Mu'awiya (when conditions necessitated such measures) or to condemn the deeds of his ancestors or even both (as is the target of this treatise when the cult of Mu'awiya has assumed dangerous levels for the 'Abbásid regime).

For this reason, we can safely assume that the religio-political setting outlined above applies to Faḍl Häshim, except that it was written during the caliphate of another caliph, the last Mu'tazili-oriented caliph in al-Jähiz's lifetime, al-Wāthiq. The importance of this work lies (a) in detecting al-Jähiz's 'Abbásidism behind the direct praising of their fellow Hāshimites, the Ṭālibites and the obvious attack on their political enemies, who happen to be descendants of 'Abd Shams, brother of Häshim himself (b) in the retrospective way al-Jähiz portrays the Hāshimite superiority in contrast to 'Abd Shams's inferiority. The Jähizian attack on the Umayyads does not confine itself to the Islamic and Post-Prophetic era, but is stretched even further in time to suggest that the grandfather of the Umayyads, 'Abd Shams, was devoid of any moral accomplishments in contrast to his brother Häshim, whose philanthropic essence had considerably outweighed the inferior 'Abd Shams; a feature that existed in the past and is undeniably proving its authenticity in the present, and must therefore be pushing itself towards the future. Says al-Jähiz:

The noblest traits of Quraysh in the Jähiliyya ... were exclusively enjoyed by Banû Häshim, Banû 'Abd al-Dār, and Banû 'Abd al-'Uzza, thus leaving the clan of 'Abd Shams away ... 'Abd Shams has no noble title, nor had he a comparable son like Häshim's ('Abd al-Muttalib), who was the most charismatic and perfect figure, whereas 'Abd Shams's nobleness could only be derived from his father, 'Abd Manāf, and the children of his son Umayya. Häshim's nobleness outweighed his brother as he had derived his nobleness from his own deeds, in addition to his father 'Abd Manāf and his son 'Abd al-Muttalib ... whom God has endowed with qualities and excellences that are usually given to Prophets. 888

I. The clans of Quraysh: The following illustrative table should clarify the above clan leaders:

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888 Faḍl Häshim, pp. 67-70. It can be argued here that even the 'Abbásid al-Jähiz, who was keen to marginalize the genealogical status of the Umayyads, could not but accept the undeniable common Manāfī lineage between the 'Abbásids and Umayyads, as 'Abd Shams was the brother of Häshim from the same father, 'Abd Manāf, thus the grandfather of the Umayyads was - against al-Jähiz's desire - an equal representative of the aristocratic stock of 'Abd-Manāf. See C.E. Bosworth, "al-Magrizi's Exposition of the Formative Period in Islamic History and its Cosmic Significance: The Kitāb al-Nizā' wa-t-Takhāṣum," in Islam: Past Influence and Present Challenge, Edited by A. Welch and P. Cachia, (Edinburgh: University Press, 1979) pp. 96-97.)
The clans of Quraysh

1. Adopted from Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*, p. 7. A rift occurred in Quraysh after the death of Qusayy, between the sons of *Abd al-`Uzzâ (a) the confederates referred to above by +, and (b) the sons of *Abd al-Manâf* [the confederacy of the scented ones referred to the above by *al- Mutayyibân], also members of *hilf al-Fudal* referred to above by ƙ. According to Watt, the term Quraysh *al-Bitâh* were descendants of Ka'b.

2. *Abd Shams was the first leader of Banî *Abd Manâf*. See Ibn Ishâq's *Life of Muhammad*, p. 56. (In translation).
Although al-Jāḥīz acknowledges ʿAbd Shams' participation in the *Ilaāf* of Quraysh, he only does so after stressing that the socio-economic system of *Ilaāf* should be credited to Hāshim, who had first initiated and conducted it before it consecutively passed to his surviving brothers, al-Muṭṭalib, ʿAbd Shams and Nawfal.  

When it comes to ʿHilf al-Fudūl*, which al-Jāḥīz values as the best alliance among the Arab clans before Islam, al-Jāḥīz insists that the descendants of ʿAbd Shams had no say in it at all, and that the descendants of Hāshim were the ones who named it as such, gave birth to it and were exclusively entrusted with fulfilling its moral code.  

II. Ḥilf al-Muṭayyibin:

A. Ibn Iṣḥāq’s version

The war between the two groups of Quraysh was cancelled after the two groups reached a peace plan that gave the ritual task of watering pilgrims and collecting the tax for feeding (ṣifāda) them to Banū ʿAbd Manāf, and giving the assembly house next to the Kaʿba to Banū ʿAbd al-Dār.

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889 *Ilaāf* is that pact or agreement that provided economic mobility for the tribe of Quraysh. See E.I.2, S.V. "Ilaāf", by Ed. whereby Hāshim provided an agreement with the Kings of Syria (Romans), ʿAbd Shams with Abyssinia, Nawful with Chosroes and al-Muṭṭalib with Yemen. See al-Ṭabarī, Tārikh, 2: 252  

890 Kitāb Fadl Hāshim, pp. 70-72.  

891 Watt, Muhammad at Mecca. (Oxford: University Press), p. 6, This ʿHilf is a confederation of the virtuous, in which the participants were the clans of Hāshim, al-Muṭṭalib, Asad, Zuhra, and Taym, and most probably without Banū ʿAbd Shams and Banū Nawfal, who may have left it at an early stage. Ibid. See also, E.I.2, S.V. "Ḥilf al-Fudūl", by C. Pellat and Ibn Iṣḥāq, Life of Muhammad, p. 58.  

892 Fadl ʿHāshim, Ibid. This low socio-economic profile of ʿAbd Shams when compared to Hāshim is strongly doubted by Watt, who on the contrary believes that ʿAbd Shams and his descendants had enjoyed a far more superior economic status than Hāshim and his clan. ʿAbd Shams’s yielding to Hāshim the rights of supplying food and water to the pilgrims, was because "Hāshim was less occupied in commercial journeys". The Prophet’s clan (Hāshim) in the third of a century before his mission had been on the wane, and was "no more than a prominent member of the group of weaker and poorer clans". See Muhammad at Mecca pp. 9, 15, 30, 32-33. According to Watt, therefore, the decision of ʿAbd Shams and Nawfal not to join the alliance of ʿFudāl was against al-Jāḥīz’s interpretation – a sign of their growing strength to do without the alliance unlike the weaker Hāshim and Muṭṭalib. See Ibid, p. 6.
B. al-Jāḥiz’s version

There is no reference by al-Jāḥiz at all in this context to the fact that ʿAbd Shams enjoyed a prominent position in the Ḥilf al-Muṭayyibīn package,893 by virtue of the fact that the ʿAbd Shams were members of Banū ʿAbd Manāf, who made the alliance. al-Jāḥiz relieved himself from this by avoiding any reference to Ḥilf al-Muṭayyibīn altogether!

When it comes to Ḥilf al-Fudūl, how does Ibn Ishaq’s version relate to al-Jāḥiz’s?

In fact both agree that Nawfal and ʿAbd Shams kept out of the confederacy of Fudūl,894 and acknowledge Hāshim’s role in being first to institute the two caravan journeys of Quraysh. So this leaves us with the problem of knowing the socio-economic status of ʿAbd Shams in relation to Hāshim, as judged from the Ḥilf al-Muṭayyibīn, al-Fudūl and the Ḥilāf of Quraysh.

Ibn Ishaq has nothing relevant to add as he simultaneously describes ʿAbd Shams as a ‘great traveller who was seldom to be found in Mecca...’, and who ‘was a poor man with a large family’895. We will come to this issue later, but as a modern historian correctly says, the four sons of ʿAbd Manāf were one solid group, and not - as circulated - enemies. The very participation of ʿAbd Shams in the Ḥilāf initiated by Hāshim should therfore raise a question mark on the alleged enmity between them.896

III. ʿAbbāsid “historical” legitimate right to rule (Ḥaqq al-ʿUmlīma)

In this treatise is found one of al-Jāḥiz’s references to the historical right of the ʿAbbāsid regime. Historical in the sense that the ʿAbbāsid legitimacy is to be accepted with a retrospective effect, i.e., in a historical frame that assumes their superiority - and hence the Umayyad inferiority - to have been established not only since the pre-Islamic era but to have continued ever since to the favour of the Hāshimites:

893 Ibn Ishaq, The Life of Muhammad, pp. 56-57. It must be noted here that al-Jāḥiz has certainly not followed the version of Ibn Ishaq in this problem.
894 Ibid, p. 58.
895 Ibid.
The Háshimites can point out that their dynasty has lasted longer than the Umayyad since today it is ninety four years old. They also boast that they have reigned by right of heredity (bi-al-Mirâth) between agnates (haqq al-‘Ašaba wa-al-‘Umûma), i.e., inheritance passed from nephew (the Prophet) to uncle (al-‘Abbâs) - that their roots of Kingship (mulk), rested in the same genetic pool, that witnessed the planting or appearance of prophethood (mulkuhum fi-maghris al-nubuwwa), and that their cause and qualifications differ from those of Banû Marwân, nay, the Marwânids should be completely alienated from attempting to ascribe any link or tie to ruling, as they were not related to "the Prophetic circle "by descent. All that the Marwânids can claim is that they are Qurayshites, and as such their dependence on the tradition that the Imams must come from Quraşyah, and that all who come from Quraysh are equally eligible (is not convincing), and contradicts the legitimate causes for the caliphate as maintained generation after generation. People have agreed to all of the above...

In short al-Jähiz's aim here is to rob the Umayyads of any legitimacy, by focussing on the non-Islamic practices that the Umayyad predecessors are alleged to have maintained. The religious criterion is stressed here for obvious political motives that suit the 'Abbâsid propaganda by way of re-writing history in a manner that fits the 'Abbâsid interests:

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897 Here is a chronological marker that suggests the date of this treatise. Counting 94 years from 132, A.H. when the ‘Abbâsids appeared, this means that the treatise was written in 226 A.H. This figure, however, when taken with al-Jähiz's reference to the contemporaneous caliph, al-Wâthiq, raises the first of what have been as "useful but troublesome chronological markers". Useful in the sense that al-Jähiz is trying to be exact, but it keeps the chronicler troubled with a couple of months - that have yet to come - in order to accept al-Jähiz's time marker alongside the established date of 227 A.H. when al-Wâthiq did become a Caliph.

898 Quoting Bosworth's notice of J. Schacht's wider definition of the term ‘Ašaba - at least for inheritance purposes - (See Bosworth, Medieval Arabic Culture, London:Variorum Reprints, 1982, p.42) ‘Ašaba- may include men who are connected with the referent in the male line, ascendants and descendants". In this sense is therefore understood the legitimate claims underlying the agnate line, this time not from the descendants of al-‘Abbâs, but from Ishāq b. al-Fadl, descendant of the Prophet's eldest uncle, al-Ḥârith. This definition would also accommodate the Umayyads as they are linked to the Prophet through their grandfather.

899 As they are from 'Quraşyah al-Zawâhir', i.e., those Quraşshites whose quarters were in the outskirts of the Ka'ba, in contrast to Quraşyah al-Biṣâh who inhabited the district immediately round the Ka'ba, See Watt, Muhammad at Mecca, p. 5. It is surprising to hear from al-Jähiz that the same Manâfi' descendants ( Háshim and ʿAbd Shams) were not regarded (as Mas'ūdi did) as belonging to Quraşyah al-Biṣah. How sensible is it to believe that the wealthiest Makkans clan (ʿAbd Shams, according to Watt) was living in the outskirts of the Ka'ba; was al-Jähiz twisting facts? and if ʿAbd Shams could do without the newly formed alliance of Fudûl (presumably made among the weaker Makkans clans) how come that ʿAbd Shams's descendant, Abû Sufyân, is believed to have dominated Makkans policy during the time of Muhammad's mission, when we are made to believe that Abû Sufyân's clan (ʿAbd Shams) was belonging to Quraşyah al-Zawâhir (the outsider Makkans)? Either al-Jähiz was twisting facts or the virtuous Makkans ( Háshim, Muṭṭalib, and members of al-Fudûl) resided close to al-Ka'ba, while the wealthy Makkans lived on the outskirts (against the image given by Mas'ūdi , (See Watt, Ibid., p.5).

900 Kitâb Fadl Háshim, p. 77.
Some have claimed the caliphate for (^c)Ali as he had combined descent (qarâba), precedence in Islam, (sâbiqa), and bequest (wasïyya). If that was the case, then neither the Sufyânids nor the Marwânids could raise any claim of legitimacy. If the caliphate was deserved by way of inheritance (mirâth) and by the right of agnates (°umâma), the Umayyads too have no right to any claim to it, and if it was only deserved by precedence in good deeds, and (Jihâd), they too had neither precedence nor a day of (Jihâd) to be remembered ... We know well how much Abû Sufyân's exemplary enmity to the Prophet was, as reflected in the battles he had fought against him, and how fake and superficial his Islam was ... In fact he only embraced Islam after al-^cAbbâs's effort, who should be credited with hindering people from killing Abû Sufyân and bringing him forward to the Prophet to grant him forgiveness. 901 Nevertheless, the bitterness remains in the undeniable fact that the Häshimites' reward was quite astonishing as the descendants of Abû Sufyân were ungrateful for the act of al-^cAbbâs, to the extent that they fought (^c)Ali, poisoned al-Hasan, and killed al-Husayn. Mu'sâwiya even ordered that the two sons of Ubayd Allah b. 3^cAbbâs be killed. Hind is said to have eaten the liver of Hamza... 902

The (¢)Abbâsid- Umayyad antagonism did not end with the Prophetic era but extended in time into the future days of Islam, in what really reflects a broader concept of the house of Häshim (to the exclusion of the Umayyad house) that contained Ôlabites as well as (¢)Abbâsids:

Häshim, (plural), accuses Umayya (plural): "You have bitten 6Ali b. 6Abd Allâh b. al 6Abbâs with a whip ... poisoned Abû Häshim (¢Abd Allâh b. Mu'hammad b. 6Ali b. Abî Tâlib), dug up the tomb of Zayd, killed Ja'far al-Šâdiq, 903 and Yahyâ b. Zayd ... and [remember] Marwân's brutal action against Ibrahim al-Imâm, until the latter died, all of this is quite known... 904

901 It can be argued here that Abû Syffyân's record was not as al-Jâbi? intendend it to appear. Dr. H. Mu'nis - contrary to the thesis of al-Jähiz on the low profile of 6Abd Shams and his descendants - believes that the alleged enmity between them was not acute nor started before Islam. op. cit., pp. 6-9. Many members of Banû 6Abd Shams like 6Ubba and Shayba ,the sons of Rabii'a b. 6Abd Shams are said - Dr. Mu'nis adds - to have held mild positions on the Prophet Muhammad and Islam (citing al-Wâqidi, Maghâzî, 1: 37). Dr. Mu'nis very much doubts the alleged enmity and says that even Abû Sufyân was not the staunchest enemy of Islam, as he is known to have held a mild position on Mu'hammad and Muslims after the hijra of the Prophet especially after the battle of the ditch (khandaq). The very fact that he represented Quraysh before the Prophet to renew the halted agreement of lludaybiyya - and he was not responsible for its halt - and in view of 6Ali's advice to him to ask the Prophet instead for the Jiwdr of Makkan Qurashites in the face of the imminent advance of the army of Muslims of Medina, and by the fact that the Prophetic announcement: "whoever enters the house of Abû Sufyân is safe", should imply a Prophetic congratulation and respect for Abû Sufyân's peaceful initiative. Ibid., p. 9

902 Fadîl Häshîm, pp. 77-79.

903 The death of Ja'far al-Šâdiq is questionable as he is believed to have died during the 6Abbâsid reign (148/765) of the caliph al-Manşûr. This constitutes another troublesome problem. Conversely, the inclusion of the figure of al-Šâdiq may have been an inaccurate addition by a copyist, not al-Jâhiç.

904 Kitâb Fadîl Häshîm, p. 79. This Jähilian trend to make the enmity acute and everlasting (before and after Islam) between the Manâfite houses of 6Abd Shams and Häshîm is a continuation of the exaggerated efforts exhibited in "Risâla al-Nâbita". Compare this to Watt, The Majesty that was Islam, pp. 29-30, who joins Dr. Mu'nis in his view that Umayyads were not as portrayed by the 6Abbâsids!
IV. Unexpected mocking reference to Ḥaqq al-ʿUmūma, internal strife within the ʿAbbāsid ruling circle:

In this treatise, the following astonishing quotation is forwarded by the Umayyad spokesman:

They question: 'By what right did Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-ʿAbbās claim authority to conduct the propaganda and aspire to the Khilāfa in a manner that deprives the rest of his brothers from that right? How could he have exclusively confined it amongst his own children thus excluding his brothers' offspring from that right? How come that we find here that the nephews are superior to the uncles in claiming the caliphate? They say: 'If this matter was a matter of inheritance (mirāth) then the closer to al-ʿAbbās has more right to the caliphate; and if it were a function of age and experience, then the ʿUmūma (uncleship) are first in priority, i.e., the ones who should take over.'

This quotation is quite clearly a reference to an inter-ʿAbbāsid dispute which is quite rare in al-ʿJāḥiz's works. If the respective sons of one ʿAbbāsid father are equally related to the same grandfather, why should any one brother be more privileged than the other?

905 Fadl Hāshim, p.101. If this is the case, the alleged sacred right of ʿUmūma is therefore halted according to taste and whims!
The issue of *Ummā* (Inter-Abbāsid dispute)

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Although the previous quotation is put forward on behalf of the Umayyad spokesmen, it is, nevertheless, reflective of the following observations:

- That the 'Abbāsid legitimacy of right of inheritance by the privileged status of 'Umūma which they have assumed seems here to have become increasingly more open to critique and more fragile than the officials stated since al-Manṣūr shifted the new basis of legitimacy. The issue of succession seems to have been at stake, and the mechanism of 'Umūma does not seem to have offered a ready made solution for the succession to the caliphate.906

- The problem of seniority of succession as between brother to brother and father to son seems to make sense in this context as this issue was equally evident among the 'Alids whose disputes on succession had run on the same lines (from brother to brother907 or from father to son908).

V. The 'Abbāsid 'revolutionary' right to rule:909

The atmosphere in which to look at the 'Abbāsid revolution is well established now for the reader as al-Jāḥiz has virtually missed no chance of blemishing the religious and socio-moral status of the great-grandfather of the Umayyad dynasty, in order to insinuate that their tyrannical behaviour was inherited from the genetic stock of their evil grandfathers. Pellat says that al-Jāḥiz does not bluntly express this view, as it is left to be guessed from various texts in which he insistently proclaims the superiority of Banū Ḥāshim over 'Abd al-Ma'mūn's fight against his uncle, when the former had chosen 'Ali al-Ridā as heir apparent, and the latter had claimed the caliphate for himself, clearly indicates the volatility of the right of 'Umūma boasted by the pro 'Abbāsid al-Jāḥiz.906

Like the Aftahiyya, after al-Šādiq's eldest son - 'Abd Allāh al-Aftah - who, upon his death said that the Imamate, after it had gone to the eldest son of the Imām al-Šādiq, al-Aftah, had in fact passed to his brother by testament. Thus al-Aftah's decision to pass the Imamate to al-Kāzīm constitutes a precedent in the succession principle (after al-Hasan passed it to al-Ḥusayn). This justification of course is not accepted by the followers of Kāzīm or the Imāmites who assert that succession worked from father to son, but as Watt notices, will be used later throughout the growth of Shi'ism, and this precedent reappears when 'Ali Ridda's brother Ahmad, claims Imāma for himself (as passing from brother to brother). See Watt, 'Sidelights', Early Islam, p. 158.

In this matter, al-Šādiq's son Mūsā al-Kāzīm is seen more senior than his brother Ismā'īl, or conversely as the Ismā'iliyya say, Ismā'īl was the most senior son.908

This right has already been analysed above in 'Risāla al-Nābita', benefiting from B. Lewis's observations in his article 'Islamic Concepts of Revolution' in Revolution in the Middle East, pp. 30-40.
Shams; Pellat says that the portraits of the two brothers and their offspring implicitly aim at confirming that the overthrow of the Umayyad family and its replacement by the Abbâsids is absolutely regular and legal because the Umayyad dynasty was illegitimate and thus the community had had the duty to revolt against those usurpers and tyrants.  

I think that al-Jâhiz was not as implicit as Pellat assumed, as can be seen from al-Jâhiz’s own reference to the revolution conducted by the Abbâsids themselves:

The Abbâsids claim superiority over the Marwânids, and Hâshim (i.e., the clan) over Abd Shams, in that although Kingship was in the latter’s hands, the former was capable of taking it from them by violent force and clever trickery... also in the fact that such an overthrow was achieved against the most courageous and tactful figure among their enemies, who was raised in a military atmosphere (of the highest standards) yet was directly faced by more superior men descending from al-Abbâs ...

VI. The Abbâsîd/Hâshimite Charisma

Before we come to al-Jâhiz’s concept of the charismatic Banû-Hâshim, it is useful to refer to Bosworth’s allusion to a broader concept of the charismatic Ahl al-Bayt (family of the house), which has been equally narrowed by the Shiites and Abbâsids to being applicable only on the house of Ali or the house of al-Abbâs. As Bosworth puts it:

It seems most probable that the Qur’anic usage of ahl al bayt signifies either “a family” in general or else “the people of the house”, i.e. of the Ka`ba, whence Quraysh as a whole or the Muslim community.

VII. The Abbâsîd-Tâlibite Charisma

The House of Hâshim in this treatise is purposely selected from the overall stock of Quraysh to perpetuate the present status quo of Abbâsîd sovereignty. For this purpose, the acknowledgement of the other wing of the Hâshimite stock, i.e. the Tâlibites, is not intended for its face value, but only to make one Qurashite entity (the Hâshimites) look historically superior to their Qurashite opponents (The Abb
Shams /Umayyads) in the attempt to eventually raise one of the Hāshimite entities 
(the 'Abbāsids) over their cousins, the Ṭālibites after deforming the picture of the 
Umayyads' ancestors and descendants for good.

VIII. al-Jāḥīz’s attacks on the Umayyads:

al-Jāḥīz’s attacks on the Umayyads are numerous and resemble in tone those 
attacks exhibited in the previously analysed treatise of al-Nābita. Of these attacks, al-
Jāḥīz’s treatise included the following statements; (It should be noted here that al-
Jāḥīz was stressing the factor of religion basically as a tool to alienate them 
completely from the political scene):

A. Jāhili Umayyads:

- No share in Ḥilf al-Fudūl.914
- No share in water/food supplying to pilgrims.915
- Married the wives of their own fathers.916

B. Umayyads during Islam.

- Abū Sufyān’s enmity to the Prophet and pretentious embrace of Islam917.
- Most rooted in blasphemy.918
- Killed Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, and many others from house of Prophet919.
- Short of the criteria conducive to the caliphate.920
- The most noble of their men does not reach the nobility of Banū-ʾal-ʾAbbās’s 
women (usually held by al-Jāḥīz as inferior to men).921

914 Fadl, p.71.
915 Ibid. p.67.
916 Ibid p.75.
917 Ibid, p.78.
918 Ibid, p.80.
919 Ibid., pp.78-79.
920 Ibid., p.77.
- Very miserly to guests.922

- al-Manṣūr regarded ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAziz the best in being one eyed among the blind923 or as al-Jāḥiẓ describes him, the most famous figure that celebrated determinism (Jabr).924

-The despotic Pharaohs are nothing when compared to the Umayyad tyrants.925

- ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwân adopted cursing ʿAli publicly to undermine the credibility of the house of Hâshim.926

- ʿAbd al-Malik distorted the laws of Islam when claiming himself fit to rule according to the very laws of Islam.927

Unlike al-Nābita, however, this treatise has given the opportunity for an Umayyad spokesman928 to boast for the clan of ʿAbd Shams against the clan of Hâshim,929 thus bringing the circle of Arab-Arab dispute almost to a full round, until the Hâshimite spokesman is able to refute the Umayyad points referred to above. To reach this, al-Jāḥiẓ was constantly belittling the Umayyads and exalting the Tālibites and ʿAbbâsids.

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922 Ibid, p. 89.
923 Ibid, p. 89.
924 Ibid, p. 90.
925 Ibid, p. 91.
926 Ibid, p. 92.
927 Ibid, p. 92. It is worth mentioning here that, contrary to the taste of al-Jāḥiẓ, many Sunnite historians have accepted the rule of the Umayyads, from the angle of the admissable and predicted change of rule from Khilâfa to mulk. Ibn Khaldûn highly regards the figures of Muʿawiya, Marwân, and ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwân. Marwân is held to be a first degree Tâbiʿi (associate to the Companions of the Prophet). See Ibnish, al-Khilâfa wa Shurūṭ al-Zâʿama ṣind ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamâʿa., (Beirut: Dâr al-Ḥamrâʿ, 1991), pp. 100. Ibn al-ʿArabi holds an identical view on Muʿawiya, Marwân and ʿAbd al-Malik. In Addition to these sources - and against al-Jāḥiẓ's claim - Malik in his Muwatta' is said to have based his legal judgement on the way ʿAbd al-Malik had acted. The ʿAbbâsid caliph al-Rashid is known to have read the Muwatta' before Malik. See Ibn al-ʿArabi, al-Ṣawāsim min al-Qawâsim. (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿIlmiyya, 1371 A.H.) pp. 249-251.
928 We shall see al-Jāḥiẓ resorting to this technique in the coming treatise Taṣwīb ʿAlī.
929 Kitāb Fadl Ḥâshim, p. 93.
IX. Political Significance underlying the praise of the two wings of Banū Hāshim: A wider notion of the House of Hāshim.

The remarkable feature of this treatise lies in its launching a phenomenal simultaneous praise of the two constituting wings of the stock of Hāshim and it would be useful here to examine the political significance behind such a political step; that is after acquainting ourselves with this type of praise:

If superiority lies in the numerosity of offspring - as is celebrated by the Arabs - we should mention that the offspring of ۶Ali b. ۶Abd Allāh b. al-۶Abbās today equals those of all the House of ۶Abd Shams. Similarly is the situation with the offspring of ۶Huṣayn b. ۶Ali b. Abī Ṭalib... Of all the surviving Qurashites, no one ever doubts that the Hāshimites do outweigh in their offspring all the other stock of Quraysh ... If superiority and pride lies in the nobility of opinion and correct utterances, who is equal to al-۶Abūs b. ۶Abd al-Muṭṭalib and ۶Abūl Hašim, p. 82.

Who is the like of Ḥāmza b. ۶Abd al-Muṭṭalib and ۶Ali b. Abī Ṭalib and his son al-Ḥusayn in courage and fighting? Do you have anyone to match our Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm, the sons of ۶Abd Allāh (b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. ۶Ali b. Abī Ṭalib), or even Zayd b. ۶Ali (b. al-Ḥusayn b. ۶Ali b. Abī Ṭalib)? You have equally heard of the generosity of al-Muṭṭalib, and before him ۶Abd Allāh b. ۶Ali b. ۶Abd al-Aṯār b. al-۶Abbās who removed you from the throne, and similarly his brother Ṣāliḥ b. ۶Ali who tracked down Marwān b. Muḥammad until he killed him ... Who is comparable in generosity to ۶Abd Allāh b. Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭalib (۶Ali's brother), Ḥabīb Allāh b. al-۶Abbās b. ۶Abd al-Muṭṭalib and al-Ḥasan b. ۶Ali b. Abī Ṭalib? ... How can you ever compare your generosity (you, Umayyads) to that of the ۶Abbāsid caliphs: al-Mahdi, Ḥārūn, al-Amin, al-Maʿmūn, ... Could anyone dare to claim that al-۶Abbās b. ۶Abd al-Muṭṭalib or al-Ḥasan b. ۶Ali b. Abī Ṭalib were not tolerant? Similarly,
al-Ma'mün was the most tolerant in his time, as was al-Saffāh, and before them 6Abd al-Mu'talib and Hāshim.936

al-Jāḥiẓ continues:

As regards what you (Umayyads) have boasted of in eloquence and/or oratory, people have well known the superiority of the house of Hāshim in this respect over the Umayyads; ... such as Abū Ṭalīb al-Faḍl b. 6Abbās b. Ṭuba Abī Lahab, and 6Abd Allāh b. Muṣawīya b. 6Abd Allāh b. Ja'far (b. Abī Ṭalīb), 6Ali b. Abī Ṭalīb, 6Abd Allāh b. 6Abbās, Ṣayd b. 6Ali b. al-Ḥusayn, Ja'far b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥasan, Dāwūd b. 6Ali b. 6Abd Allāh b. al-6Abbās, 6Abd al-Malik b. Ṣāliḥ b. 6Ali ... 937 When it comes to asceticism (Zuhd) we boast of 6Ali b. Abī Ṭalīb, and his grandson Zayn al-6Ābidin: 6Ali b. al-Ḥusayn. How can you relate to 6Ali b. 6Abd Allāh b. al-6Abbās? How far you are (really) from Mūsā al-Kāzīm? b. Ja'far (al-Ṣādiq) b. Muḥammad (al-Bāqir), and similarly from 6Ali b. Muḥammad938 al-Riḍā If pride and honour reside in perfection, beauty and voluminous body, who was the like of al-6Abbās b. 6Abd al-Muṭṭalib? Who was the like of 6Ali b. 6Abd Allāh b. al-6Abbās and his offspring? ... Have you not heard of the handsomeness of al-Saffāh, al Mahdi, and his son Ḥārūn, and his grandson Muhammad b. Zubaydā (al-Āmin) up to al-Ṭāhīq? Likewise was al-Ḥasan b. 6Ali who is said to have mostly resembled the Prophet P.B.U.H, and similarly 6Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan al-Mahd (grandson of al-Ḥasan b. 6Ali b. Abī Ṭalīb).939

The above quotations undeniably confirm the wider notion of the house of Hāshim, the effective name under which all candidates for the Institution of the Caliphate were highly or solely recommended. al-Jāḥiẓ uses the same method in the following passage:

We (the Hāshimites) have witnessed three men named 6Ali, who lived in the same period and each one of them was suitable for the post of caliph, by virtue of his fiqh, nusk (asceticism), essence, opinion and experience and well celebrated reputation among people. These were: 6Ali b. al-Ḥusayn b. 6Ali, (b. Abī Ṭalīb), 6Ali b. 6Abd Allāh b. al-6Abbās and 6Ali b. 6Abd Allāh b. Ja'far (b. Abī Ṭalīb). Each one of them was perfect in all respects ... After them directly, came three cousins (the respective sons of the above three 6Alis) all having the name Muḥammad, exactly as each one of their fathers was called 6Ali, and each one of them is best fit for the caliphate by virtue of noble descent, and noble traits: these were: Muḥammad b. 6Ali b. al-Ḥusayn b. 6Ali, (b. Abī Ṭalīb), and Muḥammad b. 6Ali b. 6Abd Allāh b. al-6Abbās , and Muḥammad b. 6Ali b. 6Abd Allāh b. Ja'far (b. Abī Ṭalīb)...940

The political message behind this text is somehow clarified now; the attention of the reader is directed to a very critical moment in the immediate past, i.e., the couple of years that immediately preceded the end of the Umayyad dynasty

936 Ibid., p.104.
937 Ibid., pp.104-105.
938 The famous eighth Shi'ite Imam, 6Ali al-Riḍā was son of Mūsā al-Kāzīm and not as mentioned in the text. The text should have read: 6Ali b. Muḥammad b. 6Ali al-Riḍā (i.e., the words b. 6Ali are missing).
939 Fadl, p.105.
940 Fadl, p. 108.
and the appearance of the ʿAbbāsids. If all of these ʿAlīs and Muḥammads were really representing the sole legitimate candidates for the post of caliph as al-Jāḥiz is narrating, then the scope of flexibility of the House of Ḥāshim was really wide open as it had accommodated, as well as the ʿAbbāsids, the Ẓālibites as a whole, whether from the genealogical line of ʿAli b. ʿAbī Ṭālib or from ʿAli’s brother, Jaʿfar, whose descendants’ revolution against the Umayyads was badly received by the ʿAbbāsid agents, as his death was brought about, not from the official Umayyads -but from the secret agents of ʿAbbāsid Daʿwā 941 as Wellhausen suggested.942

On the other hand, when recalling al-Jāḥiz’s attempts in this treatise to acknowledge the various Ẓālibite and ʿAbbāsid candidates, one can not but remember Watt’s saying: "that up to 750 A.D. the Proto-Shiʿite idea of charisma was in an extremely fluid state..."943 This we have seen in the quotation mentioned above which was referring to the three ʿAlīs and the three Muḥammads representing Jaʿfarid, Ḥusaynid and ʿAbbāsid components and the broader and the yet unabridged definition of the house of Ḥāshim.

So far is clear, but was this flexible sense of charisma allowed - by the ʿAbbāsid minded al-Jāḥiz - to extend further in time, i.e., beyond the period that witnessed the end of the Umayyad reign and the appearance of the ʿAbbāsids? In other words if Ẓālibites (Ḥasanids, Ḥusaynids and Jaʿfarids) could have been acknowledged as candidates during a time the ʿAbbāsid Ibrāhīm al-Imām was secretly calling for himself as al-Isfahānī mentions944 in Khurāsān around the year 129 A.H., was this tolerant attitude allowed to be stretched into the ʿAbbāsid era when they had taken over?

It is remarkable how al-Jāḥiz does not refer to the cousin of the Jaʿfarid Muḥammad, i.e., ʿAbd Allāh b. Muʿāwiyya b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Jaʿfar, whose famous revolt in 129 A.H. against the Umayyads had gathered full Shiʿite and Khārijite support and even some Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid figures, and thus endangered the ʿAbbāsid plans and interests so much that they licensed - according to Wellhausen - Abū Muslim to get rid of him. See the immediate religious setting before the ʿAbbāsid revolution in our historical Survey above, and Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī, Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyin, ed. A. Ṣaqr (Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabi, 1365/1946), pp. 161-169.

941 See the previous footnote above.

942 See our discussion of the Proto-Shiʿite phenomenon above, namely the reference to Watt, "The Significance of the Early stages of Imāmīte Shiʿism", in Early Islam, p. 163.

943 Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī, Maqātil, p. 168.
In fact, despite the conspiratorial view of the āAbbāsids against their own Hāshimite colleagues, it is astonishing to find al-Jähiz - if the text is really wholly Jähizian - pronouncing in the time of the āAbbāsid Wāthiq something which is undeniably not to the taste of the āAbbāsid authorities. In fact, such pronouncements are contained in the following quotation that seems to be problematic from more than one angle:

a) from the way al-Jähiz is directly recommending the Ḥusaynid Imams for the caliphate - without maintaining the previous balance of praising or acknowledging the Jaʿfarids, Ḥasanids, or even the āAbbāsids!

b) from the details contained in the following recommendation:

Says al-Jähiz:

Who - amongst the stock of Quraysh or outside Quraysh, can count, as the Ṭālibites can, ten consecutive figures in a row, each and everyone of them a scholar, ascetic, courageous, generous, chaste and pious. Of them came caliphs, and of them were candidates for the caliphate... son of... son of... son of... up to the number ten. These were: al Ḥasan (al- āAskari) b.  āAli (al- āHādi) b. Muḥammad (al-Jawād) b.  āAli (al-Riḍā) b. Mūsā (al-Kāzim) b. (Jaʿfar) al-Šādiq b. Muḥammad (al- Bāqir) b.  āAli (Zayn al- āAbidin) b. al Ḥusayn b.  āAli (b. Abī Ṭālib). This sequence has not been matched by any Arab or non Arab house!945

Does the recognition of a series of ten Ḥusaynid Shiʿite Imams in this work of al-Jähiz upset the conclusion advanced earlier by Watt on the allegedly 'extremely fluid state of Proto-Shiʿite charismata,'946 up to the time of al-Wāthiq (227-232/842-847), the Jähizian text seems to contradict Watt's theory on Shiʿism during this time.

In fact, Watt may not have realized the existence of this evidence and therefore his outlook on the formation of Shiʿism - which may appear slightly incompatible with our source - could still be accepted as sound with some minor modifications. Initially Watt has maintained that "from 818 - (ʿAli al-Riḍā) to 874 ( Ḥasan al- āAskari), the imams took no active part in politics, and that there are no traces of any underground movement connected with them..."947

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946 See our discussion of the Proto-Shiʿite phenomenon in the Introductory Survey.
Then Watt clarifies this argument by adding the possibility of having recognized Imams on a minor scale:

between 818 and 874 there was a body of persons of Rāfidite sympathies who had no thought of engaging in political revolts and no connection even in idea, with those afterwards accepted as Imams. This conclusion is not upset by the fact that there were small groups of malcontents in various places who recognized various imams. After 874, there was a change.948

If the above text has not been merely interpolated into al-Jähiz’s treatise, I think Watt’s estimation of the later fully developed form of Shi‘ism will need to be adjusted and redated from 260/874 to 232/842. al-Jähiz’s text, although problematic from the historical angle as will be studied below, seems to clearly suggest that Proto-Shi‘ism has given up its fluid state (reflective of the period prior to 750) for a more solid and definite state, as the list of ten Ḫusaynid Imams obviously suggests.

In my view such an acknowledgement by a non-Shi‘ite heresiographer like al-Jähiz of those ten Ḫusaynid Imams is significant and allows one to make the following observations; of course if the text is authentically Jähizian:

a) That at least during the reign of al-Wāthiq, Proto-Shi‘ism had moved a considerable way towards the Imāmite form of Shi‘ism, probably two-thirds of the distance it needed in order to assume the fully developed Imāmite form. Hence if al-Jähiz’s previous texts prove that there was no recognized series of designated Imams before 750 (as Watt maintained)949 the present text forces one to modify Watt’s later conclusion on the active existance of such Imams until around 874. This keeps a difference of about thirty years in the sense that thirty years earlier than Watt had expected, the Shi‘ite sympathies have ‘considerably’ crystallized around specific Imams. Their appearance in a row is remarkable but need not reflect the wide popularity of the idea of designation in the political active sense.

b) It can be substantiated from other Jähizian texts that such a fluid charismata had abandoned its fluid state for a more solid one.950

948 Ibid., p120.
949 Watt, Early Islam, pp. 140, 143, 144-145.
950 See K. al-Tarib wa-al-Tadwir, (allegedly in same period as Faḍl Ḥāshim), i.e., in the same post-Ma’mūnid era where reference to “the” Imām of al-Rāfīḍa is mentioned (parag. 73), the Shi‘a of al-Imām (parag. 31). In Risāla fi Ḥujaj al-Nubuwwa, (Rasā‘il al-Jähiz 3: 233, of al-Mutawakkil’s time, there is a reference to the now distinctive Shi‘ite group holding specific positions in all legal matters, and even in regarding their own Imam as different from the established 6th Abbāsid Caliph. In this way, a literary source like al-Jähiz could be used to assist in historical disputes.
As Watt has allowed for the possibility of recognized Imams on a local level,\textsuperscript{951} this needs to be corrected as al-Jāhiẓ's references allude to such a recognition by the widespread groups of Shi'ites he calls Rāfīḍa, which seems to be something more than local, and if the Rāfīḍa or Shi'ites had really gathered around those Ḥusaynid Imams what deduction can be inferred from such a gathering? was it political or spiritual?\textsuperscript{952}

Judging from the tone of the treatise "Faḍl Ḥāshim", one is inclined to accept the outlined Imāma of the Ḥusaynid line alongside the developed theme of Banū-Ḥāshim's charisma (i.e., their mention is deliberately made to politically outweigh the Ḥāshimiyya and hence in political faḍl as is evident by the description of the Ḥusaynid Imams: 'faminhum Khulafā' wa minhum murashshahūn'\textsuperscript{953} a transformation which, however, has not reached 'the level of exerting serious political pressures.'\textsuperscript{954} It can therefore be argued that since the time of al-Wāthiq, and probably as a result of the pro-Alid policy maintained by the ʿAbbāsid-Muʿtazili caliphs al-Maʾmūn and al-Wāthiq, the situation of the fluid charismata could have undergone a change, and that such a crystallization was to continue and accelerate especially with the change in policy towards the Alids during al-Mutawakkil's reign\textsuperscript{955} before it has fully assumed the Imāmite form of twelver Shi'ism. In this sense, the situation of the Shi'ites during the reign of al-Wāthiq may fit Watt's notion of the transformation of Proto-Shi'ism from the quietist Rāfīḍite/charismatic stage ot the political Imāmite stage, in the sense that al-Jāhiẓ's contemporary Shi'ites

\textsuperscript{951} Watt, 'The Rāfīḍites,' p. 120.

\textsuperscript{952} On the spiritual form of leadership, see F. Omar 'Aspects of the ʿAbbāsid Ḥusaynid Relations', Arabic, Tome XXII, Fascicule 2, pp. 175-176, and Watt, 'The Political Attitudes of the Muʿtaṣila', p. 49, & Kennedy, The Early ʿAbbāsid Caliphate, p.211.

\textsuperscript{953} Faḍl, p.109.

\textsuperscript{954} The problem in short is a matter of historical diagnosis: were the Shi'ites of al-Wāthiq recognizing the various Imams during their lifetime? and if so, were they recognized as spiritual or active revolutionary leaders? Watt seems to assume it was quietist/spiritual, and proposes an almost similar view as that of al-Jāhiẓ on the categories of Shi'ites then: Zaydiyya, Ghāliyya, Rāfīḍa. The point of divergence is whether the Rāfīḍa's recognition of their Imams was a political one. al-Jāhiẓ seems to have solved this by furnishing us with evidence that although such a recognition had not been seriously political (reign of Maʾmūn, Muʿtaṣim), it was now assuming this dimension, thus paving the way as Watt says, for the later developed Imamite doctrine of 900 A.D. ( Cf. Watt, Sidelights on Early Imamite Doctrine, Studia Islamica, (Paris, 31,1970), pp. 297-298.

\textsuperscript{955} As evidenced by al-Jāhiẓ's references to the distinguishable juristic and legal dogma of the Rāfīḍa in "Ḥujaj al-Nubuwwa", which I believe was written in the era of al-Mutawakkil (232-247).
who were clustering around specific charismatic figures (Wāthiq's reign) and boastful of independent legal thinking (al-Mutawakkil's reign) could be seen as indicators of a firm shift from the spiritual form of Shi'ite Imamate\(^\text{956}\) to the political Imamate of Twelver Shi'ism. Had al-Jāḥiẓ noticed this threatening dimension earlier he would not have remained silent. In fact, it proved useful for him in his previous works to praise them as in "Maqālat al-Zaydiyya" or as in the coming work "Tašwib 'Ali". But now when they have started to assume a larger role than officially allowed, he can openly direct the attention of the authorities to that undesirable change. Ibn Khallikān's statement that al-Askari's father ('Ali al-Hādi) was summoned to al-Mutawakkil's court,\(^\text{957}\) should draw a link between the situation of the Alids up to Wāthiq's time and that under al-Mutawakkil, when the State policy was strictly anti-Shi'ite. Moreover, al-Jāḥiẓ's first outspoken reference to the series of Ḥusaynid Imams during Wāthiq's time need not necessarily mean full-hearted support for their cause but rather may be taken as a chronological marker to suggest that not until the time of al-Wāthiq - (or at least al-Mu'tasim and al-Ma'mūn, who were openly sympathetic to the Alid cause) - did the Proto-Shi'ite phenomenon finally express itself in a less flexible manner than that assumed in the period immediately preceding the accession of the Ṣabbāṣids. It may have taken Shi'ism until al-Wāthiq's time to make an observer like al-Jāḥiẓ be aware of 9/10 Ḥusaynid influential figures in a row, presided over by 'Ali al-Hādi (and not by his son as mentioned by al-Jāḥiẓ above),\(^\text{958}\) al-Jāḥiẓ therefore had served his patrons twice: in undermining their officially known enemies, the Umayyads, and in also pointing out to the authorities the emergence of a no less influential body that had crystallized around certain charismatic figures. Stretching the alleged view of the conspiratorial policy of al-Ma'mūn further, al-Jāḥiẓ may have been using such a flattering technique in order to expose the Shi'ite figures to the public and hence discount the growing rumours among the masses around them, in an effort to disclaim the superhuman dimension and thus decrease their danger to the State.\(^\text{959}\)

\(^\text{956}\) First acknowledged by Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. See F. Omar., \textit{op. cit.} (article, p.175), Kennedy, p. 211, and Watt, \textit{The political Attitudes of the Mu'tazila}, p.49.


\(^\text{958}\) This reference could have been inserted later into al-Jāḥiẓ's text by another copyist or by al-Jāḥiẓ himself at a later stage, and that problematic note could not have existed in the original document (This part of the text does not relate to the announced date of the text -i.e., rule of al-Wāthiq). al-Hādi's alleged Imamship is possible as he was fifteen years old when al-Jāḥiẓ wrote this work (Hādi born 214, died 254).

It is remarkable - judging from the above context - that al-Hasan al-Askari, who according to Imāmite and even Sunni sources, was not yet born by the date given by al-Jāhiç for this treatise (226/227). How is it then that al-Hasan al-Askari is presiding over this list of Husaynid Imams, and therefore recommended and acknowledged as fit for the post of caliph? The number ten remains significant as it obviously disregards al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. Abi Taubah and his descendants, and thus considers al-Askari as the tenth Imam and not as the eleventh according to Imāmite counting.

The treatise continues by allowing the 'Abd Shams spokesman to claim his Manāfi origin that links both Hāshim and 'Abd Shams to the same father, thus trying to halt the successful points the Hāshimites spokesman has scored, by stressing that there had been virtually no difference between the two brothers since the Jāhilīyya. But al-Jāhiç in his polemical style tries to convince the reader that despite the intermarriages between the two houses - namely the fact that the wives were from 'Abd Shams - it should not be taken as a criteria to match the superior husbands from the house of Hāshim. al-Jāhiç then rehabilitates the religious criteria to undermine the religious crimes undertaken by the Umayyads during the Prophet's mission, by stressing that the houses of 'Abd Shams and Nawfal (sons of 'Abd Manāf) had formed an alliance against the house of Hāshim because of hatred and envy.

Towards the final parts of the treatise al-Jāhiç somehow revives the balance among the Hāshimites maintained above (except for one case), by stressing the superior courageousness among the 'Abbāsid caliphs and the Alids, referring to al-Mu'tašim and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya (among other charismatic traits), and also by referring to the humorous tolerant natures of 'Ali b. Abi Ṭalib, al-Saffāh al-Mahdi b. al-Manṣūr, al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn. The treatise is brought to a close by haphazardly mentioning other important Hāshimite figures, though the 'Abbāsid ones remain far more numerous. In this context appears the unexpected reference to Ja'far b. Muḥammad (presumably Ja'far al-Ṣādiq b. Muḥammad al-Ḍair) that says:

961 Fadl, p.111.
962 Ibid., p.112.
963 Fadl, pp. 113-114.
He had always been mistaken for being the caliph when he was seen riding. But al-Jähiz’s pro-Abbāsidism finally stamps the treatise to erase any doubt surrounding his previous pro-Ṭālibite/pro-Alid utterances: although he lists Muḥammad b. Ibrāhim Ṭabāṭabā, the Ḥasanid revolutionist against al-Ma’mūn, among the religious Ḥashimite figures, al-Jähiz at once recalls the figure of ʿIsa b. Mūsā b. Muḥammad b. ʿAli b.ʿAbd Allāh b. al-ʿAbbās by bluntly boasting:

It is he who firmly established the mulk of al-Mansūr, and who brilliantly fought against the two Ḥasanids: the sons of ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥasan (b. Ḥasan b. Abī Ṭālib) i.e., Ibrāhim and Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zākiyya in 144/762 and 145/763 ... and amongst our men are ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Ibrāhim al-İmām ... etc.

This shows that al-Jähiz’s choice for the Ḥasanid Ibn Ṭabāṭabā was quite political as he boasts of the ʿAbbāsid figure who has killed the ancestors of the same Ḥasanid figure!

Problems of this treatise:

Below is a summation of the problematic issues of K. Faḍl Hāshim.

1. Its reference to the murder of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq during the Umayyad era, when he is supposed to have survived around fifteen more years (d. 148/765) into the ʿAbbāsid era.

2. Its reference to the candidacy of al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī in 226/227 (the proclaimed date of this treatise) when the Imāmīte sources agree that his birth was in 232 A.H.

3. Its unexpected acknowledgement of the Ḥusaynid Imams as suitable for the caliphate.

4. Its unexpected reference to an internal conflict within the ʿAbbāsid circles, as pointed earlier by the Umayyad spokesman. Here the question of the superiority of the right of the ʿUmūma over the right of the cousin is explicitly touched on:

How was it that Muḥammad b. ʿAli b.ʿAbd Allāh b. al-ʿAbbās (who had presumably received a wasiyya from Abū Ḥāshim), could claim the caliphate for himself without allowing his brothers to equally do so, being equal descendants of the uncle of the Prophet? How dare he restrict it

964 There is no time reference to Jaʿfar, who is thought by al-Jähiz to have been killed by the Umayyads.


966 Faḍl, p. 115.
to his offspring to the exclusion of his brothers, who were the uncles in this case, thus halting the principle of *Umâma*, which is now subject to his own whim. How come the cousins now have superior right to rule over their uncles? If the Imamate is deserved by *mirâth* (inheritance), those closer to al-`Abbâs should have priority. If it was by experience and age, the principle of *Umâma* should be equally applicable... 

5. Its concentration on presenting a balanced and eclectic approach to the house of Hâshim, the exclusive candidates for the Imamate, while failing at times to maintain that balance by omitting certain members. The list of the Ḥusaynîd Imams headed by al-`Askari is one illustration of al-Jâhiz’s eclecticism in contrast to his harmonising attempts. The eclecticism is obvious as the Ḥasanîd branch is completely disregarded here, and so is the Ja`farîd and ʿAbbâsid. But when the Ḥasanîds are used again, al-Jâhiz’s political motives cannot be hidden as we have seen him above boasting of the ʿAbbâsid ʿĪsâ b. Mûsâ, who is credited with killing the ancestor of the Ḥasanîd figure of Ibn Ṭabâṭabâ.

XI. al-Jâhiz’s ʿAbbâsidism:

One explanation for al-Jâhiz’s fondness for the Hâshîmite individuals mentioned in Kitâb Faḍl Hâshim - inspite of the fact that he was simultaneously boasting of members who were hostile to each other under the umbrella of Hâshim - is that al-Jâhiz’s concern was purely political, and it proved very useful for him to acknowledge as many Tâlibites (Ḥasanîds, Ḥusaynîds, Ja`farîds) as possible in the hope of scoring more points against the house of ʿAbd Shams! 

Scoring points for the Hâshîmites against the ʿAbd Shams - as we have seen - did not make, as may have been insinuated by al-Jâhiz, all members of the House of Hâshim equally charismatic. We have seen al-Jâhiz acknowledging an equal charisma just before the ʿAbbâsids had taken over, and we also saw al-Jâhiz proposing the Ḥusaynîd Imams. The significance of the treatise is therefore apparent in its reference to the still fluid, yet competitive, states of charismata enjoyed by the collective Banû Hâshim (Tâlibites and ʿAbbâsids), and by the Ḥasanîds, yet keeping the emphasis on the ʿAbbâsids. Inspite of these two landmarks, al-Jâhiz’s pro-ʿAbbâsidism was stronger and although faḍl could be argued to have been shared by

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967 Faḍl, p. 101
968 This trend appears again in al-Jâhiz’s _al-Bayân wa-al-Tabyin_, when the virtues of the house of Hâshim and of ʿAbd Shams and even the Khârijites are acknowledged against those of the the non-Arabs.
all Hāshimites, al-Jāḥīẓ was keen to imply the fact that Fadl should be traced back exclusively to al-ʿAbbas and not to Abū Ṭālib.969

The ʿAbbāsid blessing:

al-Jāḥīẓ, as a semi-official ʿAbbāsid propagandist, was keen to use every opportunity to undermine the political enemies of his patrons. In this way, al-Jāḥīẓ portrayed the ʿAbbāsids' coming as a blessing that has relieved the community even from catching plagues. Says al-Jāḥīẓ: “Hāshim (plural) boasts that no one had really found ninety years that were free from plagues until the ʿAbbāsids took over. Only then did God free them from the attacks of the spears of the jinn,970 [ the traditional name used by Arab poets to describe plagues.] It is not justifiable for a Muʿtazilite figure like al-Jāḥīẓ to appeal to such an irrational thinking.

al-Jāḥīẓ's statement need not necessarily imply a resort to superstition just because reference to plague was made in an allegorical manner. The significant point to be raised here is that, contrary to al-Jāḥīẓ's claim, quite a few epidemics are reported to have recurred - in Rai (134/751-752), Syria (135/752-753), Baṣra (158/775) and in Baghdād 167/783-4, 200/815-8166 and famine in Rai, Khurāsān and ʿIṣfahān in 201/816-817, and famine in ʿIrāq 207/822-823971 - at least during the ninety years following their reign. There remains no reason other than political partiality which could have made al-Jāḥīẓ say such a thing.

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969 See Kitāb Fadl Hāshim, pp. 115-116.
970 See Kitāb Fadl Hāshim, pp. 80-81.
2 Risāla fi al-Ḥakamayn wa Taṣwīb ʿAli fi fi`lhi:

1 - Setting: historical vacuum and the Muʿtazili version of events.

2 - Analysis of al-Jāḥīz's treatise 'Taṣwīb ʿAli'

   (i) preface on goals.

   (ii) placing al-Jāḥīz as a historiographer among the contemporaneous and influential historiographic traditionists:

   A. al-Jāḥīz and Umayyad historians:

      (i) Ṣāliḥ b. Kaysān (d. 758)

      (ii) al-Sha`bi (d. 725)

   B. al-Jāḥīz and ʿAbbāsid historians:

      (i) al-Jāḥīz and Ibn al-Kalbi (d. 819/204)


      (iii) al-Jāḥīz's opinion on (a) the source of the halt in fighting (b) ʿAli's right to the Imamate. (c) What was the issue at the Taḥkīm?; al-Jāḥīz's version of events:

         a- A critical appeal to the concept of taqiyya: a praise of ʿAli's Ilhām/tadbir.

         b- The basis for ʿAli's right to the Imamate and purpose of Taḥkīm.

         c- Muʿāwiya's purpose of Taḥkīm.

         d- ʿAli's purpose of Taḥkīm.

         e- Comments from the Muʿtazili point of view.

         f- Charismatic Portrait of the figure of ʿAli.

         g- The disputed issue of Taḥkīm.

         h- Historiographic comment.
(iv) al-Jähiz and Sayf. b. ʿUmar (d. 796).
(v) al-Jähiz and Abū Mikhnaf (d. 774): Mediational Efforts (of the Muʿtazilites and the ʿAbbāsids.)
(vi) al-Jähiz and al-Wāqidi (d. 823): Mediational Efforts.
(vii) al-Jähiz and al-Madāʾini (d. 840): Mediational Efforts.

3. Significance of the treatise.

(i) Political doctrines on Imamate.
(ii) Towards a Shiʿi-ʿAbbāsid Imam?
(iii) Shiʿite ingredients.
(iv) Classical ingredients.
(v) Imamate of ʿAlī and Zaydites. This treatise reflects mixed criteria on the Imamate (merit vs inheritance).

1. Setting:

Petersen suggests that the victorious ʿAbbāsids who freed themselves from recognizing the contribution of their fellow Hāshimites (the ʿAlids) to their success and denied them of any credit in that victory, needed at the same time to answer many questions and forward their own version of events that would tackle those questions. Following the schism with their cousins from the time of al-Mansūr,972 later caliphs were greatly concerned to raise theoretical debates on:

(i) Who should be held responsible for the coming of the Umayyad Caliphate?

(ii) Who was responsible for the murder of ʿUthmān?

These questions were obviously raised for purely political interests because the ʿAbbāsids found themselves confronted with a historical vacuum in the traditional account of events that could counteract those of the Umayyads and Shiʿites who not only were present politically at the seat of events but also had their

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972 Petersen, ʿAli and Muʿāwiya, p. 116.
own historical version that threatened the victorious 6Abbāsid rebellion against the
Umayyads, and that had recently led to a schism with the Shi‘ites:

While the 6Abbāsids had taken part in al-Hāshimiyya, there had hardly been any
acute need on this point, but under al-Mansūr the rupture of the alliance with the
Shi‘ites prevented the 6Abbāsids from employing the Shi‘i propaganda material,
and the ensuing void had to be filled in by other means. This is precisely the
process observable in the building up of a pro-6Abbāsid tradition, in the first
generations after the change of dynasty.973

One of the main concerns of the 6Abbāsid tradition974 was to 'justify the
coming of the 6Abbāsid Caliphate' by providing the basis that could legitimize their
entitlement to the Caliphate against the claims of Umayyads and 6Alids975 and
therefore demonstrate their established historical right to the caliphate.976

The 6Abbāsids, in order to account for their alleged absence from the political
scene, had to emphasize Ibn 6Abbās's role in the years following the fitma as 6Ali's
mentor, who was allegedly in real need of Ibn 6Abbās's advice. Although 6Ali is
treated with sympathy, the message is to stress the superiority of the 6Abbāsid vision
over that of the 6Alids, who not only lacked that farsighted sense which Ibn 6Abbās
displayed, but was unfortunately failed by his adherents.977 Thus the attempt was
made to also "depict b. 6Abbās as the caliph's mentor and to make the latter's own
adherents responsible for the Umayyad Caliphate."978

If violent disagreements had broken out among 6Ali's adherents . . . the pro-
6Abbāsid tendency could easily benefit and account for the Umayyad Caliphate, by
illustrating how it was principally that "discord within 6Ali's own ranks that paved
the way for the illegitimate caliphate."979 This pro-6Abbāsid tradition therefore pre-
supposes an 6Abbāsid superiority facing Umayyad usurpation, and 6Ali's
helplessness, increased by 6Ali's own adherents' discord. The 6Abbāsids' alleged
absence from the political scene could in this way be accounted for. These political

973 Petersen, Ibid., p. 71.
974 Petersen, 6Ali and Mu‘awiya, p. 116.
975 Ibid., p. 20.
976 See J. Lassner, The Shaping of 6Abbāsid Rule (visions of Mansūr, pp. 27, 72, 74 circulated
to legitimize the 6Abbāsid dynasty).
977 Petersen, Ibid., p. 71.
978 Ibid., p. 77 and article p. 84. This of course, aimed also at neutralization of the 6Alid claims
to the caliphate, and invalidating any 6Alid claim to 6Ali's right to rule. On this
reconstruction of the image of al. 6Abbās and its implications, see M. Sharon, Black Banners,
pp. 46, 92-99.
979 Ibid.
themes, Petersen adds, were under construction during the ʿAbbāsid era, first between 756-800 drawing from such sources as Abū Mikhnaf\(^980\) (d. 774). The rupture of the ʿAbbāsids with radical Shiʿism that had necessitated prompt building up of an official re-expounding of the ḥīna, could not have been more cleverly undertaken by agents other than the Muʿtazilites, whose religio-political entry was first made under al-Maʾmūn, whereby they played a leading part in framing and propagating the ʿAbbāsid interpretation of ḥīna,\(^981\) so now a Muʿtazilite tradition\(^982\) was framed before al-Maʾmūn. The new thing now is that Muʿtazilī historians' and men of letters' version of events was not a replica of Abū Mikhnaf's, (d. 774) but as Petersen's survey of the ʿAlī- Muʿāwiyah conflict shows, was an amalgamation of elements (that not only included Abū Mikhnaf, but also borrowed from other members of the same ʿIrāqī school such as al-Shaʿbī (104/725), ʿAwāna b. ʿAbd al-Ḥakam al-Kalbi (d.751), and Muḥammad b. al-Sāʿib al-Kalbi (d/763), in addition to the representatives of the Syro-Medinese School such as ʿAlī b. Kaysān (d. 758) and al-Zuhri (124/742). Petersen believes that prior to Abū Mikhnaf's historical efforts, there had already been formed by the end of the Umayyad era the Syro-Medinese and Iraqi historical schools of thought, that provided later historians with ample elements to choose from in defending their arguments.\(^983\)

In the conflict of historical visions and political interests among the ʿAbbāsids, the Ḥanbalītes, and the Shiʿītes, the Muʿtazilite school was "instrumental in bringing the ʿAbbāsid Caliphate's endeavour to identify itself with and control Islam's religious and political institutions into the foreground."\(^984\) This ʿAbbāsid scheme started not with al-Maʾmūn but since the rupture with Shiʿism occurred. Within the period to which this research is confined, we may suggest this table as a guide to the Traditionists and Historians that participated or were used in the struggle for or against Shiʿism and Ḥanbalīsm:

\(^{980}\) Petersen, ʿAlī and Muʿāwiyah, pp. 120-121.
\(^{981}\) Ibid.
\(^{982}\) Ibid., p. 121.
\(^{983}\) Ibid., pp. 50, 25, 174 and 120-121. The two schools were almost incompatible and not identical. See pp. 34-35.
\(^{984}\) Ibid., p. 121
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditionists &amp; Historians:</th>
<th>Caliphate of:</th>
<th>Official Attitude to  (^c)Alids:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Abū Bakr -al Hudhali</td>
<td>- al-Mansūr (d. 775)</td>
<td>- strife with Shi'ism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sayf b. (^c)Umar (d. 796)</td>
<td>- al-Mahdī (Barmakids) (d. 785)</td>
<td>- Some attempts of reconciliation with (^c)Alids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī (d. 204/819)</td>
<td>- al-Ma'mūn (d. 833).</td>
<td>(anti-Umayyad)(^985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Shi'ī scholars:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Abū Mikhnaf (d. 774)</td>
<td>- al-Ma'mūn.</td>
<td>anti-(^c)Alid.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Naṣr b. Muzāhim (d. 828)</td>
<td>- Hārūn al-Rashid (d. 809), al-Amin, al-Ma'mūn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditionists, Historians:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- al-Wāqidī, (qāḍī of Ma'mūn(^986) d. 823)</td>
<td>- al-Ma'mūn (d. 833)</td>
<td>reconciling the orthodox and moderate Shi'ite standpoints with Mu'tazilism with a denunciation of the Rāfi'da</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- al-Madā'īnī (d. 840)</td>
<td>- al-Mu'taṣīn (d. 842)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- al-Jāhiz (d. 869)</td>
<td>- al-Wāthiq (d. 847)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- al-Balādhuri (d. 892)</td>
<td>al-Mutawakkil (d. 861)</td>
<td>period of strife with (^c)Alids(^988)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^985\) Ibid., p. 76.
\(^986\) See Petersen, Ibid., p. 83.
\(^988\) For more details see Ibid., pp. 178 and ff.
As far as these historical trends mentioned above are concerned, we intend in analysing Tašwib ʿAli, to prove that al-Jāḥīz, despite his deceiving notice to the addressee (Ibn Ḥassān) that, as a typical Muʿtazili, al-Jāḥīz was trying to pose as an objective mediators, avoiding in his description of Kitāb al-Qādīyya (the alleged book concerning the real issue of dispute) and the 'Cult of Muʿāwiya' dependence upon famous historians like the Umayyad al-Shaʿbī and al-Zuhri, or the disreputable ones like the three Kalbis, besides Abū-Mikhnaf and al-Madā'īnī. In fact, we are going to show undeniable resemblances and typical borrowing from the whole historical package of traditions that al-Jāḥīz claimed to have avoided in his attacks on K. al-Qādīyya and the Umayyad arguments and throughout his discussion of the issue of Taḥkim.

Such a Muʿtazili version of events was essential to the ʿAbbāsids in their effort to define on which shoulder of the Hāshimite family, the ʿAbbāsid or the ʿAlid, rests the full responsibility for the Umayyad caliphate, and to push that argument further by demonstrating their illegality by adopting a view of the fitna that could directly focus on:

(1) the worldliness of Muʿāwiya's character, so that "if Muʿāwiya's seeking for vengeance could be proved to be merely a pretext, the legitimacy of his assumption of power would also become questionable."991

(2) the relation between ʿAli and his adherents, so that:

... If ʿAlī's failure could be proved to be due to defection in critical situations on the part of his own adherents, Shiʿism would at the same time have forfeited its right to act on behalf of the Prophet's family. Any such exposition would furthermore serve to justify the fact that it was the ʿAbbāsids who reaped the fruits: they would be seen as loyal to ʿAlī and as taking a leading part in the fight against the unlawful caliphate.992

So the ʿAbbāsid era was witnessing a building up of a pro-ʿAbbāsid tradition, thanks now - as far as our thesis is concerned - to historians like al-Wāqīḍī, al-Madā'īnī and to men of letters such as our author who as we shall see, was heavily

989 al-Jāḥīz, 'Tašwīb', parag 73 and 95.
990 Ibid., parag 55.
991 Petersen, p. 49 and this is a weak point for who has the means to judge the true intentions of Muʿāwiya's claim as wali of ʿUthmān?
992 Petersen, p. 71. (Compare this to paragraph 55 of 'Tašwīb ʿAlī.')
borrowing from them. We should keep in mind Petersen's conclusion on the value of historical writing in the ʿAbbāsid period concerning the ʿAli-Muʿāwiya conflict, and its value in view of the difficulties inherent in this writing. According to him:

The historical writing in ʿAbbāsid days is of interest primarily as a monument to the age and the society in which it came into existence. The late tradition is still of value as a source in so far as it reflects Islam's religious and political development; as a source of information on the civil war after ʿUthmān's death it is of no value at all, but it ranks high as regards elucidation of the propaganda surrounding the later formation of parties. This does not however, mean that the earliest and primary tradition is free of contradictions or misrepresentations... the earliest narrators, too worked eclectically and tendentiously.”

As an outlet to this eclecticism, and in spite of the historical observation that states "none of the Islamic historians is explicit in stating his party political standpoint or in formulating his general conception," Petersen suggests that; "the likes and dislikes as well as his (i.e., the historian's) programme and appraisal must always be deduced from the context or from his composition." In other words, as Petersen rightly puts it, such a condition makes "heavy demands on the deductive faculty of reader or audience", without claiming to reach "a completely and absolutely certain reconstruction of the historical development."

2. Analysis of Treatise:

1 - al-Jāḥiẓ's eclecticism and/or opportunism in Taṣwīb ʿAli

Apparently, al-Jāḥiẓ's main goal in this epistle is to show that ʿAli b. ʿAbi Ṭālib - contrary to all Khārīji views, and despite the events following and accompanying the arbitration (Taḥkīm) - was always on the right course of action, and that his Imamate should not have been questioned and unjustly seized by Muʿāwiya.

However, al-Jāḥiẓ's real goal, in my opinion, was not just to echo the ʿAbbāsid-ʿAlid proximity as exhibited by al-Ma'mūn's act of designating an ʿAlid, but to provide enough arguments that could defend the ʿAbbāsid interests and demonstrate the goals of the ʿAbbāsid court referred to above in the pro-ʿAbbāsid Muʿtazili version of events covering the fitna. These goals are perfectly met here and

993 Ibid., p. 187.
994 Ibid., p. 184.
995 Ibid., pp. 184-187.
996 al-Jāḥiẓ, Taṣwīb, parag. 4.
al-Jāḥīz spares no method to serve the ʿAbbāsid political cause. The amazing thing is that the Jāḥīzian goal is styled in a highly hypothetical fashion and is wrapped in immense linguistic and intellectual gymnastics that could be seen as potentially misleading the reader as to the real direction and aim, had one not been familiar with other versions of that historical period. As Petersen suggests, despite the fragmentary and one-sided character of a transmission, "a knowledge of the historical material through all its phases and all its modifications affords us possibilities of a critical and historical evaluation of the mechanism and technique of the shaping of tradition behind and independent of, the principles laid down by its authors."997 al-Jāḥīz's self-claimed objectivity998 is highly questionable as he has fallen victim to the general trend that dictated that the victorious ʿAbbāsids should describe the ʿAlids and Umayyads in a dubious way.

In the following section we attempt to prove al-Jāḥīz's heresiographical eclecticism in view of the similarity in views held by al-Jāḥīz and previous historians, as reflected in his treatise "Taṣwīb ʿAlī".

A. Umayyad Historians

(1) al-Jāḥīz and Šālīḥ b. Kaysān (d. 758)

(l) al-Jāḥīz is trying hard to venerate ʿAlī, and stress his wisdom in all his actions, and accept his Imamate as unquestionable; the new thing here is that al-Jāḥīz presents himself as having understood ʿAlī's character and deeds in a manner not even reached by contemporary ʿAlid/Shīʿite adherents, or by his radical Khārīji opponents.999 Underlying this, however, al-Jāḥīz does not mind quoting an Umayyad view of ʿAlī that he intends to refute - which could threaten all of the above - as ʿAlī is reported to have imposed himself as Imam without resorting to counselling (Shūrā) thus judging him in the alleged words of Muʿāwiyah1000 and his cult as "a usurper and innovator" simply because he had discarded the surviving members of the Shūrā set by Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb,1001 and imposed himself as Imam without their consent.

997 Petersen, Ibid., p. 185.
998 See parag. 73 of Taṣwīb.
999 Taṣwīb, parag. 88.
1000 See Ibid., parag. 110-112.
1001 Ibid., parag. 112.
Such a view of 'Ali is observed by Petersen to have been first expressed by the Umayyad Syrio-Medinese historian Şâlih b. Kaysân, who not only portrayed 'Ali as imposing himself on the caliphate but also showed that the surviving and potential members of the Shūrā -Sa'd b. Abî Waqqâs, 'Alî, al-Zubayr- and foremost Mu'awiya, had not only denied 'Ali his longing for the Imāma but shown themselves to be more competent. 1002

(ii) As for 'Ali's responsibility for the blood of Uthmān, al-Jâhiḍ, although he categorically refutes the view that 'Ali had no responsibility whatsoever, 1003 states that 'Ali's possible share in it was alleged to have been asserted by both 'Ali's own group (Shi'ite, Khârijites) and 'Ali's opponents (Mu'awiya). In other words, al-Jâhiḍ, while classifying attitudes towards the murder of Uthmān, acknowledges the existence of a belief maintained by "the Shi'a wa al-Khawārij" that "'Ali's own killing of Uthmān was one of his greatest religious deeds that made God pleased with him." 1004 al-Jâhiḍ's opinion here is that 'Ali - even if he were indeed the murderer 1005 - was acting properly in not disclosing the identity of the real murderers. His silence was therefore ideal, whether he was responsible, or those among his group. al-Jâhiḍ tries his best to build on this mystery his own paradoxical and esoteric vision of 'Ali as an ideal Imam whose idealism rests sometimes on being silent, and on his apparent acceptance of Tahkim, and equally of the arbitrators. Singing the praise of 'Ali lies in crediting him for his good secretive religious intentions, for his far-fetched tadbir that could give him immunity from putting his merit under supervision - after Uthmān's death - by Ĥalîha, Zubayr, Sa'd and yet, conversely, could allow the same technique of Shūrā to be exclusively exercised with Mu'awiya! 1006

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1002 al-Jâhiḍ, Taşwîb', parag 108-112. Compare to Petersen, ('Ali and Mu'awiya) pp. 38 and 40. This is against the 'Iraqi Kūfic report that 'Ali had desired a Shūrā. Ibid., p. 38. al-Jâhiḍ refutes the possibility, on the other hand, that although 'Ali got office legally, the manner of succession was not free from pressure (parag. 126 - "his Imāma was achieved by ljmā' on his excellence, and "that we not yet know of any pressures that had pushed him to accept it." This shows that al-Jâhiḍ does not favour the view that the Sabā'iyya or murderers of Uthmān imposed the Imamate on 'Ali by force, see Introductory Survey.

1004 'Taşwîb', parag. 44.
1005 Ibid., parag 45-46.
1006 Ibid., parag. 129. This point touches on the kind of political authority that is supposed to be enjoyed by the guided caliph, who should not always resort to Shūrā, if he has alternative knowledge of the adequate measures that should be undertaken.
As for the views of the group of Mu`awiya, `Ali's share in the blood of `Uthmān is highlighted by al-Jāhiz as he acknowledges the existence of those murderers in the group of `Ali himself. But who can ever doubt - al-Jāhiz says - that `Ali's group did not contain the killers? Furthermore, Mu`awiya's own accusation of `Ali and his group is reported by al-Jāhiz, who tries to refute this claim, since otherwise it could easily pave the way for Mu`awiya's claim to the Caliphate, as `Ali is shown to have lacked the criteria for Imamate in his tolerance of the real killers among his group and if he is shown to have refused to forward them to trial as Mu`awiya had desired, then Mu`awiya's claim would overpower that of `Ali.

Petersen says:

Both versions (the Umayyadan-Syrian and Umayyadan-`Iraqi versions) agree that (Mu`awiya's) opposition to `Ali was due to doubts about the justification of the caliph's murder and `Ali's possible share in it. The Syrian-Medinese version (that of Śāliḥ b. Kaysān) adds that Mu`awiya desired a Shūrah set up for the purpose of electing an un-tarnished caliph and thus emphatically accentuates his doubts whether `Ali's attitude to the murder would permit him to fill the caliphate.

So al-Jāhiz has adopted both Umayyad versions, i.e., the Syrian and the `Iraqi, on Mu`awiya's incentives and the issue of `Ali's responsibility, in order to refute them and show that Mu`awiya's opposition to `Ali and hence his claim to Imamate were sheer pretence.

(2) al-Jāhiz and al-Sha`bi (d.725):

As regards `Ali's attitude to the arbitration and bringing a halt to the battle, al-Jāhiz takes the view that `Ali was forced to that position. In so doing, he is adopting the Kufic-Umayyad version narrated by al-Sha`bī (d. 725) who said that `Ali had to surrender to the pressures of the majority among his group and thus accepted the halt and arbitration. This is against the Syrian Umayyad view of al-Zuhri that once the Qur`ān was raised, it was `Ali who accepted the Shūlah at once al-Jāhiz is also keen here to stretch the esoteric and sometimes the far fetched view

1007 Parag 132. Here he is moving closer to the view maintained by the Abbāsid Sayf. b. Umar (d. 796) on the role of the Saba`yya, though without elaborating this point any further.
1008 Parag. 112.
1009 Petersen, p. 38.
1010 See Tašwīb', parag. 19, 89, 91.
1011 Ibid., parag. 55 and several others.
1012 See Petersen, pp. 39, 42.
1013 Ibid., p. 41.
of `Ali and his character as he accepts the Kūfān Umayyad view that says although the two parties consented to abide by the Book and Sunna, `Ali, however, still had the right to oppose the results if they turned out to be illegal i.e., passed in an unlawful way against him.1014

al-Jāḥīz’s picture of `Ali accepting the ṣulḥ and the choice of the arbitrators echoes the Kūfān image of `Ali, especially when al-Jāḥīz repeatedly emphasizes the wisdom underlying `Ali’s secretive manoeuvres and technique of taqiyya.1015 Finally, whereas the negotiations of Siffin are said to have broken down due to the incompetence of Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī as the Umayyad Syrian report says, without any reference to trickery of any sort,1016 the Umayyad Irāqī report says it was due to the treachery of `Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ. al-Jāḥīz’s amalgamation here lies in making both arbitrators responsible for the failure of arbitration. His previous mixing of Umayyad reports lay in the simultaneous acknowledgement of the innocence and guilt of `Ali in `Uthmān’s blood.

1014 Ibid., p. 42.
1015 See Taṣwīb’, parag 60–63,85,88.
1016 Petersen, pp. 41 The whole concept of `Amr’s deceit could have been a concoction, see Ibid., p. 43.
B. al-Jāḥīz and ʿAbbāsid historians:

(i) al-Jāḥīz and Ibn al Kalbī (d. 204/819)

In this work al-Jāḥīz makes two references to Ibn ʿAbbās. This comes in the context of Ibn ʿAbbās forwarding his advice to ʿAli b. Abī Taʿlīb not to remove Muʿāwiyah from being governor of Syria, before ʿAli could firmly establish his authority. This trend, Petersen says, was maintained by Muḥammad b. al-Sāʿib's son, Hishām Ibn al-Kalbī, for a double purpose i.e., to "justify the ʿAbbāsids for their own sake; no longer are they merely ʿAli's loyal supporters, but (also) active and independent participants in the fight against the Syrians." 1018

The advice is significant for the ʿAbbāsid historians who could use it in defining a charismatic role to be played by the ʿAbbāsids in relation to the ʿAlids and Umayyads from the way "Ibn ʿAbbās is depicted as the caliph's mentor, who sees the future as through a thin veil." 1019 Furthermore, al-Jāḥīz is observed to have made use of Ibn al Kalbī's material on ʿAli's piety, 1020 (with the intention of having it eclipsed by Ibn ʿAbbās's vision of events). 1021 So we have shown - in Petersen's view - how Ibn al-Kalbī "played a leading part in framing the ʿAbbāsid interpretations of the fitna" and how that was echoed in the work of his contemporary traditionist, al-Jāḥīz, though our author tends to discredit him1022 in his works.

One may conclude that the cornerstone of the ʿAbbāsid legitimacy is laid now, as Ibn ʿAbbās's superiority vis-à-vis ʿAli is established and hence not only the ʿAbbāsid absence from the political scene is accounted for but the very coming of the ʿAbbāsids as deliverers of the Umma from the usurpation1023 of the Umayyad rule which is described by al-Jāḥīz in each and every way so as to make them devoid of religion; 1024 so the ʿAbbāsids have come as a salvation and their presence as such is therefore very necessary in view of ʿAlid helplessness and Umayyad worldliness.

1017 Ibid., parag. 86, 90.
1018 Petersen, p. 76.
1019 Ibid., pp. 75-77.
1021 Petersen, pp. 77 and 160.
1023 al-Jāḥīz, Taʾṣīb', parag. 61, 74. Muʿāwiyah's Sira is described as like those of Mulūk al-ghalaba.
1024 Ibid., parag., 67.
The above points perfectly echo the situation al-Jähiz was living in, in the sense that the figure of 'Ali could be praised but is not venerated as highly as the extreme Shi'ites would demand, in a reconciliatory attempt between the 'Abbasids and the moderate 'Alids, but it is one that can hardly give, on behalf of that 'Abbasid-'Alid proximity, any measurable political rights to the latter. 'Ali is in effect raised just to be eclipsed by Ibn 'Abbas, and the arguments of al-Jähiz in his favour should not be taken at their face value. Singing the praise of 'Ali, therefore, echoes the period of 'Abbasid pro-'Alid proximity, or as Petersen described it, the rulers' attempt to reconcile the orthodox and moderate Shi'ite standpoints with Mu'tazilism as a bridge between them and the authorities:

Instead of the bitter attack on Shi'ism that had characterised the first generation after 750, the rulers now preferred to try to reconcile the orthodox and moderately Shi'ite standpoints with Mu'tazilism as the common denominator, though still without in any way relinquishing their denunciation of ar-Rafida.  

al-Jähiz's above approach should be related to the reason that made the proposals of the Rafaḍa incompatible with 'Abbasid orthodoxy for "while the 'Abbasids in their own interest argued for the orthodox continuity as framed by the earliest caliphs, Shi'ism defended continuation of the divine guidance in the Imam line."  

al-Jähiz devotes some passages in Tašwib to implying the incompatibility of 'Ali's sincere religious position and his actions. One is surprised to discover that although the treatise aims to defend and praise 'Ali, it indirectly suggests al-Jähiz's hidden attachment to someone who is not the announced object of defence and praise. The political al-Jähiz is reflected clearly in such a play with the "pious - but unsuccessful 'Ali" in the interest of the more 'clever 'Abbasids!' In fact, 'Ali's religious firmness or ruthless rigidness and non-compromising attitude is reflected by al-Jähiz in the same passages in which Ibn 'Abbas's advice is quoted i.e., in the ruthless responses uttered by 'Ali himself therein. The advice of Ibn 'Abbas is cleverly cited: that is, when 'Ali refused to listen to Ibn 'Abbas and decided to depose Mu'awiya saying: "None but the sword is for him until righteousness/my right rules him," Ibn 'Abbas responded: "and nothing but the sword you will earn from him until falsehood overwhelms and beats you!"  

1025 i.e., period of 'Abbasid-'Alid proximity.  
1026 Petersen, Ibid., p.179.  
1027 Ibid., pp. 178-179.  
1028 Tašwib, parag. 90.
manifested in his response to Ibn ćAbbâs's first advice: "Keep Mućâwiya in office until your authority is firmly established, then you may remove him"; "I would never depend on those who misguide and mislead others,"1029 ćAli responded.

Petersen's observation on the influence of Ibn al-Kalbi's role and in the pro-
ćAbbâsid tradition (which al-Jâhîz received happily) may also be quoted here:

In the pro-ćAbbâsid tradition, . . . the Caliph's integrity (i.e., ćAli's) assumed indirectly the character of unreflective integrity or doctrinaire rigidity. The irrationality of ćAli's persisting in his religious norme in the face of illegal adversaries is pointed out already by al-Kalbi and repeated by subsequent historians, but refuted by Shić scholars. That this was a main point in the pro-ćAbbâsid tradition is attested to by the fact that it makes b. ćAbbâs act as the farsighted and sober deus ex machina in situations where ćAli had behaved unwisely, unrealistically or too honestly. "Ibn ćAbbâs... sees the future as through a thin veil" is Ibn al-Kalbi's comment post festum to his warnings against the Syrians' aims at the arbitration. . . .1030

al-Jâhîz's depiction of ćAli's religious rigidity, or superior honesty is also revealed in another passage wherein ćAli and Mućâwiya are compared and contrasted from this very angle: For many Arab leaders (be they loyal Shić leaders or clan leaders within ćAli's group),1031 the non-religious policy of Mućâwiya was more attractive than the (religious policy) of ćAli, even - says al-Jâhîz - if he had correctly personified the "true Imamate", i.e., "one that was based on justice, reward and punishment".1032 al-Jâhîz is referring in this passage to the fiscal measures taken by ćAli, which are described as being "erroneously fatal".1033 If they were palatable to the Shić leaders within his group, they were not tolerated by the clan leaders whose attitude now "wavered between indifference and treachery and which became more pronounced as ćAli's position vis-a-vis Mućâwiya weakened."1034

1029 Ibid., parag. 86, 90.
1030 Petersen, p. 119.
1031 This distinction is based on M. Hind's article "Küfan Political Alignments and Their Background In The Midseventh Century", International Journal of Middle East Studies, 2 (1971) p. 363.
1032 Taćwib', parag. 28.
1033 Ibid., parag. 64-65.
1034 M. Hinds, Ibid. This is shared by al-Madâ'ini as well.
al-Minqari's version of events: (and al-Jähiz's eclecticism)

'Ali as proposer of the halt and its relation to the Shi'ite concept of Ilhām:

How would things be explained if the source of the halt was 'Ali himself - and not his group? (who are proposed by al-Jähiz to bear the bigger responsibility). This view is forwarded by Petersen and is ascribed to both Ibn Ḥanbal and the Abūsūdī Shīite Kūfī historian Naṣr b. Muzāhim al-Minqari (d.828). This historian was concerned in "exalting 'Ali above the fitna" implying that as a member of the Prophet's family, he had received his divine knowledge that made him propose the halt. The "Hudaybiyya" treaty was the model for 'Ali's renunciation of his title of caliph, and "the fact that the Kūfans subsequently support the arbitration scheme at Ṣiffin does not mean that they failed him, but that they acted in conformity with the Prophet's example..."

al-Jähiz could not have accepted al-Minqari's version as it would - al-Jähiz wants us to assume - throw the blame on 'Ali's side and raise genuine Khārijite doubts on his legal status as Imam: why should he have persuaded his group to stop the victory over the rebellious Syrian subjects if his group was actually implementing the Imam's orders to fight ahl al-Baghy? In this way we see al-Jähiz's eclectic approach (as he rejected al-Minqari's premise that 'Ali was the initiator of the halt) but nevertheless adopted the Shi'ite notion of 'Ali's ilhām, while implicitly intending at the same time behind this praise, to criticize it and show its weakness and failure and its inferiority to Ibn Ābbās's thought. But why is Ibn Ābbās absent from any further political advice? Why is the focus centered on 'Ali, the Shi'ites and Mu'tawwiyas? If Ibn Ābbās was always superior to 'Ali, what prevented him from rescuing 'Ali? was his advice so fatally visioned and not open to any improvements?

1035 See Petersen, p.119.
1036 Ibid.
1037 Ibid.
1038 Petersen, pp. 119-120.
1039 Ibid. Those who failed 'Ali (According to Abu Mikhnaf) may have been the clan leaders and not the loyalists who backed him. See Hinds above.
Yes, 'Ali neither wanted to halt the battle at its victorious stage, nor did he initiate it, says al-Jähiz. Against Minqari's and Ibn Ḥanbal's views, al-Jähiz says that 'Ali who did not start the halt should have been credited in facing the torturing consequences of that undesired halt; namely the arbitration (taḥkīm). The subtle difference between al-Jähiz and al-Minqari is in the timing of the technique of taqiyya although it is believed by both to have been exercised by 'Ali; al-Minqari presupposes that it had accompanied 'Ali as of the moment he initiated the halt, whereas al-Jähiz says that it was only practised after 'Ali had been forced by his camp to accept the halt, and after discovering the deep schism that had erupted among his followers. One may assume while reading this treatise that al-Jähiz's intentions behind composing it may appear similar to Minqari's (Shiite) purpose of venerating 'Ali, but one should, however, note the subtle differences between them. Although al-Jähiz has almost been continuously venerating 'Ali's tadbir, and praising his correct course of action, his practises and motives, nevertheless, do not exactly lift him to the Shiite doctrine of viewing the Imam as infallible, as al-Minqari would have wished. al-Jähiz's high esteem for 'Ali is undeniably traced throughout the treatise, but the political pressures have won over his religious-orientated arguments and the superior ʿAbbāsid links take priority over his pro-ʿAlidism, such that he "depicts ʿAli as Ibn ʿAbbās's protegé" and having failed to listen to Ibn ʿAbbās's advice, ʿAli's plans unfortunately crumble!"
(iii) al-Jāḥiz’s version:

(a) A critical appeal to the concept of taqiyya: (a praise of ʿAlī’s tadbir/Ilhām, to be denounced later)

Firstly, al-Jāḥiz starts by adopting the Shiʿite stand of Abū Mikhnaf that ʿAlī was forced by his group to the Sulḥ with the Syrians.1042 From here he builds a far fetched explanation of the actions of ʿAlī, vis-à-vis that premise. ʿAlī is freed from the bigger proportion of blame in the halt that dethroned him,1043 as it is ascribed to his group. But ʿAlī is not totally freed, and a political balance is made to praise ʿAlī’s tadbir/Ilhām which is nevertheless outweighed and lacks the farsightedness of Ibn ʿAbbās that had previously warned him against Muʿāwiya before the battle of Siffin started. By developing the premise of ʿAlī being forced to the Sulḥ - for he did not at all want to bring a halt to his victorious army - al-Jāḥiz is trying to forward a highly hypothetical understanding of ʿAlī’s course of action. ʿAlī is depicted as enjoying superior planning faculties and calculative intentions, but one soon gets the message that however wise and honest ʿAlī was, he had, however, to face the consequences of not listening to Ibn ʿAbbās’s advice and thus meet the more influential challenges that eventually wrecked his plans altogether, driving him from that moment to appear as ambiguous and obscure as possible in order to conceal the weaknesses and schisms in his group from Muʿāwiya’s group. The momentarily acceptance of the halt was shocking to him, for it occurred when the adversaries were about to surrender. The shock of the halt was less bitter when it suddenly disclosed to him the benefits of accepting it solely to cure the defects in his own group before asking them to resume victory over the Syrians. He was very concerned to re-establish unity among his followers and was very eager to settle the growing differences, weaknesses and short sightedness and desire to rest in his camp.1044 That was the sole reason underlying his unwanted resort to and apparent acceptance of the

1042 The Ḥanbalītes hold an opposite view in which ʿAlī was the one who convinced his group to stop the fight against the Syrians. This is even held by some Kūfī Śīʿites (see Petersen, ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya, p.119). It is obvious why al-Jāḥiz avoided this report as it may undermine ʿAlī and free his group from the heavy responsibilities that he wants to stress in ʿTaṣwīb‘. See Parag. 55; (Initially, ʿAlī was to be blamed as having discarded Ibn ʿAbbās’s advice, but now that the battle has ensued, the blame is shifted intensively towards ʿAlī’s group, who initiated the halt and participated in ʿAlī’s failure). Equally to blame is Muʿāwiya’s group.
1043 See parag. 33 of ʿTaṣwīb‘ where al-Naẓām’s term “Khuliʿa” is employed.
1044 Ibid., parag. 60.
arbitration and the negative effects of the negotiations that were brought about by his
group's insistence to stop the fight despite his urging them not to. Had his group
obeyed his orders, no halt or negotiations would have been necessary. The resort to
tahkim - al-Jähiz emphasises - appeared to be one compulsory tactic that `Ali faced.
`Ali hoped to make use of the time and prepare his group for a more successful round
of fighting. All `Ali's statements should not therefore be judged literally as he had
intended to deceive the other camp by that method.1045

al-Jähiz makes `Ali look like the real hidden plotter1046 or wise planner facing
the alleged treachery and open worldliness of Mu`awiya and his agent Amr b. al-
As. `Ali's greatness, al-Jähiz says, was in the clever diplomatic way he appeared to
have consented to stop the fight1047 and even to the terms of negotiations1048
following that halt, since he was following a plan based on Ra'y that would at one
instant allow him to categorically and openly refuse to allow judgement as to who
was better for the Imamate and make Shūrā with Ṭalḥa and Zubayr. It is this very
faculty of `Ali that dictates now that he should openly accept Shūrā with Mu`awiyya
despite all considerations.1049

The height of al-Jähiz's political veneration of `Ali appears in several
statements that marvel at `Alī's administration (tadbir1050): "was anything better than
`Ali's course of action?"1051 Another statement says that `Ali could be placed in
merit before Abū Bakr and Umar,1052 simply because of the severe testing (Mihna)
he was subjected to, since nobody but `Ali was as much tried as him.1053

Having reached the peak of his praise of `Ali, al-Jähiz goes on to implement
the theme of his treatise. If the superior faculties of `Ali's ra'y (or Ilhām as Shi`ites

1045 See parag. 40,43,62,63,79,85,99 of Taşwib'.
1046 Ibid., 62, 63, 85, 99.
1047 Because of discovering a shism in his own group.
1048 i.e., Kitāb al-Qadiyya, which made `Ali provisionally accept - in imitation of the Hudaybiyya
pact of the Prophet - not to use his title of Amir al-Mu'minin or caliph.
1049 See Parag. 129 of Taşwib'.
1050 Ibid., parag. 46, 69, 88, 99.
1051 Ibid.
1052 Taşwib', Parag. 46.
1053 Here al-Jähiz is reflecting the Mu`tazili Baghdādi view of `Ali. Although this appealed to al-
Ma'mūn's decree in 212 A.H. that saw `Ali as best after the Prophet (see parag. 46,69), al-
Jähiz had phrased this in a way that was safe. He just narrated it on behalf of those who
highly venerated him (see Taşwib', parag. 46). This has already been noticed in Kal-
Uthmāniyya.
view it) have unfortunately met such a political failure, the next hidden aim of al-Jāḥīz would be to refute any remaining basis for the ʿAlids' right to the caliphate that they could raise over their Hāshimite cousins, but this argument has now to be based on the authoritative sources of Kitāb and Sunna, and not on ʿAli's character.

(b) The Basis for ʿAli's right to the Imamate, and Purpose of Taḥkīm

Although al-Jāḥīz may have really had sincere esteem for the person of ʿAli, just as many Muʿtazilites had more affection for him than for ʿUthmān, his political attachments were stronger than his religious ones; that is why we find that ʿAli was approached in the Jāḥīzian manner above without giving his descendants any religio-political grounds for claiming any substantial political rights. Praising ʿAli was one thing but the ʿAbbāsid interests - despite their proximity to the ʿAlids - dictated that such a praise should be very cautious so as not to leave anything on which the Shiʿites could build any political right.

As to ʿAli's right to the Imamate, al-Jāḥīz was consistently approaching ʿAli in high terms: the Imam, one who embodied the true Imamate, the Imam's "tadbīr" (wise administration), who despised Muʿāwiya for having questioned that right, even despising anyone who would question the right of all legal caliphs in the way "God had entrusted them with correct tadbīr and knowledge of obscure matters."

Despite all of the above, al-Jāḥīz surprises the reader in the way he leaves the opposing candidates at Siffin (i.e., Muʿāwiya and ʿAli) to be strictly devoid of any contextual divine basis making reference for the post of caliph! This was reached by expounding Muʿāwiya's claim to the Imamate (if any) against ʿAli, as being against the ruling of the Qurʿān and the Sunna. al-Jāḥīz doubts the authenticity of the contents of the Sulḥ agreement as narrated by al-Zuhri as it probably challenges

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1054 That led him to being overthrown thanks to the alleged treachery of Muʿāwiya. See parag 33 al-Jāḥīz even gives himself the liberty of explaining ʿAli's defeat as due to an error made by ʿAli himself. (See parag. 64.), due to ʿAli's religious rigidity and non-compromising nature and strict fiscal policy (a direct borrowing or influence from people like Ibn al-Kalbi).
1055 See 'Taṣwīb', parag. 28.
1056 Ibid. parag. 89.
1057 Whether the post had been maintained (by ʿAli) or allegedly claimed (by Muʿāwiya).
1058 See our reference to the Qur'ānic Sulḥan and access to authority that Muʿāwiya is believed to have claimed in his capacity as a wali of the martyred caliph, in the Introductory Survey.
1059 'Taṣwīb', parag. 78.
his expectation or image of 'Ali as a competent Imam, so why should he then put his competency subject to debate? But if the Qur'an and the Sunna had been put as criteria at Šiffin,\(^{1060}\) and if the Imamate of 'Ali was very unlikely to be the main topic debated as al-Jāḥiz says,\(^{1061}\) 'what could have been the issue(s) raised then,\(^{1062}\) and was the meeting necessary or even legal?\(^{1063}\) Were the Khārijites dismayed by 'Ali's refusal to fight when they eventually but not initially found him eager to continue the fighting\(^{1064}\) or were they dismayed because he put the Qur'anic verdict on the bāghi under the authority of his enemies?\(^{1065}\) al-Jāḥiz's opinion of the issue debated at Taḥkim is the following:

Having established the point that Muʿāwiya had no right and had not the least qualification that could raise him to think of the post of Imamate,\(^{1066}\) and having established the full right of 'Ali and his high qualifications for that post, with a high degree of presidential confidence\(^{1067}\) that allowed him "to appear" as accepting Sulḥ and arbitration, while intending it as a trap\(^{1068}\) to win his enemies, al-Jāḥiz says at one time: Taḥkim was accepted as an 'Alid manoeuvre that would cleverly show 'Ali and his camp united in the eyes of his adversary (when they were not), it was not 'Ali's intention, but once there, it was used as a trick, in which 'Ali could have outweighed Muʿāwiya, had the discord not ensued among the group of the manoeuvring Imam. In fact one may be surprised to find after that, how al-Jāḥiz's definition of Taḥkim was not really definite or consistent as he was projecting it simultaneously from two different angles and sides: (a) from the side of 'Ali (as a manoeuvre) and (b) from the side of Muʿāwiya as a hidden unqualified claimant to the caliphate and as an openly adamant claimant to have the killers of ʿUthmān (among the group of ʿAli) tried and punished. While denying that a wise and just caliph such as 'Ali could never yield to the impractical and hasty demands of Muʿāwiya to bring the killers forward, for the genuine legal reason that he did not have any specific evidence against the real killers of ʿUthmān,\(^{1069}\) besides tactical

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1060 One may say that the minimum or common agreement was on the Kitāb & Sunna to settle the differences between ʿAli & Muʿāwiya, see parag. 77.
1061 Ibid., and parag., 79,80.
1062 Ibid., and mainly parag., 82,58,64.
1063 Parag. 64.
1064 Ibid.
1065 Ibid., and parag. 49.
1066 Ibid., parag. 8, 58,82.
1067 Ibid., parag. 58-61
1068 Ibid., parag. 62,63,85,99.
1069 Ibid., parag. 42,132.
reasons, al-Jāḥiẓ makes one reach the conclusion that Taḥkīm was more shaky and ambiguous\textsuperscript{1070} than expected, as the problem remained open on the issue(s) that were really debated and disputed then.

The reader of this treatise is thus faced with the task of knowing, in view of the conflicting purposes of Taḥkīm (within each camp, i.e., ʿAlī's purpose and Muʿāwiya's purpose) what was the agreement on? The Kitāb and Sunna were to guide the arbitrators but on what issue?

c- Muʿāwiya's purpose of Taḥkīm

Going back to the Syrian circles, or to Taḥkīm from the viewpoint of Muʿāwiya, Muʿāwiya is said to have been:

1. Exploiting the divisions within ʿAlī's newly formed coalition after feeling that the Syrians were losing. So he was keen to isolate ʿAlī from his ʿIrāqī followers who were not willing to transfer the dispute with the Syrians to the level of fighting and losing their own lives. As M. Hinds puts it, "the established clan leaders had gone with ʿAlī to Šīffin . . . to assume their positions and interests . . . not because they were prepared to be killed fighting the Syrians."\textsuperscript{1071} The most powerful of the clan leaders, al-Ashʿath, (was interested in) ensuring that neither ʿAlī nor Muʿāwiya could gain any clear advantage.\textsuperscript{1072} Hinds puts ʿAlī's helplessness in the frame of conflicting interests among the established clans, so much so that he could not choose his own representative.\textsuperscript{1073}

2. Keen to put on trial the murderers of ʿUthmān.\textsuperscript{1074}

3. Strongly resentful and highly doubtful of the legality and conditions leading to the Imamate of ʿAlī.\textsuperscript{1075}

\textsuperscript{1070} See parag. 78 on the various versions of Taḥkīm among the factions.
\textsuperscript{1072} Ibid., p. 97.
\textsuperscript{1073} Ibid., p. 99. Compare to parag. 22 of Taṣwīb'.
\textsuperscript{1074} Parag. 91.
\textsuperscript{1075} Parag. 99.
4. Willing to fight and defy the present (illegal) Imam if he insisted on not surrendering the murderers to him.\textsuperscript{1076}

5. Determined, after the murderers were captured, that they should be tried under a new Imam like Mu\textsuperscript{a}wiya who believes that \textsuperscript{6}Ali had gained office in abnormal conditions; Mu\textsuperscript{a}wiya should not resign from his governorship which he had received in very legal circumstances.\textsuperscript{1077} Thus Mu\textsuperscript{a}wiya is shown to be very keen to appoint a new \textit{Shūrā} to choose a new Imam,\textsuperscript{1078} and also shown as claiming to be the most fit for that office.\textsuperscript{1079}

These details clearly reflect the alleged layers of differences and issues of dispute at the \textit{Tahkim}. Mu\textsuperscript{a}wiya's demands as presented by al-Jāhiz are undeniably inconsistent and contradictory\textsuperscript{1080} and it is very unlikely that they were made by him as al-Jāhiz himself admits.\textsuperscript{1081}

d- \textsuperscript{6}Ali's Purpose of \textit{Tahkim}

Having discovered a division in his camp, \textsuperscript{6}Ali accepted to halt the fighting under the pressure of his coalition. That acceptance is viewed by al-Jāhiz as momentary until \textsuperscript{6}Ali could achieve a unity of opinion again with his followers.

Arbitration was acceptable to \textsuperscript{6}Ali but only to camouflage the weaknesses and differences of outlook among his own camp. So \textsuperscript{6}Ali did accept (but bitterly) the principle of arbitration and the choice of the two arbitrators, whom al-Jāhiz does his best to represent in the worst possible image. Nevertheless, accepting arbitration did not change \textsuperscript{6}Ali's plan; al-Jāhiz sees \textsuperscript{6}Ali's acceptance of the arbitration as a highly tactical step, and a very right one such that he names the treatise "On the arbitrators and the Correctness of \textsuperscript{6}Ali in his choice." Unfortunately, as al-Jāhiz himself admits, that tactical step was unlucky as it was obstructed by extraordinary factors that worked against him and in favour of Mu\textsuperscript{a}wiya.\textsuperscript{1082}

\textsuperscript{1076} Parag. 109.
\textsuperscript{1077} Parag. 107, 109.
\textsuperscript{1078} Parag. 112 against the wishes of \textsuperscript{6}Ali; see also Hinds, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 98.
\textsuperscript{1079} Parag. 110.
\textsuperscript{1080} i.e., al-Jāhiz makes Mu\textsuperscript{a}wiya's demands swing between blood vengeance and claiming the caliphate. See parag. 132 and 110.
\textsuperscript{1081} See parag. 120.
\textsuperscript{1082} See parag. 22, 28, 29, 30, 33, 40, 42, 99.
Before discussing the details of ʿAli’s aim of Ṭaḥkim, we can say that the Kitāb and the Sunna of the Prophet may have been used as a criteria to guide the arbitrators in settling differences, but who can claim knowledge of the issue(s) or even limit the issues disputed if we recall al-Jāḥiz’s own suspicion of Kitāb al Qadiyya as narrated by al-Zuhri and Ibn Ishāq, and equally of similar forged versions circulated by the Khārijite, Shiʿite, Syrian and ʿIrāqi sources?¹⁰⁸³

To al-Jāḥiz, ʿAli’s manoeuvre of Ṭaḥkim:

- could not have concentrated on choosing a new Imam⁰⁸⁴ by allowing the chosen arbitrators to set a new shūra on behalf of ʿAli (viewed as the Imam) and Muʿāwiya (viewed as the deposed-Wāli) simply because this would defeat ʿAli’s own purpose and defy the very essence of the quality of wisdom that ʿAli must have enjoyed, being the existing Imam. Never did ʿAli doubt that dimension in himself,¹⁰⁸⁵ and why should he put himself equal to Muʿāwiya when he himself had refused the same principle with Ṭalḥa and Zubayr?¹⁰⁸⁶

As such al-Zuhri and Ibn Ishāq’s reporting of what al-Jāḥiz describes as Kitāb al Qadiyya¹⁰⁸⁷ (Book of Dispute) is categorically rejected as it ridicules, in the opinion of al-Jāḥiz, the status of ʿAli as Imam,¹⁰⁸⁸ and brings him down to the level of an ordinary subject. This report cannot be accepted as it portrays the leader ʿAli as led by the dictates of the arbitrators who assume now a higher status than that of the (existing) Imam.

Furthermore, Ṭaḥkim could not have aimed at finding a scriptural basis of legitimacy or reference to Muʿāwiya or ʿAli simply because there is no such reference to either,¹⁰⁸⁹ be it in the Kitāb or Sunna. al-Jāḥiz, however, did leave one suggestion for the disputed issue at Šiffin, from the side of ʿAli, that could bridge the irreconcilable purposes of Muʿāwiya, the wicked wāli, and ʿAli the unfortunate but correct Imam: Ṭaḥkim, according to al-Jāḥiz, for ʿAli, who should not be blamed but praised for the predicament he was put in,¹⁰⁹⁰ was as simple as that: It took the form

¹⁰⁸³ Parag. 78.
¹⁰⁸⁴ Parag. 80, 84
¹⁰⁸⁵ Parag. 80.
¹⁰⁸⁶ Parag. 129.
¹⁰⁸⁷ See parag. 76, 77.
¹⁰⁸⁸ See parag 80.
¹⁰⁸⁹ Parag. 81.
¹⁰⁹⁰ Parag. 99, 88, 89.
of an ostensible acceptance by ۶Ali of the choice of the arbitrators to be guided by the Kitāb and Sunna, not to question ۶Ali's right to the caliphate but probably to erase Mu‘awiya's doubts that had been growing around ۶Ali as regards his relation to the murderers of ۶Uthmān and consequently the legality of his post as Imam, because keeping the murderers of ۶Uthmān within his army was reason enough to criticize ۶Ali's Imamate and the unstable circumstances that had given birth to it.

In short, ۶Ali is said to have pretended to listen and sit on the same level of negotiations (Musāwät) with Mu‘awiya, apparently just to settle the differences, but in reality intending to benefit from the time spent in the period of negotiations to enable him settle the problems that had appeared among his followers, so that once they were settled he could ask them to resume the fight with a more united front and a more settled frame of mind.

**e- Comments from the Mu‘tazili point of view**

- al-Jāḥiz in approving ۶Ali's course of action in "Tahkim" was from the Mu‘tazilite point of view quite compatible with the Baghdādī school of Fītizāl that found ۶Ali in the right and all those who had fought him wrong, if not infidels. This pro-۶Alid stance was the position taken by the Zaydites, Rāfīdites, al-Nazzām, and Bishr b. al-Mu‘tamir.

al-Jāḥiz, in celebrating ۶Ali's actions, was not only rejecting the Khārijites in their extreme position of viewing ۶Ali as an infidel, but was expressing the caliphal outlook that is said to have almost adopted the Zaydite view. In short, as Nyberg found, the Intermediate position championed by the Mu‘tazila was not to be drawn in a vacuum for mere speculation but was directly targeted against those members who had participated in the conflict surrounding the issue of the caliphate. The status of ġāsiq in this case was naturally applied by Mu‘tazilites like al-Jāḥiz to Mu‘awiya and

1091 Parag. 80.
1092 Parag. 63.
1093 Ibid.
1095 See Hinds, 'Şiffin Agreement' quoting Balādhuri and Ṭabarī, page 94 f.n.5 In other words, the differences on the part of Mu‘awiya and ۶Amr b. al-۶Aṣ were not revolving at all round Mu‘awiya's right to the Imamate. ۶Amr's oath with Mu‘awiya was for the sake of "khilāf" (a certain dispute) and "muḥāraba‘ al-۶Aṭī i.e., fighting ۶Ali for certain disputed matters.
1096 Parag. 50, 51, 63.
1097 See parag. 63.
1098 See Ash‘ari, Magālät, p. 453.
other Umayyads who could be assimilated or incorporated with the Islamic system but only if relegated to that area of sinners\textsuperscript{1099} that the community had witnessed. It can never be applied to \textsuperscript{6}Ali as the Khärijites did. The interesting thing here is to trace the degree of consistency adhered to by al-Jähiz in applying the notion of \textit{fāsiq} to Mu\textsuperscript{6}awiya, as we shall see to be changed later [according to the order of al-Jähiz's works we have established] so that al-Jähiz enhances the degree of condemnation of the Umayyad head from "\textit{fāsiq}" to "\textit{Kāfir}" thus alienating Mu\textsuperscript{6}awiya from the Islamic \textit{Umma}.

\textit{f- Pro-\textsuperscript{6}Alid sentiments:}

In this version of events, \textsuperscript{6}Ali is given a new dimension that al-Jähiz believes all responsible Imāms enjoy. al-Jähiz likens the figure of \textsuperscript{6}Ali to that of the Prophet Muḥammad, as \textsuperscript{6}Ali had tactfully accepted not to have his name preceded with the title '\textit{Amīr al-Mu'mīnīn}', in the very spirit of events that had dictated to the Prophet in the \textit{Hudaybiyya} agreement to give up his title as Prophet\textsuperscript{1100}.

From this point al-Jähiz starts to portray \textsuperscript{6}Ali as the strategy-making Imam\textsuperscript{1101} who has apparently lost his title on paper but in reality was setting a trap for his rival. al-Jähiz never fails to stress that \textsuperscript{6}Ali's strategy reflects the fact that \textsuperscript{6}Ali was acting in awareness and confidence in his position as a privileged Imam who enjoys the right to deceive his opponents whenever necessary\textsuperscript{1102}. \textsuperscript{6}Ali, al-Jähiz says, pretended to have accepted Abū Müsā and \textsuperscript{6}Amr b. al-\textsuperscript{5}Āṣ when in reality he was sure of his capacity as Imam to reject any negative decision reached by either against him\textsuperscript{1103}. So, \textsuperscript{6}Ali's strategy allowed - on the surface of events - for those judges to put him on the same level of negotiations as Mu\textsuperscript{6}awiya, with the corollary that around either there existed some doubts that needed to be cleared by the judges\textsuperscript{1104}. \textsuperscript{6}Ali is said to have uttered certain vague expressions that should not be taken at their face value\textsuperscript{1105} and did his best to deceive Mu\textsuperscript{6}awiya and his camp when he accepted equality with Mu\textsuperscript{6}awiya and agreed that the arbitrators should settle the question of \textsuperscript{6}Ali's inexplicable relations with the murderers of \textsuperscript{6}Uthmān. This was only, however, to use the period of arbitration as a breathing space following his discovery of the

\textsuperscript{1099} See parag. 70-73 of \textit{Tašwīb \textsuperscript{6}Ali}.
\textsuperscript{1100} Parag. 89.
\textsuperscript{1101} Parag. 88.
\textsuperscript{1102} Parag. 58-63.
\textsuperscript{1103} Parag. 30, 33, 62.
\textsuperscript{1104} Parag. 63.
\textsuperscript{1105} Parag. 79, 61.
division of opinion within his camp, hoping to unite his camp and to continue the fight from the strong position that he had already achieved.
g- The disputed issue of arbitration/Tahkim:

Thus, according to al-Jähiz the Tahkim was not intended to question the Imamate of cAli or to put its authenticity at the mercy of one dissatisfied and dangerous member of the community,1106 the usurper (Ghäsib), nor was it intended to find scriptural evidence for the Imamate of either of them in the Kitāb and the Sunna. Tahkim was probably the provisional acceptance of cAli in order to erase all clouds of doubt related to the murder of cUthmān and the question of whether the murderers should or could be punished as Mu'āwiya was demanding, seeking the solution from the reservoirs of Kitāb and Sunna.

If we were to reconstruct the scene at Šiffin, this version would be reasonable, especially if we accept other historical reports that consistently viewed the relation between cAli and Mu'āwiya one between Imam and governor (Wāli) respectively, even in the midst of the clash at Šiffin.1107 Several references in this treatise back this line of interpretation and show how cAli was continuously confident of being the Imam or as Hinds put it "master of the situation"1108 and how Mu'āwiya - although given an opportunity to grow out of his proportions as Wāli of Syria - could not change his status or tried at best to improve it.1109 So, Mu'āwiya was probably more keen to have the killers of cUthmān tried and punished1110 while acting as the Wāli of cUthmān's blood; he may have never aimed to change his status as Wāli of Syria to compete with cAli on the status of the Imam. But cAli's full awareness of the legal and tactical reasons that hindered the fulfilment of Mu'āwiya's

1106 This is true despite the contrary implicatons in the section of the treatise where al-Jähiz makes the Näbita claim that Mu'āwiya must have made his demands on cAli, for obviously political reasons. See parag. 107.


1108 Hinds, op.cit., p. 111.

1109 This conclusion should not conflict with the contents of the emotional statements attributed by al-Jähiz to Mu'āwiya. One has to be careful in this treatise to be able to follow and project the (just) image of cAli, in the eyes of al-Jähiz as an Ideal Imam despite the haphazard and frequent data that imply the contrary. For the image of cAli as an Ideal Imam and the correct course of action he never left, see: parag. 40, 42, 43, 46, 62-63, 85, 99, 126 especially 61, 82 and 90 in which the Imam is given the right to resort to "implicit" tactics that could relieve him from the dangers of Fiina unleashed by those demanding blood vengeance, raising the Qur'ān, and acting as usurpers (Ghasib), see paragraph 61, 63.

1110 See Hinds "Šiffin Arbitration", p. 94
demand did not prevent him from pretending to fulfil it until his camp became more united by accepting arbitration. This shows that he was acting in his full capacity as a just Imam guided by the *Kitāb* and the *Sunna*, and that because of the lack of any evidence that could be legally raised against the killers of `Uthmān it was impossible for him to be certain that a legal case would be made, as this required verifying and distinguishing between the various participants in the murder, be they those who ordered, wished, helped and administered, or those who were charged, or who admitted their share in the crime.

**h. Historiographic Comment**

It is interesting to note that a recent analysis of the various versions of the arbitration agreement (which sees al-Jāḥīz's rendering as valid and representing the authentic classical version, A), suggests that al-Jāḥīz's suspicion of it should not be taken seriously as al-Jāḥīz himself was not accurate in his suspicion of the concocted nature of *Kitāb al Qadiyya*, simply because a considerable portion of its contents do coincide with those portions narrated by what the study values as "our two most important sources for Islamic history, i.e., al-Ṭabarī (d 310/923) and al-Balādhuri (d. 279/892)."

The study makes a comparison with another version (B) uniquely narrated by al-Dinawārī (d. 282/895) in his *Akhbār Tiwāl*, and it is to this version that the arrows of doubt, the study says, should rather point.

al-Dinawārī's version was based on the first one, but Hinds notices that it was more elaborate and "was associated with a chain of decidedly pro-`Alid colouring". Another difference is in the order of narration of events at Siffin. But the basic distinguishing feature is to be sought in the notably 'curious' phrase appearing in Dinawari's version which reads: "Sunnat Rasūl Allāh al-Jāmī`a" instead of "al-Sunna al-`Adila al-Jāmi`a ghayr al-Mufarrika" of version A (al-Jāḥīz and others). Hinds suggests that the former phrase was a direct Shi`ite intervention or alteration that could have suited the Shi`ite view of `Alī as

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1111 Which al-Jāḥīz consistently portrays in the worst possible light in order to hide the political intentions of Mu`awiya.
1112 See parag. 79, 63, 61.
1113 Parag. 42.
1115 Ibid., pp. 105-108. The uniqueness lies in the observation made by Hinds that only Dinawari narrated version B, whereas al-Minqārī and Ibn Abī-al-Ḥadid narrated versions A and B together.
1116 Ibid., p. 105.
1117 Ibid., p. 107.
specifically abiding by the Prophetic Sunna. It is suggested that this phrasing could have been purposely made against the Khārijite rendering of the phrase (al-Sunna al-Jami`a ghayr al-Mufarriqa), which, Hinds says, would obviously have undermined `Ali in his alleged recourse to paths that deviated from those of the Qur'ān and the Sunna of the Prophet.1118

Hinds wonders whether the Shi'ite rendering (which he views as spurious and probably fabricated between 114-128 A.H. i.e., after al-Sha`bi) should make us share al-Jāhiz's doubt on the authenticity of the classical version he has narrated on authority of al-Zuhri and Ibn Ishāq; this need not occur for this version can be regarded as the basic and classical version because it is (a) narrated by "our two most important sources for Islamic history: al-Balādhuri and Ṭabarī and (b) by virtue of the fact that its contents are equally stressed in the accounts of the Ṣiffin confrontation by Ibn A`tham (d. 204/819), Ibn Qutayba (d. 270/889), al-Ya`qūbī (d. 284/897), Ibn Muzāḥim al-Minqari, (d. 212/827) and Ibn Abī al-Ḥadid (d. 655/1257). Hinds, who gathers enough arguments to question al-Jāhiz's doubt on Kitāb al-Qaḍiyya and who tries to prove its authenticity, shifts this doubt altogether to al-Dinawari's version. After refuting al-Jāhiz's points that made him view Kitāb al-Qaḍiyya as concocted (madkhūl), Hinds, however, applies the suspicion - with which al-Jāhiz has treated certain aspects of the Kitāb - to the very issue that had raised his suspicion towards the variant version of al-Dinawari i.e., the issue of Sunna.

In my opinion, this interpretation of al-Jāhiz is too narrow as it superimposes a much later issue of concern to a very early period of the Muslim community, i.e., the question of the development of the meaning of the word Sunna.1119 The Shi'ites' and the Khārijites' differences centered on the figure of `Ali, namely on the former's alleged view that `Ali was continuously correct as he never abandoned revelation and consequently all sources of guidance such as the Prophetic Sunna.1120 The Khārijite-Shi'ite conflict and equally the Mu`awiy-`Ali dispute should therefore have been obviously centered on much more relevant issues to the group of Mu`awiy and to `Ali and his camp respectively. To avoid repetition, al-Jāhiz's understanding of the events at Ṣiffin outlined above should be examined against Hinds' view of al-Jāhiz's suspicion. al-Jāhiz did not deny reference to Qur'ān or Sunna by the parties

1118 Ibid., p. 102.
1119 See Ibid., p. 112.
1120 See Ibid., p. 111.
concerned, but his doubt should be affixed to the alleged portion of Kitāb al-Qadiyya that had lead some to assume that in either the Qur'ān or the Sunna (be it tribal or Prophetic Sunna) are found the scriptural divine references to the genuineness of the Imamate of Mu'tawiya or even 'Ali. But more significantly, the source of doubt in the eyes of al-Jāḥīz as regards the Kitāb al Qadiyya is a function of the logical contradiction it implies concerning the competency and fitness of the arbiters to appoint and depose Imams, that 'Ali would never have accepted.1121

(iv) Sayf b. ṢUmr and al-Jāḥīz

According to Petersen Sayf b. ṢUmr (d. 796) is said to have adopted and propagated a dubious version of events in which the 'Sabā'iyya' - the name he gives for a proto-Shi'ite sect - is said to have (i) murdered ṢUthmān, (ii) 'sabotaged' the caliphal election of 'Ali, (whose intention was to punish the caliph's slayers but who had to desist owing to lack of support) and (iii) prevented a peaceful resolution of the conflict with Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr before the battle of the Camel, and consequently punishment of the killers. After the battle of the Camel, the Sabā'iyya felt dissatisfied with the apportionment of the spoils and started intriguing behind 'Ali's back. Sayf pursues the line from here into the budding Khārijism."1122

al-Jāḥīz's treatise of Taṣwīb bears rich similarities to Sayf b. ṢUmr's version, but the only difference is that al-Jāḥīz, while accepting that the murderers of ṢUthmān were responsible for a considerable series of events, does not give them the name Sabā'iyya. Mu'tawiya's alleged complaints against 'Ali (namely that Mu'tawiya could not tolerate 'Ali as caliph for he presided over the very group who had terminated the caliphat of his predecessor, and did not imprison them or put them on trial and did not care to set a new Shūrā to elect an Imam in an atmosphere devoid of those slayers),1123 may have been partly borrowed from Sayf. b. ṢUmr. Another

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1121 Hinds himself has noticed that al-Jāḥīz's rendering of al-Zuhri's version as regards the capacity of both arbiters in "the direction of Imārat al-Mu'minin" i.e., to depose "Khalī man khalā'ā" and to appoint as Imam "ta'mir man ammarā" is quite remarkable as the other renderings do not include it, and as it stands "as a clearer specification of the function of the arbiters". If this phrase was of Khārijite inspiration, it proves that al-Jāḥīz was taking an anti-Khārijite stance and hence a pro-'Alid position suitable to the dominating caliphal pro-'Alid interests that were first emphasized by al-Mā'mūn and a significant proportion of the Shi'ite community then.

1122 Petersen, ṢUli and Mu'tawiya, p. 78 citing Ṭabārī.

1123 See 'Taṣwīb', paraagraph 109-112.
similarity lies in al-Jahiz's reference to the fact that within 'Ali's group there were people directly responsible for the slaying of 'Uthman, a group that:

(i) believed that 'Ali's murdering (?) of 'Uthman was one of his most pious acts. These were the Shiites and Kharijites.  

(ii) thought badly of 'Uthman and highly of his murderers.  

(iii) eventually defeated 'Ali while pretending to be his loyal soldiers, by first refusing his advice to continue fighting Muawiya and by their subsequent discord, rashness, and longing for leadership. 

But the whole blame for 'Ali's helplessness according to al-Jahiz does not reside within 'Ali's group. Muawiya had a share, and this he owed to the rebels before him at the battle of the Camel: "The group of Talha and Zubayr opened the precedent of rebellion against the caliph 'Ali, among the group of Muawiya in the battle of Siffin." 

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1124 See 'Taswib', paragraph 40, 42, 99, 132.  
1125 Ibid. paragraph 44.  
1126 Paragraph 99.  
1127 Paragraph 54.  
1128 Paragraph 29, 68 and see paragraph 69. This is the outspoken Jahizian theme that he openly declared.  
1129 Paragraph 99.  
1130 Paragraph 92.
al-Jähiz and Abū Mikhnaf

al-Jähiz's view, that ʿAli was forced to accept the ʿulūh by his group - which is equally maintained by Abū Mikhnaf\(^{1131}\) - is indispensable for his elaborated plan of presenting the genuineness of ʿAli in his continued but fruitless efforts to face the consequences of the halt, imposed on him by his own group. If ʿAli was a victim of his own group, then such a view would perfectly fit the ʿAbbāṣīd version of events in its concern to emphasize that it was principally the discord within ʿAli's own ranks that paved the way for the 'illegitimate Umayyad caliphate'.

Thus, al-Jähiz could hit three targets with one stone:

1. to praise ʿAli's far sighted outlook.\(^{1132}\)
2. to depict ʿAli's group as responsible for the appearance of the Umayyad caliphate by the very fact they were disunited, unhelpful, and disobedient.\(^{1133}\)
3. to depict the Umayyads as treacherous and usurpers.\(^{1134}\)

But this is not enough because if ʿAli's image were to be lifted above the everyday level of events and if he were to be completely liberated from any defect, this would deprive the ʿAbbāṣīds of their new Caliphate, hence the following elements need to be added and, thus,

4. ʿAli, in spite of his pious fairness - as confirmed by ibn al-Kalbi's reference to his letters and apophthegms - needs sometimes to be eclipsed by Ibn ʿAbbās.\(^{1135}\)

Although one could find many common points between al-Jähiz's version of arbitration and Abū Mikhnaf's, I would like to confine myself to the most important ones, such as al-Jähiz's dependence on Abū Mikhnaf in the way he makes out

\(^{1131}\) See Y. al-Yahyā, Marwiyyät Abi Mikhnaf fi Tārikh al-Tabari, p. 381. We should note that this view is the opposite of the Umayyad view that Ibn Ḥanbal propagated, whereby ʿAli is reported to have willingly accepted the ʿulūh, and was not forced by his group, but asked his group to accept his orders to stop their fight against the Syrians. See Ibid., p. 414. The view that ʿAli was forced to ʿulūh is that taken by modern scholars. See M. Hinds, "The Śiffin Arbitration", op.cit., pp. 96 and 98.

\(^{1132}\) See Tašwib', paragraph 46.

\(^{1133}\) Ibid., paragraph 23, 44, 51-52, 54, 55, 60, 69.

\(^{1134}\) Tašwib', paragraph 19 and Petersen p. 77.

\(^{1135}\) Ibid., Parag. 86 and 90.
Mu`āwiya's demand for the trial of killers, to be "sheer pretence," a pretext for his worldly motives.\textsuperscript{1136}

All of al-Jähiz's references to Mu`āwiya aim at pointing to Mu`āwiya's selfish motives. It cannot be denied that Mu`āwiya did indeed issue a demand that the murderers be brought into trial,\textsuperscript{1137} but it cannot be classified by al-Jähiz as anything other than "pure trickery and mere pretence."\textsuperscript{1138}

\textbf{Mediational Efforts of the Mu`tazilites/Abbāsids:}

(vi) al-Jähiz and al-Wāqidi (d. 823)

We referred above to a mediational trend in the age of al-Ma`mūn to reconcile the `Alids and the Abbāsids. Both al-Wāqidi and al-Madā'ini (d. 840) may be taken to illustrate this trend on the historiographic level and al-Jähiz's works may well have responded to the caliphal instructions and even have benefited from the efforts of those historians in a unified attempt to serve the Abbāsid goals:

Both al-Wāqidi and al-Madā'ini belong to the Mu`tazilite period of the Abbāsid caliphate, and both seem to have been influenced by the official dogmatics . . . (we observe here) the veneration for the classical Arab Empire (and) . . . the first germs of the merciless denunciation of the Umayyads which are brought to full development in al-Madā'ini. Two currents meet in these historians, one pro-`Ali, the other anti-Umayyad, but both with a common background in the same generation and both flexibly adapted to the requirements of the moment.\textsuperscript{1139}

As for the similarities between al-Jähiz and al-Wāqidi, we are first met by a "more benignant atmosphere around the figure of `Ali as compared with that of the preceding generations . . . the first traces of a beginning `Ali-legend in the orthodox tradition (are seen).\textsuperscript{1140}

Another point is the treacherous image of `Amr b. al-Äs who is described as a deceiver, a betrayer\textsuperscript{1141} and a great plotter,\textsuperscript{1142} an old fox\textsuperscript{1143} and a suspicious

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1136} See Petersen, p. 120.
  \item \textsuperscript{1137} \textit{Tašwib'}, paragraph 132.
  \item \textsuperscript{1138} \textit{Ibid.}, and paragraph 19 and 91.
  \item \textsuperscript{1139} Petersen, p. 99, 179, 184 and see Watt, \textit{The Majesty That Was Islam}, (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1974) p. 146.
  \item \textsuperscript{1140} Petersen, p. 91 and al-Jähiz, \textit{Ibid.}, paragraph 88.
  \item \textsuperscript{1141} See \textit{Tašwib'}, parag. 30
  \item \textsuperscript{1142} \textit{Ibid.}, parag 34.
  \item \textsuperscript{1143} Parag. 68.
\end{itemize}
character.\textsuperscript{1144} al-Wāqidi holds an identical view as to the role of ʿAmr in the arbitration agreement.\textsuperscript{1145} We should note here that although al-Jāḥīz acknowledge's Muʿāwiya's cunningness, the emphasis he puts on ʿAmr in this respect seems to proportionally outweigh that given to Muʿāwiya, as if the head of the Umayyad dynasty lacked the subtleness of ʿAmr.

Another common point is the worldliness of Muʿāwiya and his eagerness to use any method, such as bribery, in an attempt by al-Wāqidi to attack the Umayyads.\textsuperscript{1146} This can be easily detected in al-Jāḥīz's work who expounds it continuously throughout the treatise.\textsuperscript{1147} Another similarity is in depicting ʿAli's arbiter, Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿari, as "helpless."\textsuperscript{1148} Furthermore, ʿAli's innocence of ʿUthmān's blood is equally maintained by both.\textsuperscript{1149}

Finally, the merit (fadl) of Ibn ʿAbbās is implied by both to have outweighed and superceded that of ʿAli's.\textsuperscript{1150}

(vii) al-Jāḥīz and al-Madā'īnī

Pellat has pointed to the great resemblances in outlook and titles of works between al-Jāḥīz and another ʿAbbasid historian, al-Madā'īnī (d. 840) who was most probably to al-Jāḥīz a reservoir of his historical outlook.\textsuperscript{1151}

A main feature of al-Madā'īnī's historical writing was reflected in his "strenuous efforts to demonstrate the absolute illegality of Muʿāwiya's action",\textsuperscript{1152} in that he "equates the Umayyad caliphate with usurpation."\textsuperscript{1153} It is not difficult to detect in al-Jāḥīz's treatise - and even other works such as al-Nābītā that will deserve another piece of research - an equally exceptional ruthless attack on Muʿāwiya and the Umayyads. The attack on the former is more apparent in Taṣwīb', the one on the Umayyads is evidently more clear in Nābītā .

\begin{enumerate}
\item[1144] Parag 86 i.e., among the Ḥijāzians and ʿIrāqīs.
\item[1145] Petersen, p. 41 and 85.
\item[1146] Petersen p. 87, 89 and 70.
\item[1147] See 'Taṣwīb', parag. 28 with the exception that good views of the Nābītā quoted by al-Jāḥīz on Muʿāwiya do not obviously fall under this heading. Compare al-Jāḥīz's view parag 28 and the adversary's in parag. 103.
\item[1148] See Petersen, p. 87 and al-Jāḥīz, 'Taṣwīb' parag. 33.
\item[1149] See Petersen p. 87 and al-Jāḥīz, Ibid., parag 44.
\item[1150] See Petersen, p. 88 and al-Jāḥīz, Ibid., parag. 86, 90.
\item[1151] Pellat, al-Jāḥīz, (Arabic Translation by Kilānī) pp. 197-199.
\item[1152] Petersen, p. 98 and see al-Jāḥīz's identical view paragraph 72.
\item[1153] Petersen, p. 97. Compare to al-Jāḥīz, 'Taṣwīb', paragraph 74.
\end{enumerate}
With the rising interest in the Umayyads in Iraq as a tool of opposition against the official Mu'tazilism, we know from Yaqūt that al-Madā'īnī warned al-Ma'mūn against this movement and the way in which it manifested itself through popular veneration of Mu'āwiyah.\footnote{Petersen p. 99. In fact, al-Ma'mūn was dissuaded from this course on the grounds that it would cause discontent among the people. See Events of the Year 211, The History of Tabari, Transl. by C. E. Bosworth, vol. 32 (New York: University Press, 1987), p. 175.} If al-Madā'īnī was concerned in attacking Mu'āwiyah in such a way that "every vestige of the vengeance motive is deliberately eliminated,"\footnote{Petersen, p. 96.} al-Jāhiz, as we have seen, meets the same purpose but only by acknowledging that although such a claim of vengeance had been raised, it was nevertheless a pretext and a fake claim.

It is not difficult to detect the various attacks of al-Jāhiz against Mu'āwiyah throughout Tašwīb. He is for al-Jāhiz a hunter,\footnote{Tašwīb, paragraph 91.} a rebellious governor,\footnote{Paragraph 127.} a deceiver,\footnote{Paragraph 18.} and a briber.\footnote{Paragraph 28.} In one sentence, Mu'āwiyah was apparently indirectly calling for blood vengeance, striving towards the verdict of the Qur'ān (which was raised up on the spears for that purpose) but in reality, al-Jāhiz adds, he was - as Madā'īnī said - a usurper, "Ghāšib." Mu'āwiyah's status in the eyes of al-Jāhiz does not in this treatise differ from the famous Mu'tazilī status of "intermediate position" wherein Mu'āwiyah is forwarded as a fāsiq and āthim\footnote{See Ibid., paragraph 18.} but is never given the status of a Kāfīr as is the situation in the treatise of Nābita which we have examined above.\footnote{I propose that the treatise of Nābita was most probably written in 211 when Ma'mūn thought of publicly cursing Mu'āwiyah. But this does not mean that Tašwīb, in spite of its Ma'mūnid pro-'Alid stamp, should be ascribed to the time of al-Ma'mūn. This is dictated by al-Jāhiz's own reference in Tašwīb to K. Fadl Ḥāshim (definitely in reign of al-Wāthiq), which puts Tašwīb outside the rule of al-Ma'mūn.} This Jāhizian verdict may be used to assist us in dating this treatise during al-Ma'mūn's reign, that had witnessed the following landmarks:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>201</td>
<td>'Ali Ridā was made heir apparent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>203</td>
<td>'Ali Ridā died</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211</td>
<td>Mu'āwiyah's name was officially condemned (at least at court level)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 212  | 'Ali b. Abi Ṭālib was proclaimed the most excellent, (afdal) Companion of the Prophet, falling in merit next to the Prophet.

\footnote{Paragraph 61.}
It would be possible then to believe that this treatise on arbitration was probably written around the year 201 when 6Ali-Ridä was proclaimed heir-apparent or around the year 212 when 6Ali b. Abi Ţâlib was proclaimed al-afdal, due to the pro-Alid tone and anti-Mu'awiya sentiments contained in it, which are not as acutely expressed as in al-Nâbita of the year 211. The anti-Umayyad tone in Tašwib has become milder than that of al-Nâbita, presumably because of having to cope with the difficulty of confrontation with the masses. This is evident in the way it could allow itself to devote a section to the (false) claims of legitimacy of Mu'awiya's Imamship,1163 but without having to raise the previous reproaches against him to the level of kufr (as maintained in al-Nâbita). Here, a sort of Mu'tazilî tolerant or hypothetical spirit dominates. Thanks to al-Jâhiç's own contextual marker in Tašwib to an already completed work, K. Fâdî Hashim, the task of timing Tašwib is solved, as it must have followed Faîl Hâshim, which includes in its turn a chronological pointer to al-Wâthîq's reign (227/842). This finding should not upset the observations made above on the mediational efforts of al-Ma'mûn, as such efforts need not be tied to al-Ma'mûn's reign but could be extended further to the rule of al-Mu'tâşîm and al-Wâthiq. Certainly, both Wâqîdî (d. 823) and Madâ'înî (d. 840) had died by that year, but al-Jâhiç's treatise could still reflect his loyalty to the Mu'tazilite spirit that dominated after al-Ma'mûn (d. 833).

It is not surprising to hear al-Jâhiç expressing in 'Tašwib' a mixed feeling of fondness and resentment towards Mu'awiya's approval of the halt at a time when 6Ali's group was not united, when people prefer to talk of 6Ali's approval of it.1164 The style of al-Jâhiç is highly political and may be taken as a sample of the very political stand of the court whereby, although the figure of 6Ali b Abi Ţâlib was venerated and admired, no political rights were to be built upon that veneration and this perfectly represents al-Ma'mûn's position to the 6Alids as he kept good relations with them despite the sudden death of his heir apparent. The absence of any attack on the Nâbita in 'Tašwib' shows that their growing influence could have checked al-Jâhiç's critical pen from continuing what he had started in 'al-Nâbita'. Ma'mûn's plan to proclaim the cursing of Mu'awiya can be seen as confined within the limits of the caliphal court. This can be substantiated by reports that describe al-Ma'mûn's wish

1163 Tašwib', parag. 100-120.
1164 Ibid., parag. 63.
to publicly curse him in 211; something that was eventually abandoned on the advice of his qādi, Yahyā b. Aktaf, lest it cause discontent among the people.1165

Another point of comparison with Madāʾinī is the concern in both for the defence of Ibn ʿAbbās and the ʿAbbāsids.1166 Ibn ʿAbbās’s advice had been accounted for in al-Jāḥiẓ’s work, but how does al-Jāḥiẓ openly now defend the ʿAbbāsids in a letter that claims to defend ʿAli?

In fact al-Jāḥiẓ had defended the ʿAbbāsids in two main passages: First, by reference to the fact that one of the criteria of the Imamate is the right of agnatic inheritance, by heritage from the uncle (Mīrāth al-ʿUmūma).1167

The second instance is more subtle as al-Jāḥiẓ criticizes the addressee’s statement that sees Muʿāwiya as misguided (dāll) because he had passed the Imamate to his son. This point al-Jāḥiẓ does not accept as it is an inherently dangerous slogan that may be raised against the ʿAbbāsid norms of passing the caliphate from father to son. “What is wrong if the son becomes an Imam as long as he really deserves such an oath of allegiance?”1168 al-Jāḥiẓ does not forget to stretch the (ʿAbbāsid) right of inheritance to brothers, and even cousins.1169

3. Significance of the Treatise:

(i) Political doctrines on the Imamate:

al-Jāḥiẓ, as a semi-official ʿAbbāsid apologist, took his share in propagating the ʿAbbāsid caliphal view that was not free from the "pre-meditated fabrications, polemical and tendentious constructions,"1170 that characterized the historical Muʿtazili tradition. al-Jāḥiẓ himself does not deny that the Umayyad tradition he was including in this treatise was partly formed by himself1171 and his Muʿtazili teachers while the rest was equally formed by the newly formed pro-Umayyad theologians (of the Nābita group).

1165 See events of the year 211, The History of Tabari, Translated by C.E Bosworth, p. 175, who in making this point, benefits from Masʿūdi’s Murūj (7: 93), and Pellat’s “Le Culte de Muʿāwiya” and Sourdel’s “La Politique Religieuse du Calife ʿAbbāside al-Maʾmūn”.
1166 See Petersen, p. 98.
1167 al-Jāḥiẓ, ʿTaṣwīb’, paragraph 14.
1168 Paragraph 74-75.
1169 Paragraph 75.
1170 See Petersen, pp. 41, 47.
1171 See paragraph 120 of ‘Taṣwīb’.
One may therefore deduce that a treatise such as Taṣwīb ʿAlī would have been written by al-Jāḥīz in his Muʿtazilite capacity i.e., as an opinion maker who was participating in the keen discussions among the Başran and Baghdādi scholars on the meritorious status of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib vis-à-vis the previous patriarchal caliphs. It would be easy enough now to understand al-Jāḥīz's position concerning ʿAlī's faḍl and character: As for ʿAlī's faḍl, al-Jāḥīz eloquently reports the view of those Muʿtazilites (presumably Baghdādis) who believed that Abū Bakr and ʿUmar outweighed ʿAlī until the moment he faced the hardships, when ʿAlī now outweighed both.1172 al-Jāḥīz does not comment on this point but it is obviously the antithesis of ʿAlī's image as seen above by the ʿUthmāniyya who shared the premise that Abū Bakr and ʿUmar were ʿafdal than ʿAlī, basing their criteria on their undeniable excellent performances during the life of the Prophet, without extending the time any further, as the Baghdādis did. Hence, one may safely assume that al-Jāḥīz's view of ʿAlī coincided with the Başran Muʿtazili school that saw the merits of the Rāshidūn in the chronological order of their rulership i.e., that Abū Bakr > superior to ʿUmar > ʿUthmān > ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib.

As pointed out in the survey, a conflict of political priorities and visions was imminent between ʿAlī, on the one hand, and Ṭālḥa and Zubayr on the other, both of whom - al-Jāḥīz says - paved the way for Muʿāwiya's militant reaction.

Having conceived ʿAlī as the ideal Imam, we would like to point out the relevant political doctrines that may be reflected from this conception, i.e., how does the projected figure of ʿAlī reflect al-Jāḥīz's concept of the ideal Imam, an idealism that can dictate certain obligations on the subjects ruled who should abide by them by virtue of the almost unquestionable and irrefutable ideas of that ideal Imam

(ii) Towards a Shiʿī-Abbāsid Portrait of the Imam

If al-Maʿmūn's pro-ʿAlid policy was not really altruistic, then one may hold the view that such a step was not different from those taken by the early ʿAbbāsid Caliphs such as al-Manṣūr who - in their fight against the ʿAlids - were nevertheless assuming their very titles and characteristics, and therefore acting in the footsteps of their predecessors, the Umayyads.1174

1172 Taṣwīb', paragraph 46.
1173 See Introductory survey above.
1174 See Crone, God's Caliph, pp. 80-81.
I think al-Jahiz found an excellent opportunity in the actions of `Ali b. Abi Talib to achieve two goals: First, he could play on the official veneration of `Ali by describing the Abbasid Imamate in Shi`ite terms. In other words, he could provide the Abbasid readers with a very good example that illustrated the supreme privileges that each and every righteous Imam should enjoy and implement without caring about any objection against them, whether the agenda of priorities matches those of the public or not. In this way, the far-fetched Jähizian justifications of `Ali's actions may be seen to serve as a pretext and precedent for the Mu`tazili-Abbasid religio-political vision that did not please the other group of of `ulamā`, who historically could not tolerate al-Ma`mūn's `ijtihād when he imposed on them irrefutable caliphal decisions concerning delicate theological matters, which were now implemented by his successors and enhanced by men like al-Jahiz, benefiting from the pro-Mu`tazilite era of al-Mutasim and al-Wāthiq.

In the same manner, the Khārijites' objection to `Ali's series of `ijtihād 'that did not match theirs',1175 is equally criticized.

Therefore if the actions of `Ali - the best companion after the Prophet as celebrated by al-Ma`mūn in 212/827 - could be justified and credited, the implementors and successors of al-Ma`mūn's scheme could easily be fitted in the same perspective in their attempt to implement al-Ma`mūn's religio-political scheme.1176

The dangerous thing, however, is that when such an attempt by al-Jahiz to defend `Ali is portrayed in such a paradoxical manner, obviously for purely Abbasid interests (by virtue of the hypothetical tone he had adopted, and the dubious points it contains against `Ali,) what in effect remains from that hypothetical attempt could be al-Jahiz's goal of stressing the concept of the ideal Imam, and the superior rights to be enjoyed by each and every Abbasid caliph and the duties his subjects have towards him, whether the reader wants to justify `Ali's actions or not, and whether al-Jahiz was successful in this manner of justification or not.

In this way al-Jahiz's several references to the distinguished status of the Imam served this double goal; behind praising `Ali, al-Jahiz was probably awakening the Abbasid public to the similar status held in by the present ideal Abbasid Imam:

1175 See paragraph 49 and 64.
1176 Be it in keeping good relations with the Alids or in introducing and implementing the notion of createdness of the Qur`ān from 212 up to al-Mutawakkil's decision to lift the Mihna.
Know that the tested and subtle Imam (ʿAli) enjoys the exclusive right to keep things hidden in his speech, and to insinuate things implicitly without having to be charged with lying . . . even if his statement would make the addressee (i.e., Muʿāwiya) think that he had succumbed to his wish.\textsuperscript{1177}

In another passage al-Jāhiz says:

Had you imagined the severe situations he (ʿAli) was put in, you would have approved his actions . . . Be wary of ridiculing Imams, and finding their recourse to concealment (tawriya) faulty, however often their course of action seems to mean one thing while it definitely means another, sometimes for the sake of general welfare or out of fear of something (i.e., refrain from discrediting Imams).\textsuperscript{1178}

Such a freedom of action and methods of speech undertaken by ʿAli (and equally by all the genuine Imams), al-Jāhiz adds, have been the wise substance underlying all Prophetic and caliphal actions:

Had the people meditated on all that God had provided for His Prophets and His Khulafāʾ, in matters of right administration, right opinion (tadbīr) and knowledge of things clear and obscure, these people would not have rushed headlong like immature youth and they would not have launched into accusing the Imams of error in the way of those who do not like power and do not know the merit of the intelligence of the Imam over his subjects to arrange things in the way the Imam foresees.\textsuperscript{1179}

Thus, here we are met with the term Khulafāʾ Allāh, that was not far from the goals and the caliphal tastes of the ʿAbbāsids. The Shiʿite model of the privileges of the Imam is also sketched by al-Jāhiz in another passage in which the distinguished status of the righteous Imam gets out of proportion as it implicitly assumes the necessary infallibility of the Imam that is accepted to justify his determination to face the adversary. al-Jāhiz says that one should not forget that behind ʿAli's apparent consent to the choice of arbiters was his very firm and established confidence in his true Imamate, and that "if all the Badrites and Hūdaybītes unanimously agreed - in the negotiations accepted by ʿAli - that Muʿāwiya was more deserving the Imamate than himself, they should nevertheless be seen as the group who went astray and were in the wrong . . . Their assumed rejection of ʿAli's candidacy does not have to loosen the rope of (his) caliphate, exactly as their acknowledgement would not confirm it!"\textsuperscript{1180}

\textsuperscript{1177} Paragraph 61.
\textsuperscript{1178} Paragraph 99.
\textsuperscript{1179} Taṣwīb, paragraph 89.
\textsuperscript{1180} Paragraph 58. ʿAli is here sketched for us as being a little over confident, even against the will of the majority that gave him power.
(iii) Classical Image of the Imām:

According to al-Jāḥiz's understanding of ʿAlī's tadbir, ʿAlī is said to have adopted a strict religious policy in which men were ranked according to their non-worldliness (zuhd), legal knowledge (fīqh), honesty, courage, and awareness of Kitāb and Sunna. That is why they may have found in Muʿāwiya an escape from the religious firmness embodied by ʿAlī, who never discarded the true model of the Imāmate and did not neglect the principle of reward and punishment.¹¹⁸¹

Within this pro-ʿAlid portrayal of the Imam, one could also easily detect classical (non-Shiʿite) features of the Imam. ʿAlī's actions were an illustration of this principle, and his refraining from accepting Muʿāwiya's call to punish the murderers in his camp - al-Jāḥiz says - was the best way to prove his just Imāmate as that punishment would initially require reaching a legal stage of certainty of the actual responsibility of those accused, before they could be punished,¹¹⁸² and that had proved to be impossible.

al-Jāḥiz also touched on the principle of Ijmāʾ and says that Ijmāʾ follows the observance of merit in a person (the Imam to be) and merit does not appear once Ijmāʾ is achieved. If the meritorious is lucky enough to attract Ijmāʾ he has to be grateful as the "Right" is now his but if he fails and meets differences - although he has the right - he has to keep patient. In other words al-Jāḥiz meant to imply that ʿAlī's Imāmate was authentic, reached by Ijmāʾ and not by Ikrāh (force).¹¹⁸³

(iv) Reflecting a Zaydi View on the Imamate of ʿAlī

So the Imāmate of ʿAlī was legal, not by force,¹¹⁸⁴ nor by divine designation,¹¹⁸⁵ but by Ijmāʾ,¹¹⁸⁶ based on his merit (fadl). His rival at the time of Siffin, Saʿd, the only survivor of the Shūrā then, in no way - al-Jāḥiz says - could be compared to ʿAlī who in addition to merit, enjoyed a distinguished Hashimite descent, received Prophetic traditions, preceded Saʿd in embracing Islam, and was exemplary in his ascetic attitude and honesty.¹¹⁸⁷

¹¹⁸¹ 'Taṣwīb', parag 28.
¹¹⁸² Ibid., Paragraph 42 and 132.
¹¹⁸³ Ibid., and Paragraph 126.
¹¹⁸⁴ Paragraph 126.
¹¹⁸⁵ Paragraph 80.
¹¹⁸⁶ Paragraph 125-126.
¹¹⁸⁷ Paragraph 130-131.
In so doing, al-Jähiz was perfectly echoing the specific Zaydi doctrine of the Imamate as the criterion leading to that post in ‘Taşwib’ is identical to the one given in ‘Maqâlat al-Zaydiyya’, and the doctrinal constant here is observed in the consistency of al-Jähiz in seeing this Zaydi group as raising no claim to the right of ʿAlī by designation or inheritance. It was firstly occasioned by faḍl, leading thereafter to Ijmāʿ.

(v) **Mixed Criteria of Imamate (merit versus inheritance)**

Precedence in faḍl is the leading criterion in this treatise, and al-Jähiz succeeds in completing the circle of discussion in the same manner in which he started. However al-Jähiz in two instances obviously could not hide his ʿAbbasid attachments and referred to a political right by inheritance whether from the uncle (mirāḥ al-ʿUmūma) or from the father or even from the brother and the cousin. In this way, he was giving the ʿAbbasids a wider basis for their legitimacy, which shows that his political motives and interests superseded his religious outlook and took priority whenever they conflicted with other doctrines.

Finally, if politics during al-Jähiz’s time took the form of historical discussion, then this treatise is a perfect example of this point where the present is defined and justified in retrospect, i.e., in light of past facts and incidents.

Furthermore, as far as the Kitāb and Sunna were concerned, al-Jähiz categorically denies the possibility that reference to the Qurʾān and Sunna was the concern of either ʿAlī or Muʿāwiya, because he believes that neither the Imamate of ʿAlī nor that of his rival had any explicit scriptural basis in the Qurʾān or the Sunna. Such a conclusion is significant because while it attacks the Umayyad basis for the Caliphate, it equally denies the alleged divine designatory political rights of ʿAlī, claimed by the Shiʿites to have been designated by the Prophet himself; but it does not close down the political channels with the ʿAlids as it could clearly praise ʿAlī’s resort to Kitāb and Sunna and acknowledge his course of action in exemplary terms.

1188 Compare Paragraph 14 and 130-131.
1189 Paragraph 14.
1190 Paragraph 75.
1191 Ibid.
1192 See Watt, Islamic Political Thought, pp. 86-87. al-Jähiz’s works are one example of rewriting history, whereby "historical discussions were part of the intellectual form of the political struggle".
Furthermore Ibn ʿAbbās's prophetic advice to ʿAlī always echoes in this version of events as if Ibn ʿAbbās was, in advance, aware of the unusual events\(^{1193}\) that would make ʿAlī an Imam, and his fear that once Muʿāwiya was allowed to approach him militarily, things would go back to the initial turbulent stage that ʿAlī had found himself in upon the death of ʿUthmān. This observation may be applied to the slogans which, according to al-Jāḥiz, Muʿāwiya must have addressed to ʿAlī:

- "Bring forward the murderers!"\(^{1194}\)
- "What relation do you have with the murderers?"\(^{1195}\)
- "Military confrontation if you continue to hide the murderers!"\(^{1196}\)

Finally, these slogans are deliberately formulated by al-Jāḥiz in order to highlight what our author describes as "Muʿāwiya's traps" (masāyid), which are meant to blemish the image of Muʿāwiya who is described as a hunter using the traps as a hunting device.

\(^{1193}\) See the advice above in addition to al-Jāḥiz's view in paragraph 90.
\(^{1194}\) Paragraph 91.
\(^{1195}\) Paragraph 99.
\(^{1196}\) Paragraph 109.
CHAPTER NINE

al-Wāthiq's period II (229-231),

Literary, political and quasi-scientific works:

1-Madh al-Tujjār
2-K. al-Tarbi° wa al Tadwir
3-early parts of al-Ḥayawān.

1-Madh al-Tujjār:

The coming of the oil-merchant, Ibn al-Zayyāt to the vizierate in the year 2201197 seems to have angered courtiers like Aḥmad b. Abī Duʿād and the poets. Ṭāḥa al-Ḥājirī suggests that the new vizier soon defended himself by asking his associates to back his position. One example was al-Jāḥīz whose treatise “Madh al-Tujjār” (after 220 A.H.) seems to praise the original post of the vizier as an oil merchant to silence the envious courtiers who could not tolerate his presence, in what he sees as an Arab-Persian Shuʿūbi dispute.1198

It is very likely that K. al-Tarbi° and K. al-Ḥayawān were presented to Ibn al-Zayyāt at a later stage, during the latter period of al-Wāthiq's rule, at a time when al-Jāḥīz had not yet lost the good relations he had established with the mercurial vizier, during the reign of the preceding caliph, al-Muṭṭasim. This turbulence was, however, reflected in the treatise "al-Jidd wa al-Hazl", which included strong language against the vizier.

2. Kitāb al-Tarbi° wa al-Tadwir.

1. Setting for Kitāb al-Ḥayawān and Kitāb al-Tarbi°

Pellat assumes that this work was written between 227 and 230 A.H.1199 Although al-Jāḥīz in his inventory mentioned in the first volume of Kitāb al-Ḥayawān does not refer to this work, he does refer to it as a completed work later in the same volume.1200 This means that K. al-Tarbi° was written prior to K. al-Ḥayawān. But when was K. al-Ḥayawān written?

1197 See al-Ṭabarī, Annals of the year 220 and 229, when al-Zayyāt became vizier and took over the “diwān of maẓālim” i.e., court of grievances respectively.
1200 K. al-Ḥayawān, 1: 308.
It is not easy to answer this question. Scholars of al-Jähiz have given various dates. Pellat says "certainly earlier than 233 /847", 1201 i.e., before the death of the vizier Ibn al-Zayyāt to whom the work was addressed. But was K. al-Ḥayawān wholly completed by 233 or was it written over an extended period of time, such that the death of Ibn al-Zayyāt did not hinder al-Jähiz from completing the other volumes - if, as Abū Milḥīm postulates, the writing of al-Ḥayawān stretched over a considerable period of al-Jähiz’s later life? Thus, al-Jähiz could have started it prior to 233 and continued its composition up to around 250.1202 This could fit with Hārūn’s suggestion in his editorial remarks on the work, where he suggests that al-Jähiz’s illness - that stayed with him for a long time (22 years) and which had accompanied the composition of K. al-Ḥayawān, did not prevent him from undertaking such a demanding composition.1203

al-Jähiz says that he has written Kitāb al-Tarbiyya al-Tadwir against Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, a secretary (katib) who is described by our author as a person who boasted of knowing everything. 1204 That is why the satirical tone is dominant in a series of un-answered questions that are intended to ridicule1205 him and show the exact amount of his knowledge.

It seems that this treatise could be fitted in the proposed scheme into which we have organized al-Jähiz’s works, in the sense that this work may belong to the era of Muʿtazili political triumph. But it may be raised here that the anti-Shīʿite tone evident in certain excerpts should put the text into the era of Muʿtazili decline, i.e., the rule of al-Mutawakkil, who followed a strict anti-Shīʿite policy. This may have been the case had al-Jähiz not explicitly referred in al-Ḥayawān to the fact that K. al-Tarbiyya al-Tadwir had already been composed. Thus K. al-Tarbiyya al-Tadwir, like K. al-ʿUthmāniyya, anti-Shīʿite in outlook, was written before the official implementation of the anti-Alid policy of al-Mutawakkil.

1201 Pellat, Ibid., Pellat suggests that K. al-Tarbiyya al-Tadwir was written between 227-230 A.H., because of events (?) that may have provoked its composition, related to the rule of Wāthiq (possibly when the addressee left the governmental office. See K. al-Tarbiyya al-Tadwir, ed. C. Pellat, (Damascus: Institut Français De Damas, 1955), p. XII.
1203 Hārūn, in his preface to K. al-Ḥayawān, I: 24-25.
1204 K. al-Ḥayawān, I: 308-309.
So the Jähizian critique of the extreme Shi'ites in the period of Mu'tazili political triumph need not be considered a completely unexpected novelty, even if such a trend is assumed to have been expressed towards the turning phase of that era. It is quite possible that 'Abbāsid propagandists like al-Jāhīz may have given themselves the liberty of signalling and detecting the position of these non-orthodox partisans, without this having to contradict the outspoken pro-Alid policy of the 'Abbāsid period. al-Jāhīz’s independent concern to attack the non-rational esoteric Rāfīdī trend, which I think is one of the main aims behind K. al-Tarbi', can be seen as a continuation of the true aims underlying al-Mā'mūn’s pro-Alid policy, which was reflected in his act of nomination of an Alid figure but only - according to one interpretation - to counteract and control the growing esotericism ascribed to Shi'ite Imams by the masses.1206

The Addressee of the Treatise

The information available on the addressee of K. al-Tarbi' wa al-Tadwir, Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb is very little. Pellat has noticed al-Jāhīz’s early concern with this man, since al-Jāhīz’s youth.1207 al-Jāhīz has described him as a Kātib1208 and one of his (previous) associates,1209 but not after he started to boast of knowing everything1210 and chose Makka as his residence.1211 al-Ḥājirī has shed some light on al-Jāhīz’s description of Aḥmad as a Kātib. Ḥājirī, citing a report from al-Aghānī, finds that al-Jāhīz’s addressee was not a secretary of the administration (diwān) but of one of the 'Abbāsid Umāra'.1212 However, he is also described in al-Aghānī as being the associate of the vizier Ibn al-Zayyāt,1213 which is confirmed by al-Jāhīz’s references to him in the treatise. There is

1206 al-Ḥājirī, Takwin al-Āqīl al-`Arabi, pp. 229-230. The Pro-Alid policy of the 'Abbāsids during al-Ma'mūn’s reign does not mean that the 'Abbāsid State had adopted the esoteric ideology of the extreme Shi'ites. In this, the 'Abbāsids could not compromise. Orthodoxy had special significance to the 'Abbāsids, and that is why we see that under al-Rashīd, the dead bodies of Shi'ite Imams were publicly displayed before the masses in order to stress their mortality. See F. 'Omar, “al-Khilāfa al-'Abbāsiyya fi 'Asr al-Fawdā al-'Askariyya”, (Baghdād: Maktabat al-Muthannā, 1977) pp. 32-34.
1207 See K. al-Tarbi', parag. 165.
1209 Ibid., 1: 308 and 1: 7.
1210 Ibid.
1211 K. al-Tarbi', parag. 4.
1212 Ḥājirī, al-Jāhīz, p. 275.
1213 Ibid., p. 276.
another significant piece of information on al-Jähiz's addressee in Ṭabarī's annals of the year 232 A.H. Here an anecdote is reported linking al-Jähiz's addressee, his brother's singer (qayna), the vizier and the caliph al-Wāthiq. The caliph was attracted by the voice of the singer, who was chanting lyrics written by al-Jähiz's addressee, and asked to purchase her. The sum of 100,000 dinārs plus the governorship of Egypt was asked by the addressee's brother, but only 5,000 dinārs was agreed to be given.1214

More significant is what has been pointed out by al-Ḥājirī on the friendship between al-Jähiz's addressee and a military figure, Jaʿfar b. Dinār al-Khayyāt, one of al-Muʿtaṣīm's military leaders in his campaign against Bābak and his military expedition against the Byzantines.1215 al-Muʿtaṣīm removed him from his position as governor of Yemen, which he held between 224-225 A.H., but al-Wāthiq put him back in 231 A.H., and asked him to lead the pilgrimage expedition in the same year. al-Ḥājirī suggests that it is very likely that between 225-231 A.H., al-Jähiz's addressee could have introduced himself to that military figure in his literary salon in Baghdād or Samarrā',1216 such that when al-Khayyāt was asked to go to Makka, he was accompanied by al-Jähiz's addressee,1217 and thus the treatise was written in 231. I think that as this treatise preceded K. al-Hayawān,1218 which was presented to Ibn al-Zayyāt before his death in 232, it is more probable that it was written earlier than 231. al-Jähiz's allusion to the fact that his addressee is staying in Makka should be connected to the harsh policy of the vizier Ibn al-Zayyāt, who was given the "diwān al-maṣālīm" and was accused of torturing his victims with his famous tannūr, starting with the year 229.1219 In my opinion, the addressee - and probably his brother - could have fled to Makka in 229, to escape the wrath of the vizier, after informing al-Wāthiq of Ibn al-Zayyāt's refusal to pay the money to the owner, which he eventually got after strenuous efforts. It is possible that al-Jähiz's addressee may have been giving his brother's qayna Kaysāni lyrics too. His extravagant preachings which reached al-Jähiz from Makka mean that al-Jähiz's

1214 The vizier who was entrusted with giving the money is said to have kept the money until al-Jähiz's addressee complained to the caliph on behalf of his brother, who left ʿamal al-Sultān (government work) and went into business with the money. See al-Ṭabarī, Tārikh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk, (Leiden: 1879-1901), ed. J. De Goeje, Annals of 232 A.H.
1215 See Ibid., Annals 223 and 225. Cited by Ḥājirī, p. 278.
1216 This friendship is confirmed by al-Jähiz in K. al-Tarbî.
1217 This is also confirmed by al-Jähiz, as pointed above.
1218 As confirmed by al-Jähiz, K. al-Hayawān, 1: 308.
address whose brother was denied the governorship of Egypt and also the money has eventually found in the military figure of Ja'far al-Khayyat his last hopes for propagating his extremist views. What concerns us here from the chronological point of view is that K. al. Tarbi has preceded the composition of the early portions of al-Hayawan and judging from al-Jahiz's tone to the vizier, these books reflect the good relations between al-Jahiz and Ibn al-Zayyat, which could have also witnessed the composition of a treatise that praises merchants and criticized governmental secretaries, of the type of Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Wahhab, who have for long attracted the wrath of al-Jahiz in his critical writings on the group of Kuttab.

It is likely that al-Jahiz wanted to ridicule this person who, in al-Jahiz' words "claimed the Knowledge of everything,"1223 by facing him with a series of one hundred puzzling issues. So while appearing to serve Ibn al-Zayyat's grudge against that secretary, al-Jahiz was - as will be demonstrated below - basically aiming at the denunciation of Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Wahhab, who had upheld extremist Shi'ite views of the Kaysaniyya type. The book is also targeted against the interpretations of such doctrines as Mazdaism and Maniism, described by al-Jahiz as "mythological" Khurajf. In this sense, the work not only be classified as belonging to the history of ideas, but also as a useful literary mirror that reflects the intellectual concerns of the third century, namely by its outspoken attack on gnostic/esoteric/non-rational manifestations, be they among the extreme Shi'ites (as al-Jahiz's addressee) or among the usual laymen of the 'Abbasi era. This concern has been clearly mentioned by al-Jahiz in his brief outline of the content of K. al-Tarbi while inviting the vizier to examine his renunciation of this line of reasoning.1224

1220 See al-Hayawan, 1: 308-309.
1221 al-Hajiri holds an opposite view and sees K. al-Tarbi as having been written when relations between al-Jahiz and Ibn al-Zayyat became agitated. There is no contextual reference to back this suggestion (See Hajiri, op. cit., p. 279), as al-Jahiz's tone in K. al-Hayawan to the vizier (apart from the dubious preface) does not fit with the outspoken attacks on the vizier found in the treatise "fi al-Jidd wa al-Hazl".
1223 See no contextual reference to this suggestion (See Hajiri, op. cit., p. 279), as al-Jahiz's tone in K. al-Hayawan to the vizier (apart from the dubious preface) does not fit with the outspoken attacks on the vizier found in the treatise "fi al-Jidd wa al-Hazl".
1224 See al-Hayawan, 1: 308-311. al-Jahiz's anti-mythological campaign is of course continued in his zoological endeavour, i.e., K. al-Hayawan. In 1: 309, those who narrated unbelievable things on behalf of Ibn 'Abbas are criticized. In 6: 160, the role of Jin in interfering with the Arab travellers is strongly rejected, and al-Jahiz reminds his readers that they had had no influence over Ali b. Abi Talib, Hamza b. 'Abd al-Muttalib, Abu Bakr, 'Umar, al-Hasan al-Basri and Amr b. 'Ubayd in their times.
I. Portrayal of the Addressee as the Charismatically expected Imām:

Careful reading of Kitāb al-Tarbi‘ suggests that al-Jahiz had been ideologically aggravated by the character and thinking of Ahmad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, who seems to have not only cherished the reasoning of the extreme Shiʿites, whom al-Jahiz names “Rāfiḍa”, but according to al-Jahiz, in his exaggerated way, has implicitly aspired to preside over them as their ‘charismatic’ Imām.

al-Jahiz says to his addressee:

I sympathize with your concern to be Ibn Saʿīd(?), and with your aspiration to be the false messiah (al-dājjāl); perhaps you are the talking reptile (dābbat al-ard), but I am not sure. You may as well be considered as Sawshā (Saoshyant), but evidently you are not al-khīdr. What I am positive about is that you are not Jesus (al-Masih). I have the feeling that your soul is that of .... Dukālā ... nay you are the expected Arkūn! In this passage, al-Jahiz has incorporated or employed a Christian element (Jesus), a Muslim element (the dajjāl, dābbat al arḍ, al-Khīdr, the associate of Moses, who had been gifted with knowledge inaccessible to Moses), and even the Pre-Islamic Persian heritage of Mani and Mazdak. Pellat comments on these two (Māni and Mazdak) in this passage by saying that al-Jahiz was mixing up both when he took Saoshyant (the last saviour in Persian religion) for Arkūn, (one of the bad spirits believed to have been born out of the bad principle in the doctrine of Māni, and which is expected to return). As for Dukālā, Pellat suggests, it stands for al-Dajjāl or for Satan. The significant message one gets here is that the addressee is paradoxically likened - in a hypothetical way - to a person who is superior to Prophets, in the very manner that al-Khīdr was superior to Moses as evident in the chapter of the Cave (al-Kahf) in the Qurʾān, and is eventually likened to the return of the anti-Christ or the Dajjāl, before the day of judgement; this point is stressed in the closing words of the passage, as

1225 The person with whom Moses is said in the Qurʾān to have associated and sought Knowledge from. This figure, on the other hand, is significant in Imāmite literature for his longevity as an illustration of the Mahdi’s longevity. See Ibn Bābawayh, Kamāl al-Dīn, 1: 354.
1226 Kitāb al-Tarbi‘, parag. 65.
1227 See Pellat, Ibid., index, p. 16.
the addressee is finally recognized as the awaited Arkûn, which as Pellat points out, refers to a bad spirit in Maniism or Mazdaism.\footnote{1228}

As regards the sarcastic acknowledgement of the addressee by al-Jähiz as \textit{Saoshyant}, one should state here that this term stands for the Zoroastrian "World Saviour who is to come,"\footnote{1229} "the one who will bring benefit,"\footnote{1230} and "who will lead humanity in the last battle against evil"\footnote{1231} and reduce \textit{Ahriman} (the devil) to impotence and bring about the resurrection and the existence to come.\footnote{1232} H. Corbin has noticed the analogous relation - though not identical - between Mazdaism and Shī'ism: "In Mazdaism there is the \textit{Saoshyant}, or Savior to come, surrounded by his companions, while in Shī'ism there is the hidden Imām surrounded by a mystical body of Knights ..."\footnote{1233} This saviour is assumed to restore all things to their primordial splendor, to the state in which they were until the invasion of the Ahrimanian counterpowers.\footnote{1234} Consequently, it follows that al-Jähiz is categorically classifying his addressee as the awaited hidden Imām who was cherished by the emerging group of Rāfiḍites, emerging during the time of al-Jähiz into the yet unformed Imāmite group. The treatise therefore bears a historical significance as al-Jähiz's attention has focussed on the Imāmite group to come, still in its formative period, not in a too early formative stage but in a much more outspoken, defined and less secretive stage than had been predicted by Watt.\footnote{1235}

The other message one gets from this passage is the way al-Jähiz is looking at the Rāfiḍism of his addressee as something quite alien from the

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  \item \footnote{1228} See Ibid., index, p. 5.
  \item \footnote{1230} M. Boyce, \textit{A History of Zoroastrianism}, vol. 1. \textit{The Early Period}, (Leiden/Köln: E. J. Brill, 1975) p. 234. Saoshyant is a "future active participle '...future benefactor'... in general, it has been interpreted as being used obliquely by Zoroaster of himself ..." but can also refer to "the teaching of a yet greater man whom the prophet expected to come after him to crown his work." Ibid.
  \item \footnote{1232} See H. Corbin, \textit{Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth, From Mazdean Irân to Shi'ite Iran}, Translated from French by Nancy Pearson, (Princeton: University Press, 1977) p. XIV.
  \item \footnote{1233} Ibid., p. 62. M. Boyce explains the relation between Shi'ī Muslims and Zoroastrianism, by pointing out their common attribution to their leaders "an especial divine grace ... by virtue of their lineage" and in the similarity between the "hidden or expected imam who will, like the Saoshyant, appear at the end of time, restore the faith, and fill the earth with justice". See Boyce, Ibid., p. 152.
  \item \footnote{1234} Corbin, Ibid., p. 69.
  \item \footnote{1235} See introductory survey, under Proto-Shī'ism.
\end{itemize}
mainstream of orthodox Islam, as something that is categorically foreign and essentially rooted in the Pre-Islamic Persian ideological pool (Saoshyant1236, Arkûn) although the Islamic, Christian1237 and Jewish ingredients were suggested as an approximation and way of clarifying the Persian roots of Râfidi Shi`ism.

Another significant passage that ridicules the potential Imâmship of al-Jâhi`z's addressee in terms of the Imâmate of the Râfida reads as follows:

Even if you were the Imâm of the Râfida, you would have been killed in the twinkle of the eye! and if you were so killed, the Umma would then perish, as you are a man without offspring; for the Imâmate today is not valid among brothers (i.e., from brother to brother) and had it been acknowledged among brothers it would have equally been fit between cousins... (What aggravates the matter) is that succession has become more concentrated in kinship such that it became valid only in a direct line, among the sons. In this reasoning, (one may predict) it shall not continue/exist unless the Imâm himself is (conceived as) permanently existing until the end of time. This is the logic of the upholders of transmigration (tanäsukh) but you are a Râfidi and transmigration of souls is not celebrated by you. So send me a gift ... as I have gifted to you the chapter of metempsychosis.1238

This passage mockingly suggests the aspiration of the addressee to preside over the Râfida. However, it does imply a degree of underground political involvement which al-Jâhi`z may have been personally keen to expose and highlight before the attention of the authorities, who - despite their pro-Alidism - would not have tolerated such claims and activities. This is emphasized by saying: "You would have been put to death in the twinkle of the eye." The other message one gets from this paragraph is the way Râfidi Shi`ism is sarcastically compared, this time, to the Indian concept of metempsychosis; thus al-Jâhi`z once more is stressing the foreigness and non-orthodoxy of his addressee's beliefs.

1236 M. Boyce says that it was during the 6 Abûsîd epoch "that Islam took root and came to flourish everywhere in Iranian soil. In the process it grew steadily more Zoroastrianized, with adaptations of funerary rites and purity laws, and a cult of saints springing up in place of the veneration of yazads. The Shi`i also found a figure to replace, in their hopes and longings, that of the Saoshyant." Ibid.

1237 Christianity and Judaism will be employed by Imâmite theologians to stress certain dimensions in the notion of the Mahdi. For example, Ibn Bâbawayh likens the Imam’s ghayba to Moses’ occultation, (Kamâl al-Dîn, 1:23) and to Jesus’s occultation (Ibid., 1: 354) When compared to Prophets, the Imam resembles Noah and al-Khidr in their longevity, Moses in his occultation, Jesus in the differences of people on his nature, and Muhammad in the use of the sword. See Ibid., 1: 577.

1238 K. al-Tarbi`, parag. 130. The way that Râfidi Shi`ites believe in the Imam’s longevity is ridiculed in the same way as the Indian belief in Tanäsukh. In otherwords, the Sunni heresiographer al-Jâhi`z is openly saying that this sketch of the everlasting Imam is as ridiculous and fanciful as the foreign non-Muslim idea of Indian Tanäsukh.
The significance of the above text lies in the following main points: first, in reflecting the existence of the Shi'ite doctrine that the *Umma* and in fact the world would not exist without the presence of an Imām. Second, in drawing attention to the problems that Shi'ites contemporary to al-Jāhīz were already confronting in terms of succession to the Imāmate, clearly indicating that the doctrine - that after al-Ḥusayn succeeded Ḥasan there could be no further legal succession from brother to brother - was already established among the Shi'ites. Thirdly, the text also establishes that the doctrine that one of the Imāms would live until the end of time was also a current Shi'ite doctrine. We know that earlier groups of Shi'ites like the Kaysāniyya thought that Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya was the expected Imām.1239

We also know that certain *Ismā'īlī* groups held that the Seventh Imām (Ismā'īl or his son Muḥammad1240) was the awaited Imām. This passage suggests that among the group usually referred to as the Rāfiḍa, i.e., those who saw the Imāmate as passing from Ja'far al-Ṣādiq to his son Mūsā al-Kāzim, and from him to ʿAli Riḍā, some also held the belief that one of their descendants would be the expected Imām. In fact, there were some who thought that it was Mūsā.1242 The passage therefore gives us a valuable insight into the doctrines of the Rāfiḍa that were present during this period in the sense that the Rāfiḍa of al-Jāhīz were of the Ismā'īlī (seventh), Kaysānī form of Proto-Shi'ism.

Many scholars of al-jāhīz have regarded al-Jāhīz's passage quoted above as prophetic,1243 by understanding it to reflect al-Jāhīz's expectation of the expected Mahdi. However, a quick reading of Shi'ite heresiography shows that al-Jāhīz's statement merely reflects views current among messianic sects centering around Shi'ite Imāms. al-Jāhīz's assumption was therefore a natural

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1241 The Ismā'īliyya and Mubārakīyya held that Ismā'īl (brother of Mūsā al-Kāzim) and his son Muḥammad did not die and were considered Imāms. See Nawbakhtī, Firaq, pp. 57.
1242 As the group known as Futhiyya who gathered around Mūsā's elder brother then became attached to him. Ibid., p. 65.
1243 It will only take couple of years for al-Jāhīz's prophecy to start to actualize, i.e., when it would be dogmatically and widely possible to say that the Imam will stay alive till the end of time! Pellat says: 'a paragraph on the evolution of the Imamate in a direct line, which necessarily leads to the belief in the survival of the Imam and to the metempsychosis is at the same time prophetic, because in the same year of al-Jāhīz's death will be born the twelfth and last Imam of the descendants of ʿAli; it is a revelation of the way the Mu'tazilites could mock Rāfiḍite theses'; See Pellat, 'L'imamat dans la Doctrine de Gāhīz', p. 38.
consequence to an established reality in as much it was pointing to the future. The following table on the Messianic figures around the Ṭālibids aims to clarify this point: i. e., that messianic extremist sects were present before al-Jāḥīz; and are equally believed to have continued after him until Twelver Imāmism replaced Rāfidism and made Shi'ism more unified under the Imāmi banner.

2- Claimed 6Abd Allah to be God embodied in him. Ibid, pp. 29, 32.

3- Claimed that Ibn al-Hanafiyya was God. Ibid. p. 25.

4- Claimed that Ibn al-Hanafiyya did not die, resided in Radwa protected and nourished by a lion and a tiger. Ibid. p. 24.26

5- The group is named after al-Mughira b. Said, who claimed that Muhammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya was the Mahdi who did not die and was alive in a mountain close to Makka. The followers of al-Baqir who refused his view and accepted the Imamship of al-Sadiq were nicknamed by him as al-Rafi"a. Ibid. pp. 54–55.

6- Named after al-Man§u, who claimed prophethood after death of Bagir. He was killed by the caliph al-Mahdi. pp. 34–35.

7- Named after Abu-l-Khattäb who claimed 6Far was God and he was his messenger. He also claimed that God was a moving soul that left 6Far then stayed in Abu-l-Khaṭṭāb. Ibid. p. 37.

8- Claimed his immortality and regarded him as the expected Mahdi, and the holder of the sword. p. 57.

9- al-Waqifa were groups around Mūsā, differed on his death. Those who said he is alive, claimed that he was in occultation (ghayba) as the Mahdi, entrusted Ibn Bashir, thus the name Bushriyya/Bashiriyya. p. 70.

10- al-Muhadditha approved Imamate of Mūsā and then his son 6Ali al-Ridä.

11- al-Futhiyya eventually accepted Imamate of Mūsā.


13- Named after Abu-I-Khattäb who claimed Jäfar was God and he was his messenger. He also claimed that God was a moving soul that left Jäfar then stayed in Abu-l-Khaṭṭāb. Ibid. p. 37.

14- al-Waqifa were groups around Mūsā, differed on his death. Those who said he is alive, claimed that he was in occultation (ghayba) as the Mahdi, entrusted Ibn Bashir, thus the name Bushriyya/Bashiriyya. p. 70.

15- After al-Numayrī, Muhammad b. Nuṣayr who claimed prophethood from 6All al-Hādī, believed to be his God. Ibid. p. 78. (Time of al-Mutawakkil)
How much can Kitâb al-Tarbiyat be used to reflect the situation of Shi`ism or Proto-Shi`ism whether in its Râfidite or Imâmite form? Although this treatise alludes, as we have seen, to the awaited Imâm who will live forever and assume an immortal status, which is a necessary condition for his unspecified return in time, and represents one Imâmite theological principle of justification for his concealment and re-appearance,1244 and although it may be taken as echoing the intra-Shi`ite disputes over succession (from brother-brother versus father-son) besides the other significant notion of the significance of the Imâm to the salvation and continuity of the Umma, it should not, however, be necessarily taken to mean that Imâmism was fully developed and elaborated during the time of writing of al-Tarbiyat for it is said that "the distinctive feature of Imâmite Shi`ism" that is based on "the recognition of a series of twelve Imãms"1245 and "handed on from father to son in the line of al-Ḥusayn until the occultation of the twelfth Imâm in 874,"1246 was not crystallized before the year 874.

Whether al-Jâhiz was confronting here Shi`i Imâmism as such - i.e., the fully developed twelver Shi`ism - or whether Shi`ism was still in its Râfidite developing stage, is an open issue that can not be finalized. What can be noted is that this treatise gives no reference to twelver Shi`ism as such, nor to Imâmism; al-Jâhiz's only reference was to his addressee as "Imâm al-Râfi`da." We can conclude that up to this period al-Jâhiz's writings do not contain the term 'Imâmites'. From one side, Imâmite sources emphasize that twelver Shi`ism has been authentic since the time of the Prophet Muḥammad - a fact that is upset by their acknowledgement of the existence of fourteen different Shiite groups after the death of the eleventh Imâm.1247 In this period, the Ithnâ-`Ashariyya was about to be announced as the other side of the argument maintains. This side understands twelver Shi`ism differently, in the sense that it has taken an evolutionary developmental line, and has appeared as an offshoot from the multitude of groups and movements that have been accompanying ʿAli b. Abî Ṭâlib and his relatives or descendants. This multitude and that offshoot (Imâmism) seem to be mutually irreconcilable, i.e., can not be believed to have existed simultaneously, otherwise if Imâmism of the 9th century was as effective

1244 See Ibn Bâbawayh, Kamâl al-Dîn, p. 126 and Watt, "The Polarization of Sunnism and Shi`ism" : Islamic Philosophy, pp. 60-61 (a brief sketch of the principles that had developed Imâmism from Râfidism).
1245 Watt, Ibid.
1246 Ibid., p. 36.
1247 See al-Nawbakhti, Firaq al-Shi`a, p. 79.
as of the time of ʿAli, it should have dominated this growing multitude of Shiʿī or Proto-Shiʿī groups.

As Watt has suggested, Shiʿism (during al-Jāḥiz's time, the death date of the eleventh Imām) had not yet been unified under the Imāmī banner into a single Imāmīte sect; the new name of Imāmīyya could not have come into use before 900 and depending on L. Massignon's finding, that "Imāmites were only welded into a strong and cohesive body in the twenty years following the death of the eleventh Imām "1248 by Abū Sahl al-Nawbakhtī, the issue of the authenticity or evolutionarity of twelver Shiʿism remains open, between those whose concern was to prove the historicity of the series of Imāms which have now indeed ended with the Twelfth Imām1249 or those who maintain that twelver Shiʿism was a totally new phenomenal product, that had benefitted from existing notions.

Further Indications of Giving the addressee the role of the hidden Imām

In this treatise, al-Jāḥiz has in fact provided the reader with useful information on the aspirations and probable activities of his addressee. He has done this by mocking his addressee's pseudo-Imāmship.1250 For instance, despite his eternal essence that made him completely knowledgeable, the addressee is mockingly described as hating fame and determined to stay anonymously with the masses (al-hashwiyya), because of his intrinsic modest nature.1251 al-Jāḥiz ironically begs him to declare his exact address and open the closed doors leading to his house and set up a flag pointing to it1252 (in order to provide him with answers to the puzzling questions that have been raised) but he later refers to this matter by acknowledging that the addressee's disciples and students have narrated on his behalf his knowledge of the causes underlying certain puzzling zoological phenomena, in addition to his superior medical knowledge.1253

1248 See Watt, 'The Rāfiḍītes a Preliminary Study...' pp. 120-121.
1250 Ahmad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb need not necessarily be taken as the real intended target of al-Jāḥiz, in as much as he is taken as an instrument through which Kaysāniyya, Rafḍ and non-orthodoxy are attacked.
1251 Tarbic, parag. 58.
1252 Ibid., parag. 60.
1253 Parag. 180. Again this refers to the belief of The Rāfīda that the Imam knows all things about the world, including all languages and sciences. He also knows al-ghayb, see al-Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, (Tehran: Dâr al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, 1388 A.H.), 1: 227, which is
light of this assertion (that he has students) one can understand al-Jāhiẓ's other allusions to the role of the Imām's leadership in knowledge, on which al-Jāhiẓ is basing his request to announce it publicly: "Say and we shall listen, point and we shall follow!"  

al-Jāhiẓ questions:

Do students and seekers of truth have anybody else but you to seek?... Does vision fall on anything but you? Is reference made to anyone but you? Do you have a rival in knowledge or equal in ability of understanding, tolerance and will power?  

From the above references one can safely assume that despite al-Jāhiẓ's apparent eagerness to recognize the exact address of the hidden Imām ("tell me where is the door to your house? ..."), al-Jāhiẓ has nevertheless furnished us with evidence of the fact that ʿAbd al-Wahhāb must have been secretly mixing with his followers (if not the followers of one hidden Imām) who are now his sincere students who have become fanatically fond of him. His excellent status has invaded the hearts of the women both young and old, who are desperately longing to see him.  

After building this image of the addressee in the role of the hidden Imām, it was equally incumbent on al-Jāhiẓ to criticize the ideas associated with the concept of the awaited Mahdi/Imām. Specifically, al-Jāhiẓ was primarily concerned with concepts such as (a) the longevity of the Imām, (b) his unique and eternally established access to Gnostic-intuitive knowledge, (c) his preaching of allegorical interpretations, (d) and his alleged association with fabulous animals that are supposed to provide protection and nourishment for him until the time he may come out (raj'a) of his concealment.  

II. Sarcastic references to the hidden Imām's unique longevity, unique knowledge or knowledge of eternal or historical events:

Says al-Jāhiẓ

explained by Ibn Bābawayh, Kamāl al-Dīn, 1: 107 in that he knows ghayb after God wills it and not by himself. (see Ibid., p. 110).

1254 Parag. 57-58.
1255 Tarbiʿ, parag. 98.
1256 Ibid., parag. 106.
Who else but you can count of years what you can, and who has reached of time what you have of age? \[1257\] You must be the associate of planets, how were your evenings? Ye, the strength of Prime matter (quwwat al-hayūld), how were your mornings? Ye, the eagle of Luqmān, how did you appear? \[1258\] Tell me about the Abdāl \[1259\] how did you witness deformation (maskh) occurring? was it over a gradual process or all of a sudden? \[1260\] Tell me about the Pharaohs... and origin of water... \[1261\] You definitely enjoy the essence of celestial bodies (jawharuka falakī) but your substance is terrestrial, thus combining the contradictions! (...but why bother with the outlined difficulty of simultaneously being celestial-terrestrial) you are the type of creation that is immune to change and above contradiction! \[1262\] You have overcome the durability of gold (which is envious of you) ... as God has bestowed upon you such a longevity (Ammaraka Allāh). \[1263\]

This passage contains references to Shi‘ism which will be amplified in the footnotes:

May I be sacrificed for you \[1264\] since you have really witnessed humanity since \[1265\] they were created (up to now) and have seen the Jinn before they have been made invisible, and (because) you have uniquely been endowed \[1266\] with finding the reality of things, be they discrete or mixed, healthy or diseased or unsound of mind (madkhūl) evidently certainty is not mistaken by you for doubt, neither abnormality for normality, or possibility for impossibility... so much that the worldly existence is sketched before you in its totality and you have discovered the cause (al-sabab) as well as the effect (al-musabbab); \[1267\] So tell me now, what do you say of (how do you value) esoteric vision (ru'yā) ... the al chemical elixir ... etc.) \[1268\] God has surely provided you for us as a bounty; \[1269\] blessed be who seeks salvation... cursed he who avoids you, and hellfire awaits all who deny your merits or even who are ignorant of your status \[1270\] but do not ever believe you are pre-existent (gadīm) thus accused of blasphemy, nor think you are created (muhdāth) and are thus accused of coexistence with God, and of polytheism, \[1271\] for you are unlike Satan who is uniquely endowed with living to the day of judgement ... although it is you who deserves to be invisible, and you are in a sense more ambiguous (than him), and we belong to one father and share the same religion. \[1272\]
Pellat has cleverly noticed the relation between the longevity of al-Jähiz's correspondent and the doctrine of the expected Mahdi among the Rāfidi Shi'ites of his time. As the expected Mahdi should know everything, it was quite natural of al-Jähiz to emphasize his alleged longevity. Because he has experienced all creation and events, it was natural that he should be exceptionally knowledgeable.

As Pellat says:

The doctrine of al-Mahdi seems to have influenced and initiated the search for traditions concerning figures famous for longevity... To this question of al-Mahdi is attached the question of human life since it was convenient for the Shi'ites to justify his ghayba (apparent absence, occultation) and the return of the Imam by reference to historical examples of exceptional length of period of human life. This explains the importance of works devoted to mu'ammarûn and the insistence of al-Jähiz to question the longevity of those figures. 1270

III. Sarcastic references to the highly allegorical (Süfi/Gnostic) frame of mind of his addressee:

al-Jähiz seems to be quite critical of his addressee's highly unrealistic and deluded frame of mind, as he is adamantly indifferent to what people think of his shape, as al-Jähiz narrates him saying: "Why should I care for those who see me as quite fat, when I am in God's eyes very attractive, tall and very fit!" 1271

The addressee seems to be unable to cope with reality, since he is unable to perceive his physical shape for what it is, and is pathetically deluded about his mental powers; he is adamant in his position, since his interpretation of external reality is entirely shaped by his esoteric (bâtin) philosophy:

6Abd al-Wahhâb was exceptionally short but claimed to be quite tall, 6Abd al-Wahhâb was too old but claimed to be very young; his arrogant claim that he knew all disciplines was proportional to his real ignorance of them and his eagerness to express them was equal to his

1270 Pellat, K. al-Tarbic, notes on 'Rafidi' and "Mu'ammar", pp. 174, 147. Ibn Bâbüya's mention of the long living "Mu'ammarûn" (in his Kamâl) among the Indians who have lived for 900 years seems enough evidence for him to believe in this phenomenon embodied in the figure of 'Hujjat Allâh", i.e., the expected Mahdi. See Ibn Bâbüya's Kamâl al-Ni'ma wa Itmâm al-Din (Tehran: Dâr al-Kutub al Islâmiyya, 1395), 2: 432-433.

1271 Kitâb al-Tarbic, parag. 14. This handsomeness is only cherished by God and the addressee, in what is described as "the hidden fitness (al-Tâl al-Khaft)" Ibid., parag. 25. The addressee is surprisingly enjoying a width or roundness that he shares with the earth, planets and paradise. Ibid., parag. 31.
stupidity [...] You must have an infallible logic [...] when you say: 'why should I care how people see me when I am in the eyes of God and in reality- (fi al-ḥaqīqa)1272...

In poking fun at ābūl Waḥḥāb’s shape and his apparent belief that he was much more handsome than he really was, al-Jāḥiz links this with the claims of Shi‘ites that the Imāms had the ability to interpret things allegorically. It is only by such ridiculous ideas, al-Jāḥiz seems to indicate that the true nature of matters, including ābūl Wahhāb’s shape, can be ignored.1273

al-Jāḥiz goes on to ridicule ābūl Wahhāb by suggesting that not only has he the perfect knowledge of a Shi‘ite Imām but also that he possesses the perfection of a Sūfī Saint. In this al-Jāḥiz is revealing a similar hostility to Sufism as that he has shown to extremist Shi‘ism.

In both instances, the type of knowledge with which this addressee is gifted, is described as 'needless of proofs and argumentation' as God has relieved him from the task of forwarding evidences1274 by making him perfect in every sense.1275 We are to infer that scholastic Aristotelian argumentation is not a sign of perfection in the eyes of the addressee and this categorically conflicts with the illuminative-Gnostic type of knowledge he is exclusively claimant to, after having access to and being endowed with a light (diyā’), that may be momentarily witnessed by those privileged to meet him1276 (diyā’uka Āriyya ‘ind al-Khalq).

1272 Ibid., Parag. 1, 14, 31.
1273 Resort to allegorical interpretations, reflective of one doctrine of extremist Shi‘ites, has also been exemplified through describing the addressee’s further insistence on rejecting visual appearances (‘ayānān) the way they are really visible to others. al-Jāḥiz says: “You regard one who is killed for his adamant position as a martyr, and that adhering to this dogmatism - against all balanced people - as a pleasure, and that taking presidency (ri‘āsa) in the art of rejecting truths gives one a high rank (simply because) the acceptance of what is visualized is a sign of inferiority, and being known for exaggeration is a mark for excellence (...). The well-mannered in your judgement is one who... backbites, hates scholars and intelligent men, envies every bounty and rejects each truth.” See Ibid., parag. 129, 131.
1274 Ibid., parag. 97-100.
1275 Ibid. parag. 90-95. The addressee has been made so perfect in knowledge (‘ilm), tolerance (fahm), and will power (‘azm) that he has become “The target of all scholars and students, the aspiration of all looks and pointers. His status (qadr) is simply matchless. See Ibid., parag. 102, 106.
1276 Ibid., parag. 113.
Reference to the irreconcilability of gnostic or self-intuitive Ilhām and inductive access to knowledge (Istinbät) is also touched on in the following paragraph:

Tell me about Jesus's speech in his mother's womb then while in the cradle and about Yahyā's wisdom when he was still a boy: were they both uttering what they were not knowing, or uttering what they were unaware of? How did they become knowledgable? By experience and induction (Istinbät) and after mastery of the tool of knowledge or through intuition (Ilhām) and ridding themselves from the norms?¹²⁷⁷

We are in fact not before a simple "Abd al-Wahhāb", but before a long-lived entity gifted with self evident intuitive esoteric knowledge¹²⁷⁸ that is linked to the Abdāl,¹²⁷⁹ a group of saintly figures that were said to occupy the fifth position in the hierarchy of saints residing then in Syria in the sense he is presiding over those Abdāl thus enjoying a position similar to that of a Quṭb (head of saintly hierarchy of Şūfīş), exactly like the contemporaneous mystic figure of Dhu-l-Nūn al-Misrī (180/796-246/861),¹²⁸⁰ who is said to have been the first Şūfī head to have taught the true nature of Gnostic knowledge. Although reference has been made to him, the addressee - given his very special status in knowledge and ethics - should therefore surpass this figure, as he is described previously as having no equal.¹²⁸¹

¹²⁷⁷ Ibid., parag. 164.
¹²⁷⁸ See Ibid. parag. 180 (al-Ilm al-juwwāni).
¹²⁷⁹ See Ibid. parag. 113-114, and Pellat's notes to K.al-Tarbi².
¹²⁸⁰ See E.I.² S.v. 'Dhu-I-Nun, p. 242 and S.v. 'Kutb', for Dhu-l-Nūn's status is regarded as al-Insān al-Kāmil. The Mu'tazilites are said to have been hostile to him as he had upheld the orthodox view that the Qurān was uncreated.
¹²⁸¹ See parag. 90-95. Shi'ism and Mysticism are unified in this person and the connection can be clarified in the light of the doctrine of Ibn 'Arabī, that Divine knowledge which is transmitted through the spirit of the Prophet Muḥammad (al-rūḥ al-Muḥammadīyya), is said to find its fullest manifestation in and is identical with al-Quṭb, who is the perfect man, (al-Insān al-Kāmil. ). The long lived addressee may be linked to that lāhūr that is supposedly believed to manifest itself foreover on the plane of al-Nāsūt, in Prophets and Saints i.e., in our Quṭb-like addressee, whose contact with God has made him infallible (ma'sūm). As there is one Quṭb at a time, he is God's real Khalīfa, who is the preserver and maintainer of the universe. This echoes al-Jāḥiz's reference to him: 'If you perish, the Umma would perish too!' I have derived Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine from E.I.² S.v.,"Kutb" in drawing the similarity to al-Jāḥiz's addressee. Although Ibn 'Arabī's thoughts are used to explain a (Jāḥizīan) text that has preceded it in time, the non-orthodox views of the addressee should now definitely classify him amongst those extremists described by al-Jāḥiz and by Shi'ite heresiographers like al-Nawbakhti who condemn them as "Ghullāt who have assumed Shi'ism but were drawing from Mazdaism and Maniism; who unanimously agreed that Divinity resides not in the Divine but in the body of His creatures which becomes the vessel through which the light of God moves." See Firaq al-Shī'ā, pp. 35, 41.
IV. The Prophet and the Imam:

Ibn `Arabi's view is definitely unlike that of the addressee of al-Jähiz as regards the status of the Imam vis-à-vis Prophets. In the following passage the Imam is given a higher status than the Prophet, which proves the extremism of al-Jähiz's addressee:

Is it foreseeable and conceivable or acceptable that the Prophet may turn out to be an infidel, or become polytheist or go astray after his guidance, or become an enemy of God after his wilāya (entrustment of authority) and that God will verify his falsehood as He has verified his truthfulness? How come - amongst you - the Prophet may sin but can not err, whereas the Imam does neither! How was that palatable to all Prophets - despite their abundance - and that was not possible in a single Imam - despite their scarcity... How could Solomon the Prophet be ignorant of the site of Saba'... how could Joseph be ignorant of the address of his father when he was a King and a Prophet?

I have not been able to trace back such a position to the respective extreme Shi'ite group that had assumed it. However, benefiting from Hassan Yehyä Mohamed's note on this point, in explaining al-Jähiz's remark - mentioned by al-Khayyät - on how the Rāfiḍites pretend that the world is not lacking in every epoch in an infallible Imam, Hassan Yehyä Mohamed suggests that al-Jähiz is making allusion to the doctrine of Hishäm b. al-Hakam, according to whom it is possible that the Prophets disobey God whereas Imāms must be infallible.

1282 Parag. 136.
1283 Parag. 163
1285 See Hassan, Y.M, "Ph.D. Thesis", "Qâhîz et le Chi’sme", p. 195. According to Hishäm, the Prophet committed an act of disobedience when he too took the ransom of the captives of the battle of Badr, then God pardoned him.
Closely associated with the doctrine of the expected Mahdi, in the form of Arkûn or Saoshyant, al-Jâhîz questions the addressee on his indisputable knowledge of a series of prodigious anecdotes presumably cherished by the Râfidiites:

Tell me about the ‘Anqâ‘ Mughrib and the nature of its father and mother, was it born without them or from a male and a female? Why did they regard it as sterile (‘aqîm) and feminine? When is she going to pave the way for that infant (al-Šabî)? When is she going to shelter with her wings the Shi‘a of the Imâm?... When is the red sulphur going to be dissolved in his favour, and when will the diamond mountain be transferred to him? Tell me about Sayf al-Ṣâ‘îqa (sword of the lightning), and who passed it to the Râfida? Tell me about God’s bull on earth (thawr Allah). Speak to me about the mountain paths of Radwâ and the mountains of Ḥismâ ... how is that tiger, and does that lion get thirsty? has the bat laid eggs, and does the bustard (hubârâ) feel secure? When are you going to learn what is in Jafr and perfect what has been revealed to David in al-Zubûr (the psalms)? ... What is the evidence behind Raj‘a (return of the Imâm) and Mundâsakha (transmigration of souls)? Where from have you adopted your (plural) doctrine of Bâdâ’?1286

Because the above passages are loaded with terms that need explanation, I shall give the meaning that belongs to each and try to link the term to the mythological context that it had borrowed, then its current relevance to the addressee’s Râfidiite outlook.

A. ‘Anqâ‘ Mughrib:

i- history:

al-Jâhîz is referring here to a non-existent fabulous bird. According to a tradition related by Ibn ʿAbbâs, God is said to have created this bird of a marvellous beauty, provided it with all perfection (splendid feathers, a human face, and provided it with a female copy, and given the couple the name of ‘Anqâ‘). God is said to have presented them to the Prophet Moses saying: "I give them the wild animals of Jerusalem to feed on. I would like to establish some familiarity between you and these two birds as a proof of the supremacy that I have granted you among the children of Israel." After the death of Moses, the race of ‘Anqâ‘ is said to have left the desert of Sinai for Najd and Hijâz where they are said to have eaten children, and wild and domestic animals. God made them perish touched by the inhabitants whose children were killed, but only

1286 Parags. 50, 65, 66, 73, 74.
after an alleged prophet - before Muḥammad and after Jesus - is said to have prayed to God for that purpose.\textsuperscript{1287}

In the heroic epic of Iran, Corbin says 'the son of Sām who was abducted, was nurtured and reared by the bird Simurgh,' which al-Jāḥiẓ likens to 'Anqā'.\textsuperscript{1288} This bird assumes in the Avesta, as in later Persian mystical epics, many symbolic functions.\textsuperscript{1289}

Corbin believes that this Persian symbol has been adopted by Shi‘ism, to a degree that he sees as symbolic of "a union of Mazdean Iran and Shi‘ite Iran."\textsuperscript{1290} A fifth A.H./eleventh A.D. century silk picture of the princess Shahr-Bānū, daughter of the last Sāsānid ruler who became the wife of Husayn b. ʿAli, third Imām of the Shi‘ites, who is figuratively brought up to heaven by this 'Anqā', whose breast offers shelter in the other world to the "spirits of the witnesses of truth,"\textsuperscript{1291} aims to stress that union.

(ii) Its relevance to Shi‘ism:

As regards al-Jāḥiẓ's above reference to the 'Anqā', one has to recall his other allusion to it in K. al-Ḥayawān in which more details are given of one Shi‘ite group who had adopted it, namely al-Shumaytiyya,\textsuperscript{1292} after Ma‘dān al-Shumayṭī. Here, as in Tarbi‘ the 'Anqā' is sterile and paves the way for the expected child 'al-Ṣābi',\textsuperscript{1293} who will become the expected Imām, as she has made the cradle for him. al-Jāḥiẓ says that only among this sect, has he found a similar belief in the existence of the 'Anqā'. The snakes and ostriches are expected to listen to him; the last of his miracles is to turn today into yesterday.

\textsuperscript{1287} From Pellat's notes on this bird, pp. 174-176 of Kitāb al Tarbi‘.
\textsuperscript{1288} See al-Ḥayawān, 7: 120, where Simurgh is said to be the Persian name for "a thousand birds.'
\textsuperscript{1289} H. Corbin, op. cit. p. xviii.
\textsuperscript{1290} See Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1291} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1292} The Shumaytiyya believed in the Imamate of al-Ṣādiq's other son, Muḥammad and his line; named after Yahyā b. Abī al-Shumayṭ. See al-Nawbakhti, Firaq al-Shī‘a, p. 65. In al-Qummi al-Āshcāri’s Kitāb al-Maqālāt wa-al-Firaq, the editor (p. 224) quotes al-Majālī’s Bihār al-Anwār, that Shumaytiyya is known as Sibtiyya, after Yahyā b. Abī al-Sibṭ, who was one leader of al-Mukhtār b. Abī ʿUbayd.
\textsuperscript{1293} The Imams that were allegedly acknowledged as such as after reaching seven years, were according to Nawbakhti, either the group attached to the ninth Imam, Muḥammad al-Jawād (d.220) or his son Abu-l-Ḥasan ʿAli al-Hādī. Both were Imams as of seven. See Firaq, p. 77.
God will make sulphur melt before him, and make him own the galaxies and push away the sun. The child then will be ressurrected and preside over the Shumaytiṭes.

In addition to al-Jāḥiz's own explanations of the alleged role of the 'Anqā in the upbringing of the expected Imam, the issue of recognizing the Imāmate of a child is not foreign among Shi'ite groups. Apart from Shumaytiyya, there is a group known as Sarḥūbiyya, who believed that legal knowledge was as perfect among their elderly as among their infants in the cradle. Anyone who questions that the knowledge of the cradle-child is not equal to that of the Prophet, should be an infidel (kāfir) and a polytheist (mushrik.) They seem to have adopted a gnostic attitude, as God has by His grace made them knowledgeable without having to learn from anyone else!

The historical relevance of al-Jāḥiz's reference is clarified by the information provided by al-Nawbakhti. There seem to have been only two groups whom al-Nawbakhti refers to as acknowledging the Imāmate of the child as of seven. The first group gathered around the figure of Muḥammad al-Jawād b. ʿAlī al-Riḍā. The other gathered around his son ʿAlī al-Hādi, the 10th Shi'ite Imām. If al-Jāḥiz was not aware of these groups, his reference remains significant as it shows awareness of the circulation of such views in the ʿAbbāsīd society.

B. Sayf al-Šā'īqa:

This mythical sword is believed to have formed or been melted by lightning, to be held by Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya when he comes out of his occultation preceded by one lion and two tigers. It is believed that he will rise to the sky and destroy the sun.

1294 See al-Hayawān, 7: 121-122.
1296 See Ibid., p. 77.
1297 al-ʿAshʿarī al-Qummi, Kitāb al-Maqālāt wa-al-Firaq, edited by M. Mashkūr, (Tehran: Mathba'at Ḥaydari, 1963) p.31. Ibn Taymiyya has pointed out al-Shaʿbī's observation that Rāfidā and Jews meet in the expectation of a Messiah/Imām, who would appear with a sword. See Ibn Taymiyya, Minhāj al-Sunnah, 1 and Ibn Bābawayh, Kamāl al-Dīn, 1: 18, whereby the Qā'īn (the rising Mahdi) will rise with the sword (al-Sayf).
C. Thawr Allāh:

Pellat could not understand what al-Jāḥīz exactly meant by this term, but adds: 'perhaps he may be alluding to the primordial bull of the Mazdeans, where animals and plants came from'.

D. The Lion and Tiger, Shi‘āb Riḍwā and Jibāl Ḥismā:

These are geographic places that are supposedly the abode of the hidden Imam. This was claimed by the Kaysāniyya, of whom one group said that Ibn al-Ḥanafīyya had not died, as he is residing in the mountains of Riḍwā, between Makka and Medina, nurtured by local animals. To his right is a lion, and to his left another, or a tiger who shall protect him until he appears. As regards Ḥismā, it is a locality in the present Saudi Arabian desert and may have had a similar connotation to Riḍwā. al-Jāḥīz's reference to this setting is therefore understood.

E- al-Khuffāš:

Allegedly created by Jesus, it was necessary for the extreme Shi‘ītes to employ it in their occultation doctrine. To justify the longevity of the Imam, it was necessary to have this bat - also known for its longevity and for its endurance without food.

F- al-Jafr and al-Zubur:

al-Jāḥīz’s reference to Jafr could be indicating the leather container allegedly believed to contain knowledge of prophets and awṣiyā‘ (Imāms) in addition to the scholars of Banū Israel. Furthermore, there is the white Jafr (including al-Zabūr of David, the Torah of Moses, the Gospel of Jesus, the scripts of Abraham, legal knowledge, the Muṣḥaf of Fāṭima) and the red Jafr which contains weapons to be disclosed by the holder of the Sayf.

1301 alleged to contain knowledge of the future.
1302 al-Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, 1: 240.
This Shi'ite concept refers, according to Goldziher, to:

the intervention of new circumstances which bring about the alteration of an earlier divine determination. In particular, one Shi'ite theologian, Hishäm b. al-Ḥakam, regarded 'God's knowledge as appearing on the realization of the object so that: that which does not yet exist could not be an object of God's knowledge.' This conception leaves room for the admission of God's knowledge being in correspondence with new experiences and of His changing a fixed resolution ... First propounded by Mukhtar, this doctrine became then the thesis of the Shi'ite faction of the Kaysāniyya ... When the alleged oracle (that God will make him victorious over Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubayr) was proved false by his defeat, Mukhtar said (referring to Sūra 13: 39) that something had intervened (bada lahu) which had caused God to alter his determination. After the defeat of the Shi'ite community this view had to be accepted as a convenient explanation of the failure of the hopes and prophecies of victory for the defeated Imam ... This principle also serves the Shi'ites to explain the alteration which took place in the legitimate succession of the Imāms which had been appointed by God from all time, when in place of the predestined Ismā'il, his brother Mūsā al-Kāzim succeeded Ja'far al-Ṣādiq as the seventh bearer of this theocratic dignity... 1303

The significance of the term Badā' in the text above should be seen as one more difficult issue to be raised before the addressee in order to challenge him, this time with the difficulties Badā' implies as to how to reconcile "the assumption of the appearances of new determining moments in God's knowledge, with the belief in the absolute omniscience of God, in the eternity of His knowledge ... 1304 or as Goldziher rightly observed:

In the third century A.H. the question of Badā' seems - on account of difficulties connected with it which could only be explained by subtle arguments - to have belonged to these questions by which keen intellect and originality could be tested. This may be inferred from Djāhiz. 1305

By the same token, the way al-Jāhiz had phrased his question, and coupled Badā' with Raj'a and Tanāsukh, could be seen as pointing to the unorthodoxy of the position his Kaysāni addressee was assuming, in as much as Tanāsukh and raj'a were equally foreign principles that could not be assimilated by Sunnism.

For this reason, al-Jāhiz was keen to stress that - given the obvious corruption, (fasād) falsehood, (bātil) and mythological nature, (khurāfa) of those

1304 Ibid.
1305 Ibid.
principles and issues raised before his addressee, it was time that he should start considering leaving them by first "rejecting anthropomorphism (tashbih) and the doctrine of Badā’."¹³⁰⁶ al-Jähiz’s advice, coupled in this way is significant as it reflects the unhappy reaction of a Sunni heresiographer to the concept of Badāʾ for the very reason that this concept assumes God to change His mind as His creatures usually do.

G-Raja

This key term is quite central in understanding the aspirations of al-Jähiz’s addressee who seems to have believed in the return of the expected Imām, al-Mahdi, who will terminate his occultation (ghayba).

VI. A. al-Jähiz and Aristotelian Hellenism

Pellat has pointed to al-Jähiz’s Hellenistic attitude that underlay Kitāb al-Tarbi and Kitāb al-Ḥayawān simultaneously; as they "harmonize and complete each other."¹³⁰⁷ In other words, Pellat sets as a condition for appreciating Kitāb al Tarbi understanding al-Ḥayawān first. By the same token and due to the common spirit in both, Pellat adds:¹³⁰⁸

One must go deeply into Tarbi in order to understand The spirit of al-Ḥayawān ... In al-Tarbi al-Jähiz alludes to solutions proposed by Hellenism in matters concerning scientific facts and sets himself against Zoroastrian and Mazdaean beliefs introduced by the mawāli and against Shiʿite mythology imported from abroad ... In opposition to these beliefs that always bore a hint of the clandestine (Bātin), Hellenism, which al-Jähiz was skillful in, provided rationalistic conceptions, which were still not adopted by the most open minds.

B Significance of Insertion of Greek thought:

It is not difficult to enumerate the recurrences of al-Jähiz’s resorting to Greek personalities and thought, in his attempt to ridicule the non-scholastic and gnostic approach of his addressee. Many Greek philosophers are deliberately mentioned to make the addressee come back to the objective reality that al-Jähiz finds missing in him, or at least to make him modest in his claims to know

¹³⁰⁶ See K. al-Tarbi, parag. 189.
¹³⁰⁷ Pellat’s preface to Tarbi, pp. XIV-XVI.
¹³⁰⁸ Ibid., p. XV. See parag. 180 and 164.
everything, or to perform miracles.\textsuperscript{1309} Both the style and content of al-Jāḥīz's \textit{Kitāb al-Tarbī} manifest his dependance on the rationalistic school of thought in Hellenism quite openly: Stoic reasoning,\textsuperscript{1310} methodical doubt, constant resort to scholastic reasoning,\textsuperscript{1311} embodied in hypothetical syllogisms, and mocking of mythical beliefs\textsuperscript{1312} are quite common features of this \textit{Kitāb}. These features have been repeatedly utilized to make fun of the gnostic frame of mind of his addressee that was the ideological basis for his dogmatic extremism, i.e., for upholding the Kaysāniyya thought. If scholastic Hellenism was used by the Mu'tazilites as a weapon against their ideological enemies like the Dahrites, Maniists, Mazdeanists and Rāfiḍites, then it is in such a treatise that one can verify the soundness of this view.

In one passage\textsuperscript{1313} al-Jāḥīz pretends to be anxious to know what discourses his long lived addressee had had with Hermes, Plato and Aristotle, and which school of thought he had finally chosen. al-Jāḥīz sarcastically points that only he has certitude in him and therefore he has decided to devote his life to him by not leaving him. I think the mention of these figures is not coincidental or superficial. Although it is evident which school he has sided with, al-Jāḥīz has deliberately put the question to encourage him leave the gnostic (Hermetic), self evident/illuminative approach to knowledge, and choose the scholastic Aristotelian one i.e., in its Islamized form of \textit{Fitūzāl}.

al-Jāḥīz has uncovered his motives and pronounced them more bluntly as he requests his addressee - after confronting him with one hundred issues in an effort similar to that of Aristotle in his \textit{Kitāb al-Masā'il} to leave:

(i) anthropomorphism (\textit{al-Tashbih})
(ii) the belief in \textit{Badā’}
(iii) \textit{Rafāl}, exchanging it for \textit{Fitūzāl}.

I have deliberately asked you these questions inspite of my certitude that however little or big your ignorance is evident, I intended (questions) to make you distinguish the truth and falsehood underlying them, which are mythical and impossible and which are true or corrupt, (so

\textsuperscript{1309} The Imām is allegedly said to divert the Nile river from its course. See parag. 80 and 133.


\textsuperscript{1311} \textit{Tarbi}, parag. 16, 38, 54.

\textsuperscript{1312} As has been seen above.

\textsuperscript{1313} See parag. 83.
as to drive you to read my books and stay by my side. So I urge you to reject anthropomorphism, *Badā‘* and substitute *Rafid* for *Fīţāl*.

In view of the nature of the undeniably subtle, highly rational and antignostic type of argument advanced by al-Jāhiz in this work (and other works too), it would be useful to retrieve the historical background underlying such a rationalistic appeal, even if it has to go back to the reign of al-Ma‘mūn who is believed to have arranged for the historical marriage between the Arabo-Islamic heritage and the Greek heritage, namely that of Aristotle.

C. *Islam and Aristotelian Hellenism: Fitting al-Tarbi‘ into the historical context:*

It is maintained by al-Jābiri that the presence of the Greek philosopher Aristotle in the Arab-Islamic culture had not been witnessed prior to the reign of al-Ma‘mūn, alongside his cultural campaign and strategy to accelerate the process of translation from Greek into Arabic by putting all the services of the State to meet that purpose.

As for the purposes behind this campaign, al-Ma‘mūn, who was the head of the ʿAbbāsids, was at the same time the leader of the Sunnite caliphate that categorically believed in the termination of the series of Prophets and the end of “revelation” as culminated in the prophethood of Muḥammad, the seal of Prophets.

If esoteric and messianic qualities had been revolving around the Ṭālibite branch of the Ḥāshimites, as early as ʿAli b. Abi Ṭālib himself, and continued since then among his descendants and relatives, it would be quite natural for...
al-Ma’mūn (and consequently his faithful subject, al-Jāḥiẓ) to have acted in the footsteps of his father al-Rashid, who is believed to have adopted the strategy of:

a) refuting the Shi‘ite esoteric claims now laid by the wāqīfā, by discrediting the claim that the seventh Ḥusaynīd Imām, Mūsā al-Kāzīm had not died but was in occultation, (ghayba) and therefore they were awaiting his return (raj‘a) and saying that he was ‘al-qā‘im al-Mahdi’. For this reason al-Rashid decided to publicly put the corpse of al-Kāzīm before the masses to counteract the claims of al-Wāqīfā.¹³²⁰

b) Moulding the masses with a rational attitude against the esoteric one held by the extreme Shi‘ite group. His initiation of the House of wisdom “Bayt al-Ḥikma” is likened to the Renaissance in Europe.¹³²¹

al-Ma’mūn, similarly, embodies the proverb “like father like son” in the sense that he is believed to have adopted and developed his father’s policy and ideological strategy which happened to reach its fullest development in himself, in response to the escalating esoteric charisma attached to Shi‘ite figures. His nomination of ʿAlī al-Ridā, according to one interpretation, is nothing but a politico-ideological manoeuvre to uncover the growing charisma revolving from a Ḥanafīte wife, Muhammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya after the failure of his efforts with the major contemporary Fāṭimid descendant of ʿAlī, i.e., ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn. The appearance of the epithet mahdi is said to have first occurred with Mukhtār - who considered Ibn al-Ḥanafīyya al-mahdi, the rightly guided, and claimed to have been sent by him as his agent - or with his Kaysāni ghulāt followers who revived old ideas of the Saba‘yya that denied the death of ʿAlī, now denying the death of his son, (al-Qāḍī, op. cit., 300,301,306.) It was this complex foreign religio-political formula that advocates hereditary succession in the same noble family that was rejected by the Khawārij as well as by the outstanding members of the house of the Prophet, who acted against al-Mukhtār’s -or his fanatic adherents’- efforts to implant his/their non-Islamic ideas; namely “the return of the spirit of the Prophet in his heirs.”(Wellhausen, The Arab Kingdom, p. 502) with the corresponding messianic and pre-Christian concepts of raj‘a (return, reappearence, rebirth, see Watt, Formative, pp.43,46,48 and al-ʿAsam, Fadīḥat, p. 312 citing Goldziher) and Indian concept of tanāsūkh al-arwāh (transmigration of souls, metempsychosis, Watt, Formative, p. 57), in order to deify the ‘holy’ family. The idea of a hidden Imam spread among those attracted to al-Mukhtār’s movement, but this was rejected by those Fāṭimid descendants of ʿAlī (J. Olaf Blichfeldt, Early Mahdism: Politics and Religion in the Formative Period of Islam, Leiden Brill, 1985, p.108.) who may be regarded as having formed the nucleus of the other non-Imāmite branch of Shi‘ism i.e., the Zaydiyya.

¹³²⁰ al-Kāzīm’s body was also put publicly on view to prove that he died in a natural way. See al-Mufīd, Kitāb al-Irshād, (quoted by F. ʿOmar, al-Khilāfa al-ʿAbbāsiyya, p. 200.)

¹³²¹ See F. ʿOmar, Ibid., p. 35, Citing Metz.
around the latest Shi‘ite Imam (‘Ali al-Riḍā)\(^{1322}\) and give him his exact human proportions. In short, the ‘Abbāsid measures quoted above were directly targeted against the theses of the extreme Shi‘ites who believed that their Imāms were “a continuation to the series of Divine and universal Prophethoods, and that those Imāms enjoyed an access to the same Divine truth held previously by the Prophets, and handed over to the “awliyā’. Accordingly, the cycle of prophethood has therefore not been terminated by Muḥammad, but has continued through his (Fāṭimid) descendants, who have inherited prophethood, i.e., Knowledge of the realities of religion and the Bātin of the Qur‘ān has been solely concentrated in their persons. The Shi‘ite Imām has not only access to Divine truth/ Divinity, but is said to share such divine qualities as knowledge by way of descent of the knowledge from the former to the latter, (the Imām, the wali)\(^{1323}\)

The significance of al-Ma‘mūn’s openness to Greek philosophy and thought, al-Jābīrī adds, should be understood properly in the sense that only under al-Ma‘mūn was proper Aristotelian thought introduced to the Arabs in contrast to the accumulating neo-Platonic and essentially Gnostic heritage that was coming from the school of Alexandria. al-Jābīrī says:

As al-Ma‘mūn noticed that fighting atheism and non-belief (zandaqa) by the sword was futile, he resorted to encouraging open discussions with the opposing thinkers. Similarly, when he noticed the growing attachment of the masses to the Shi‘ite cause, especially after he was aware of the formation of a secretive Shi‘ite group after the death of Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, his new strategy was two fold and aimed:

(a) to push the Shi‘ite movement to unveil itself and its underground activities
(b) to resist the hidden Shi‘ite dogma based on gnosticism.

al-Ma‘mūn’s nomination of ‘Ali al-Riḍā was meant to achieve goal (a). Goal (b), however, necessitated that al-Ma‘mūn seek the quick introduction of Aristotelian logic onto the very battlefield that had waved the swords of Maneeistic, Gnostic and Shi‘ite ‘Irfān - that are of one essence - against the ‘Abbāsids, thus making an alliance with Aristotelian logic by planting him into the mainstream of Arabo-Islamic culture against those who had threatened, not only the ‘Abbāsids as a State but also the official religious thought in its Sunnite and Mu‘tazilite versions simultaneously.\(^{1324}\)

al-Jābīrī concludes that Shi‘ite sources confirm al-Ma‘mūn’s strategies, as they make him responsible for the death of ‘Ali al-Riḍā, as well as blaming

\(^{1322}\) F. ʻOmar, op.cit., pp. 32-34.

\(^{1323}\) See al-Jābīrī, pp. 226-227, citing al-Kulaynī on the continuity of Imams in the line of Prophecy; H. Corbin on inheriting divine truth; and citing Massignon on the way the Imam shares in the divinity.

him for his unwelcomed step of spreading Aristotelian Greek philosophy, thus working to ruin the inherited knowledge of Prophethood "ilm al-Nubuwwa" which determines with whom the right to rule should reside.\(^{1325}\) The use of 'independent judgement' as emphasized by al-Jähiz's Hellenism would have been most unwelcomed by Shi'ism then as it competed with their view of the Imam.\(^{1326}\)

In other words, al-Ma'mūn was - by introducing Aristotelian logic - trying to weaken the ideological cognitive basis of his political enemies, who had found in the gnostic philosophy of Mani and Hermes the promising and necessary means to achieve their religio-political goal by attracting the masses to the ‘infallible’, the divinely designated,”\(^{1327}\) the one on whom Divine Knowledge is rested, entrusted, and continuously emitted.

What may have worried al-Ma'mūn and his Mu'tazilite group was, besides the above anti-orthodox dogmas, the epistemological basis behind such a thesis: that the head of their political enemy was claiming direct access to an alternative divine truth, and even getting united, not by the rational methods of induction and deduction, not by the usual methods of knowledge of sense leading to abstract knowledge, but through direct intuitive contact with the absolute.\(^{1328}\)

Apart from the dangers of such a thesis, which obviously negates the need for prophecies (of which the 'Abbāsid State is the defender and promoter) the logical consequence of this proposal lies in its supposition that all but the ‘infallible’ are mentally incompetent, and thus they have to be permanently attached to and continuously looking for this saviour,\(^{1329}\) a call for the mind to divorce itself and blindly count on the fit agent for delivering it to the right path.

So epistemologically speaking, the conflict between al-Jāhiz's Frīzāl and his addressee’s Rāfidi gnosticism may be understood by quoting van Ess's following observation:

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1325 See al-Jābiri, op. cit., pp. 231-233 and 225. The writing of the treatises of Ikhwan al-Ṣafā' is suggested to have been the reaction of the Bāṭinī Shi’ites to al-Ma’mūn’s ideological strategies, as early as 229 A.H. (i.e., 10 years after death of al-Ma’mūn).
1327 al-Jābiri, pp. 224-225.
1328 On this Intuitive Hermetic knowledge, See al-Jābiri, op. cit., p. 172.
1329 On this Neo-Platonic, neo-Pythagorean Hermetic attitude, See Ibid., pp. 159, 167, 168, 172, 178, 183.
The Shia did not like giyyās and the intellectual independency involved in it because they upheld one for whom they had sacrificed all independency: the Imam who decided religious problems *ex cathedra* and who, by definition, could not countenance theological competition. This seems to be the reason they often showed a certain susceptibility to Illuministic ideas ... When the believing multitude was directed to truth by the authority of the Imam and when the Imam himself got his insight by illumination (*ihlām*)... reason tended to lose its intrinsic value ... To rely on the Imam did not mean that one had to give up giyyās and one's own reasoning; it meant only that this reasoning could not always claim to be decisive and definite.1330

In the light of this perspective, many of the scattered gnostic remarks of al-Jāḥiz in *Kitāb al-Tarbi` wa-al-Tadwir*, and similar anti-Rāfīḍite works, become more understandable and related to the real issues al-Jāḥiz was addressing and the motives underlying his compilation of such anti-Rāfīḍite works.

4. Significance of *Kitāb al-Tarbi` wa al-Tadwir*:

It is remarkable that al-Jāḥiz has referred to his addressee as -Rāfīḍite and not Imāmite, thus reflecting that least up to the date of this treatise (226/230/841-845) the shift from Rāfīḍism to Imāmism, or that the assembling of Rāfīḍa under the Imāmite banner has not yet been accomplished, although significant Imāmite doctrinal ingredients were current and common among the Rāfīḍa.

What are the reasons which underline the change in tone in dealing with Alid/Shi'ite dogma, from the friendly one in *Fāḍl Ḥāshim* to that mocking tone in *Kitāb al-Tarbi` wa al-Tadwir*, if both were presumably written during the former and latter parts of the reign of al-Wāthiq respectively? This change in tone could be:

i) Partly because towards the end of the reign of al-Wāthiq, the last 'Abbāsid caliph to back Mu'tazili tastes, the activities of the Shi'ites may have grown out of the proportions tolerated by authorities.

ii) Partly because the addressee of this work differs from the large one expected prior to writing *Fāḍl Ḥāshim*. al-Jāḥiz wrote the latter in the role of 'Abbāsid propagandist, and the former in the role of humorist.1331 Within this

1330 J. van Ess, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
1331 Even al-Jāḥiz's humorous literature can provide one with valuable chronological insights into the ideological and social realities of the Shi'ite movement.
humorous domain we should not necessarily assume that al-Jähiz - in his personal writings - was reflecting by necessity a parallel change in State policy which has been so far pro-Alid.

The mocking references to extremist Shi‘ite dogma need only reflect al-Jähiz's own alertness and his own Mu‘tazili rational challenged in the ‘Abbāsid society, and thus may not have been due to a sudden change in state politics.\(^{1332}\)

al-Jähiz’s furious onslaught against extremist Shi‘ites as exhibited in this treatise, and maintained thereafter should not be considered out of historical context, a surprising novelty in the period of Mu‘tazili political triumph, just because the same period had witnessed the Ma‘mūnīd pro-Alid proximity. The same period, however could reasonably have made al-Jähiz write anti-Shi‘ite works, without any necessary expectation that such a new genre in al-Jähiz’s writing was echoing - by necessity - a caliphal measure, or a change in the general pro-Alid policy.

I believe that such a work as K. al-Tarbi‘ reflects the independant framework of al-Jähiz, who gave himself the liberty - towards the end of the era of political Mu‘tazili triumph (i.e., rule of al-Wâthiq) - of reacting Mu‘tazilitically against the premises cherished by the Ghulât.

Benefiting from the observation that al-Jähiz had also written Kitāb Faṣilat al-Mu‘tazila during the early years of al-Mutawakkil’s time (236 A.H.), one could therefore understand how our author could survive the blow that would immediately befall Ictiznl (237), in the sense that al-Jähiz had already paved the way and allowed the new caliphal taste to accept if not admire his anti-Shi‘ite outlook that highly matched that of the authorities.

\(^{1332}\) al-Jähiz’s own references to the changing times (parag. 203, 207) in Tarbi‘ bear a chronological indication to the fact that Fīrizāl has in effect lost its momentum. al-Jähiz seems sad at this stage, short of the presence of a parallel rationalistic leader as Ma‘mūn; this may explain his attachment to viziers as Ibn al-Zayyāt (the addressee of Hayawān). Previously viziers were next in seniority after the philosopher Imam (al-Ma‘mūn) on whom al-Jähiz was most dependant. Probably viziers did not fulfil the role of introducing him to the Caliphs given the difference in character. In the era of Sunni triumph over Fīrizāl, al-Jähiz’s role will be more restricted to the circles of viziers, whereby al-Jähiz soon finds it necessary to adjust his Mu‘tazili style to one which is more orthodox.
I propose here the existence of a Jähizian doctrinal constant in the sense that the Mu'tazili minded al-Jähiz and faithful disciple of al-Ma'mūn, was capable of surviving the anti-Mu'tazile minded caliph (al-Mutawakkil) by serving the ideological basis of his 'Abbāsid patrons, i.e., by stressing the necessity of reasoning versus intuition as claimed by the Shi'ite masses.

5. Refutation of K. al-Tarbī:

I have benefited from 'Abdul-Salâm Hārūn's observation that the addressee of K. al-Tarbī had refuted al-Jähiz's efforts in that book. I have checked the few passages that are relevant, and come out with the impression that 'Abd al-Wahhab was - judging from the kind of questions he is said to have raised against al-Jähiz - more knowledgeable than al-Jähiz has portrayed. This conclusion should not, however, upset the image al-Jähiz had given about the aspiration for and involvement of his addressee in the post of the awaited Imām. In one of these questions narrated by Miskawayh on behalf of 'Abd al-Wahhab, the latter is asking al-Jähiz the reason underlying the growth of animal life in plants and not allowing the growth of plants in animals. In another instance, 'Abd-Wahhab asks al-Jähiz the difference between al-Mustabham (the vague) and al-Mustaghlaq (the unknown). In both instances, Miskawayh takes the responsibility of knowing the answers to these issues.

1333 See Kitāb al-Hawāmil wa al-Shawāmil by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawhīdī and Miskawayh (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa al-Tarjama wa al-Nashr, 1370/1951) pp. 320-322, 327. Edited by Ahmad Amin and Ahmad Şaqri.
1334 Ibid., p. 322.
1335 Ibid., p. 327.
1336 See Ibid.
3- Kitāb al-Ḥayawān:

1. Time of composition:

The exact date of composition of K. al-Ḥayawān is controversial. Whereas Pellat says that it must have been written before 233 A.H./847, i.e., the death date of Ibn al-Zayyāt, who is seen as the addressee of the book depending on a report cited by Ibn al-Nadim and Yāqūt, al-Ḥājirī does not value this citation and assumes that K. al-Ḥayawān was written much later than 232 depending on al-Jāḥiz’s own reference to the reign of al-Mutawakkil.

The Biographers’ recognition of the fact that al-Jāḥiz was semi-paralysed in his latter days, should not imply that al-Jāḥiz’s illness had prevented him from attempting this voluminous work, as al-Jāḥiz himself admits. As such Hārin proposes the possibility that al-Jāḥiz’s semi-paralysis continued from before 233 (death year of his addressee) until he died in 255. Furthermore, A. Abū Mulḥim, suggests that the composition of K. al-Ḥayawān could have stretched over a considerable period of al-Jāḥiz’s life (from before 233 until 250), without giving any evidences. Benefiting from Hārin and Abū Mulḥim, I think that K. al-Ḥayawān need not be assumed - as Pellat said - to have been composed, completed and forwarded at one time (before 233). al-Jāḥiz’s reference to al-Mutawakkil’s reign, could fit with this opinion, as this reference exists in the last portion of the extant work, but are there other evidences which back this point? I have been able to gather the following observations which confirm Abū Mulḥim’s position (that K. al-Ḥayawān was composed over an extended period). First, the present Jāḥizian inventory that appears as a preface to the whole work imposes serious questions.

1341 K. al-Ḥayawān, 4: 208. The author of “Jāmī‘ al-Jawāḥir”, al-Ḥusārī, , confirms that it remains one of al-Jāḥiz’s peculiarities, how he could have attempted this work when he was old and paralysed. (Ibid., 1: 25)
1344 I have highlighted one of them in my forthcoming article, “al-Jāḥiz’s Anthropological Endeavour...”, pp. 5-6, n. 13.
obviously many passages in the preface that strongly suggest that the preface is not intact and could have been rewritten by al-Jähiz. How can we accept its intactness when we find al-Jähiz announcing here that he has treated "K. Fakhr al-Südän" with "K. al-Ṣurahā wa al-Hujana" as one work, though we need only to notice that al-Jähiz himself apologizes to the reader in his preface to K. Fakhr al-Südän,\textsuperscript{1345} pointing there that he has deliberately treated them separately, and thus his announced plan to include them under one work was not fulfilled as promised, at least until the composition of volume three of K. al-Ḥayawān was completed, where he has made the same promise, which we know has not yet been accomplished. When this finding is added to the highly aggressive tone of al-Jähiz to his addressee (of K. al-Ḥayawān), one cannot but assume that al-Jähiz's present preface to K. al-Ḥayawān must have been inserted at a later stage, and most probably to an imaginary addressee who is described in very derogatory terms. This implies that if Ibn al-Zayyāt was the initial recipient, he must have been presented with a different preface, and that the original preface expressed al-Jähiz's unfulfilled encyclopaedic zoological and anthropological plans which are still preserved in the extant preface. That the present preface to al-Ḥayawān was inserted at a stage later than the year 233,\textsuperscript{1346} is substantiated by an allusion to a critique by this second addressee, who has maintained a negative position to many of al-Jähiz's works, including K. al-Ḥayawān. Thus, if volume three and volume 1 (which includes the preface) are identical in announcing an unaccomplished plan by al-Jähiz, one can assume that al-Jähiz, in his later edition of the original introduction, has failed to point out the shortcomings of his changed plan (as announced in K. Fakhr al-Südän), and consequently it is likely that what is equivalent to volumes 1-3 of Ḥarūn's edition could have constituted the non-manipulated version of K. al-Ḥayawān addressed to Ibn al-Zayyāt, (of course in a fashion that made him gain 5,000 dinārs, which means that the present aggressive preface must have been not present then as we know it today). Judging from the same Jähizian inventory, which seems quite ambitious, al-Jähiz's plan to include the differences between men and women in the same intended work of al-Ḥayawān,\textsuperscript{1347} (which was not fulfilled yet), besides his allusion to the composition of K. al-Bighāl after he has really completed most of al-Ḥayawān,\textsuperscript{1348} confirms the possibility that K al-Ḥayawān (with the annexes: Fakhr al-Südān, On

\textsuperscript{1345} See al-Jähiz, "Risāla fi Fakhr al-Südān", Rasā'il, 1: 177.
\textsuperscript{1346} or at least after all or some of the listed works, including al-Ḥayawān., have been composed and circulated.
\textsuperscript{1347} See al-Ḥayawān, 1: 4.
men and women, K. al-Bighâl), must have been written over an extended period of time, and that the initial Ḥayawān which had announced - but not included - them could equally have lacked some other portions of al-Ḥayawān; hence Ibn al-Zayyāt may not have been presented with the present and more complete version of al-Ḥayawān (with its annexes outlined above). There are attestations by al-Jāḥīz that refer to circumstances where he either had to amend an announced plan (case of K. Fakhr al-Sudān and that of K. al-Nisā'ī, which appeared distinctly and probably later than the early portions of K. al-Ḥayawān) or when his zoological interests had reminded him to include a topic not stated in his introduction, such as K. al-Bighâl.

Such an interruption in plan was justified, given al-Jāḥīz’s illness, and hence his preface to al-Ḥayawān should be carefully taken as a rough guide to al-Jāḥīz’s ambitious and encyclopaedic plan in the field of Zoology (and related matters as K. al Nisā'ī/ on men and women), besides serving as a pointer to what he may have really written or was going to write.

2. Politico-religious setting:

Recalling Pellat’s remark outlined above on the interrelation between Kitāb al-Tarbī and Kitāb al-Ḥayawān, by virtue of the common Jāḥīzian appeal to Greek scholasticism, i.e., to the rational school of Hellenism that “provided rationalistic conceptions that were still not adopted by the most open minds,” Kitāb al-Ḥayawān could be seen as an attempt by al-Jāḥīz to face - in his Mu'tazilite fashion - the existing wave of irrationality and non-orthodoxy embodied in mythological Beduin explanations and values,1349 Manichean/Zoroastrian beliefs, and atheistic trends introduced by the clients (mawâlî), and like minded Shu'ubiites. This seems to have necessitated the production of such works as a response by the semi-official al-Jāḥīz to culturally rehabilitate the masses - now under the influence of mythology, blind imitation, non-orthodoxy, etc. - by injecting into its mainstream the capacity for rational reasoning. al-Jāḥīz seems keen to rid the masses of these foreign influences and alien forces. Behind the voluminous zoological dimension of al-Ḥayawān, in which al-Jāḥīz employed a very common intellectual analogy in Islamic theology1350 - i.e., al-Istidlâl bi al-shâhid ‘alâ al-ghâ’ib - al-Jāḥīz not only could

1349 See K. al-Hayawân, 1: 308, which illustrates this point and bridges the two works from this angle in addition to its usefulness in stating that K. al-Tarbî had preceded K. al-Hayawân.

1350 See van Ess 'The Logical Structure of Islamic Theology', in Logic in Classical Islamic Culture, (Germany: Wiesbaden, 1976) p. 34.
silence the Dahrites and atheists by maintaining that visible indicative signs and effects should indicate the existence of an invisible cause, i.e., the existence of God; al-Jâhiz could also respond to those who also had opposed him on the cultural and ideological front, in that the simple zoological book uncovers a highly sophisticated theological endeavour to meet the religious, cultural and ideological targets outlined above. What concerns us here is to pull out the political thread relevant to the issue of Imâm, which is scattered throughout K. al-Ḥayawân, while not forgetting that al-Jâhiz’s dependance on Aristotelian logic and Aristotle’s zoological work was instrumental in fulfilling those aims, and continued to reflect the same ʿAbbāsid need for Aristotle in particular and rational reasoning in general in a period that seems to have witnessed an officially unwelcome gnostic and mythical presence in the ʿAbbāsid community, and a growing competition between Arab and non Arab (Persian) influence, which was known as the Shuʿubiyya.

The following interpretation of al-Jâhiz’s main intention and the purpose of K. al-Ḥayawân should not disturb the above conclusion on al-Jâhiz’s other purposes outlined above. As seen by a modern interpretation of K. al-Ḥayawân, this work was mainly written to silence the Shuʿubi wave of attacks, at a period when the Arab and Persian cultural clash was very acute, at the social level,1351 and by an ʿAbbāsid writer (i.e., al-Jâhiz) - who was quite independently and not officially responding to these Shuʿubi forces.1352

But as the issue of Shuʿibiyya (which happens to constitute al-Jâhiz’s new concerns, which he exhibits in K. al-Bayân, Manāqib al-Turk, etc.) is not our concern in this thesis, we shall try to pull out the excerpts that directly relate to the issue of Imâm in K. al-Ḥayawân.

3. Analysis:

I. Critique of Shiʿi wild doctrines related to the Imâm:

It would be natural to find the non-Shiʿi al-Jâhiz - as the scholar Wadād al-Qâdi points out, applying the term ghuluww to (i) those who believe in the deity of the Imam as well as in his (ii) ghayba and raja, and (iii) those undermining the Sahâba, especially those who fought ʿAli.

1352 Ibid., p. 155.
In this respect we find al-Jähiz describing a certain Saʿid al-Nawwâ' as an adherent of Ghāliya because of his insinuation that ʿAli b. Abī Taʿlib was not dead, as he asked his grandson ʿAli b. al-Ḥusayn: "When will ʿAli be resurrected?" al-Jähiz agrees that his grandson's response: "When all people are risen from the dead!" represents an early attempt to purify pro-Alid tendencies from excessiveness (ghuluww-ifrâṭ) and crudeness (fuḥsh).

ʿAli b. al-Ḥusayn’s reported regret that his grandfather had been driven to fight at the battle of the Camel, which was used by Saʿid al-Nawwâ’ to anger the other surviving grandson of ʿAli b. Abī Taʿlib, (al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAli b. Abī Taʿlib) who wished that his grandfather had never stopped fighting them, is also described by al-Jähiz as a genuine attempt (by a significant member of the house of the Prophet) to put an end to the line of hatred against the Ṣaḥāba projected by the Ghāliya, and to make them refrain from ghuluww to qaṣd (al-Ftīdāl, moderation,) as God’s religion is destined to pivot between the poles of taqṣīr and ghuluww (i.e., between falling short of awareness of the virtues of al-Ṣaḥāba and between excessive veneration and preference for one of them). al-Jähiz adds that although ʿAli b. al-Ḥusayn was quite confident that his grandfather’s merit was superior to that of Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr, and more aware of ‘mawādiʿ al-Imāma’ (where Imāmship should belong), his knowledge did not prevent him from silencing those ghulāt and trying to make them respect those Ṣaḥāba." As a modern scholar puts it:

This passage although it is relative to the thesis of parousia for the extremist Shiʿites especially the Sabaʿiyya, proves that al Gähiz(sic) wanted to tell us that the descendants of ʿAli b. Abī Taʿlib did not believe in the thesis of ṭafāʾa before the day of resurrection, that their Shiʿite partisans have adopted. On this subject, al Khayyāt has told us: "... al-Ğähiz (sic) wanted to expose the crime committed by the Rafīḍites against many members of the house of (Āl) Abū Taʿlib by reporting from them anthropomorphism, Badā', ṭafāʾa, describing the Umma as infidels, diverting from Sunan, doubting the Qurʾān, etc."

al-Jähiz’s condemnation of the most famous Kaysāni poet, al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyari, as a ghāli, reflects the general Sunnī standard or application of the term ghuluww - according to W. al-Qādi- simply because sabb al-Salaf (cursing of the opponents of ʿAli from the Ṣaḥāba) was typical of al-Sayyid both in action and in

1354 Ibid., pp. 450-452.
poetry." He classifies him as a fanatic Rāfīḍī (rāfīdiyyān ghāliyyān) simply because he blamed ʿĀʾisha, the wife of the Prophet, for coming to fight ʿAlī. The term "Shiʿī min al-Ghāliya" is not applied by al-Jāḥiẓ to those who were undermining the Sahāba vis-à-vis their position on ʿAlī, but is also stretched to any "fanatic" adherence to Shiʿism in general, simply because such fanaticism (ghuluww, according to Qāḍī), implies for the Sunnis "an exaggerated divergence within a divergence."

al-Jāḥiẓ's classification of one Khushnām b. Hind as "shaykhān min al-Ghāliya" follows the above Sunni principle because this man is said to have applied to Abū Bakr and ʿUmar highly loaded terms as: Tāghūt (the embodiment of evil), Jibīt (idol), Munkar wa-Nakīr (death angels) Kusayr wa-ʿUwayr (nick names).

al-Jāḥiẓ's interest in recording social traits and group activities has provided us with valuable material about the engagement of some classical Ghulūt groups in various forms of assassination, such as al-Mughirīyya, al-Manṣūriyya, and al-Shumayṭiyya al-Sabaʿiyya.

As for al-Mughirīyya, al-Jāḥiẓ describes them as "a group of assassins" (khannāqūn) after their leader al-Mughīra b. Saʿīd. We have seen al-Nawbakhti ascribing to him belief in Tanāsukh. As for al-Manṣūriyya, al-Nawbakhti has already put them among the rejected Ghulūt, after one al-Manṣūr claimed prophethood when al-Bāqir died. Here al-Jāḥiẓ refers to this group within the same framework of assassins of militant ghulūt, yet he supplies the reader with an insight into an inter-Shiʿī dispute that existed between certain Shiʿī factions that included 'Rāfīda' and 'Ghāliya', and was headed by Kumayliyya and Manṣūriyya, the former rejecting transfer of Imāmship (wakāla) and asserting the existence of a silent or speaking Imām (Imām Šāmīt or nāṭiq) whereas the latter - whose ideas are reported in a poem by Maʿādān al-Shumayṭī, now head of

1356 al-Qāḍī, op. cit., p. 315.
1358 al-Qāḍī, Ibid., p. 309.
1361 Firāq al-Shīʿa, pp. 54-55.
1362 On his ghuluww see, al-Qummi, al-Magālūt wa al-Firāq, pp. 46-47.
1363 al-Hayawān., 2: 269.
1364 Ibid.
the Shumayfiyya, was convinced by Abū-Manṣūr’s position that allowed transfer (wakāla) in the Imāmate. The Ghāliya of Abu Manṣūr, al-Jāḥiz adds, interpreted the Qur’anic verse 52:33 referring to the falling kisf as Abū Manṣūr himself.1365

al-Shumayt’s poem also refers to another dispute, this time among the Muslim community whereby he classifies them as (i) Khaßāri, that freed themselves from the action of ʿAli - whom they view as becoming a kāfīr when he gave up his right to succeed Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and ʿUthmān - or as (2) ʿashāb al-Ihmāl’, i.e., the non-Shīʿites who believed that the Prophet had neglected to specify an Imām after him, or (3) as ʿashāb al-Nāṣṣ’, i.e., people who believed that the Prophet had designated a specific person after himself.1366

al-Jāḥiz’s above illustrative examples of the Ghulāt, are interpreted as reflecting the flexible application of the term ghuluww, flexible in the sense of encompassing any Shiʿī fanaticism in general, or as al-Jāḥiz stated in his Ḥayawān (in the mouth of his adversary): “Raḍī is the gate to ghuluww”1367 (i.e., doctrines of Raḍīda are next to those of Ghāliya).

It is interesting to note that al-Jāḥiz himself was not free from Sunni fanaticism, as clearly reflected in an anecdote narrated by from an Ibāḍite source, who shares with al-Jāḥiz his anti-Shīʿite outlook. When al-Jāḥiz asked him:

"What was in Shiʿism and among Shiites that made you disapprove on them?" (on the assumption that the old man hated them because of his Ibāḍism), the man answered: "I rejected Shiʿism because the starting letters of the term (sh) matches all words that have a non-pleasant connotation, such as: Shuʿm (misfortune), Sharr (evil), Shayṭān (devil), Shaghāb (anarchy), Shuḥḥ (stinginess), Shayb (grey hair), Shayn (vice), Sharda (aggressiveness), Shakk (doubt) ... Shirk (polytheism) ... Shatīr (cursing) ... Shana ʿa (ugliness), ...". al-Jāḥiz comments on this that by saying that he has never heard such a remarkable theologian before, and congratulated his speaker by saying that this Shiʿite group would hardly survive after that.1368

This position should not hide the fact that al-Jāḥiz could also distinguish between being favorably disposed to ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib (al-Fiṭrāl wa-al-Iqtiṣād fī al-Tashayyūḥ) and being a member of the Raḍī group who are regarded by him as embodying extreme attachment to him (al-Ṣarāf wa-al-Ifrāt fiḥt). In fact, al-Jāḥiz seems to present himself as an adherent of the former and opponent to the latter, and

1365 Ibid., 2: 268-269.
1367 al-Jāḥiz, al-Ḥayawān, 1: 7
1368 Ibid., 3: 22-23.
emphasizes to the addressee of K. al-Ḥayawān that he should not mis-understand his moderate and sound respect for the ʿAlids simply because of his method of narrating the arguments of his Rāfiḍite-Ghālī adversaries.\(^\text{1369}\)

As outlined in the introduction to this thesis, the question of Shuʿubiyya has been disregarded although it could have fitted within al-Jāḥiz’s overall political thought. In this respect, the discourses between Ṣāḥib al-Kalb and Ṣāḥib al-Dīk have been interpreted as reflective of the Arab-Persian (Shuʿūbī) conflict in which al-Jāḥiz participated\(^\text{1370}\) in order to oppose the Shuʿūbī attempts to demolish the Arabs’ rule. There is a political passage here that relates to the question of Imāmate and the Shuʿūbī background. In this text, Jāḥiz is acknowledging - within the context of criticizing Zoroastrian practises - the right of rulers to defend their subjects and kingdom by taking all steps that they find necessary, even if they have to sacrifice those who assist them, especially if their Kingship is based on succession (Imāma), and if that succession stems from the domain of Prophethood; he then may resort to such measures even if reached by his own judgement, for (God), who stipulated the Shariʿa (including political matters) had been aware that maṣlaḥa allowed the personal caliphal judgement to take priority in matters where political deception was concerned.

Such an authoritative view of the caliphal powers could be linked to al-Jāḥiz’s views of the authority of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs and their duty to maintain themselves.\(^\text{1371}\)

II. al-Jāḥiz’s Pro-ʿAbbāsidism:

Such a pro-ʿAbbāsid attitude is reflected throughout K. al-Ḥayawān. al-Ḥumṣi and al-Mulūḥi have correctly captured this pro-ʿAbbāsidism although they suggest that this work was independent and not officially inspired. al-Jāḥiz speaks of himself among the caliphal assistants “ʾAʿwān al-Khulāfāʾ,”\(^\text{1372}\) and describes the

\(^{1369}\) Ibid., 1: 11.

\(^{1370}\) The analysis of al-Jāḥiz’s position on the Shuʿūbī movement falls beyond the limits of this research. A fair exposition of this stand is recycled by al-Ḥumṣi and al-Mulūḥi, op. cit., 2: 49-79, after al-Ḥājirī’s pioneering attempt in ‘al-Jāḥiz’, pp. 400 ff. to unveil the religious significance of the cock among the Persians, which was politically used by the Shuʿūbītes. Such as al-Maʿmūn’s alleged killing of his Persian vizier al-Ḥaḍḥ al-Bīn Sahl, upon realizing his plans to shift the caliphate to the Alids as a trick to transfer the rule to the old Persian Zoroastrianism. See al-Ḥayawān, 5: 326, and al-Mulūḥi, Min Kitāb al-Ḥayawān li al-Jāḥiz, 1: 144.

\(^{1371}\) See al-Ḥayawān, 1: 25.
"Abbâsids as "our [leading] comrades "Ašḥâbūnâ", when he is referring to how they destroyed the Syrian cities (al-Shâmât).\textsuperscript{1373}

III. Criteria for the Caliphate:

In K. al-Ḥayawân, we also find a reference by al-Jâhîz to the right of the Imâmate which is either based on descent (nasab) or on religious merit (al-dîn), or other socio-cultural factors:

Don’t you see that the most self-esteem and ambitious of men, and the most aspiring to positions, do not dream of asking for the caliphate because in order to ask for it one must belong to a certain family or have particular motives, as that exhibited by the early Khârijites in their demand for the Khilâfa, whereby religion alone and not ethnic origin or noble descent gave the right for their demand ... Thus a man who became Khârijite aspired to the possibility of soliciting the Caliphate ... Some scholars have also suggested that some men have been candidates by virtue of their sovereignty and authority, or due to their intelligence or because their tribe obeys them ...\textsuperscript{1374}

Pellat comments on this passage by saying that it touches the question of Imâmate from the psychological plane rather than the strictly theological or political, as it concentrated on the circumstances that can motivate human acts.\textsuperscript{1375} As regards the Khârijites, they were not partisans of election of the caliph like the Mu`tazilites but favoured force (ghalaba).\textsuperscript{1376} But it can be argued that the above passage has accounted for two types of Caliphate: one which is based on noble descent, which can justify the "Abbâsids family, and the other which is based on religious merit, and this justifies the rule of the Râshîdûn. It is not difficult to imagine the "Abbâsids as claiming to have combined both types by virtue of their descent and their merits.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1373} Ibid., p. 73. These include according to Ibn "Abd Rabbihi in al-İqd al-Farîd, Palestine and its city Jerusalem, Jordan and its city Ţabariyya, Ghûṭa and its city Damascus, Ḥûns, and Qinnasrin and its city Aleppo.
\item \textsuperscript{1374} al-Jâhîz, al-Hayawân., 2: 101-102. This passage may be significant in two ways: It first reflects al-Jâhîz’s contention with the doctrine of merit (that has already been sketched above in K. al-İthmûniyya), and second, it bears a similarity in outlook between the Mu`tazilî al-Jâhîz and the Khârijî as well.
\item \textsuperscript{1375} Pellat, ‘Djähiz et les Khâridjîtes’, p. 198.
\item \textsuperscript{1376} "Abd al-Jabbâr, Sharh al-Usûl al-Khamsa, p. 754.
\end{itemize}
al-Mutawakkil's Period I

Early years of al-Mutawakkil (232-237) [Last stage of I'tizāl]

In the thirteen works of al-Jāḥīz studied above, we concluded that the common political thread that allows one to put them together is the high probability of their being composed during the political triumph of I'tizāl. This era exhibited pro-ʿAbbāsid as well as pro-Alid and even anti-ʿRāfīḍite tendencies and positions by al-Jāḥīz. We have seen that al-Jāḥīz, in his anti-ʿRāfiḍism, was, spontaneously and independently, detecting such trends before the ʿAbbāsid authorities are known to have officially started to adopt such views, i.e., in the time of al-Mutawakkil; thus in so doing he was a precursor of the wave of anti-Shīʿism/ʿRāfiḍism cherished now by al-Mutawakkil and this, in my opinion, in addition to his capacity of proving his usefulness as an ʿAbbāsid necessity, by launching some of the mottos of I'tizāl and starting to focus on principles that would not spark the anger of the public; all this helped him to continue as an ʿAbbāsid propagandist of the first degree.

As Watt describes the new religio-political setting under al-Mutawakkil's rule:

...the general line of policy under al-Mutawakkil was favourable to moderate Sunnism. The caliph also took measures against the more extreme forms of devotion to ʿAlī and his family... The introduction of new regulations against Christians and Jews, or the enforcement of old regulations, was in part at least a protest against the favour shown at court during the previous reigns to Christians versed in Greek science and philosophy.¹³⁷⁷

It is remarkable how al-Jāḥīz - inspite of the big blow that I'tizāl was to face in 237 - could still be of use to the ʿAbbāsid caliphate. The following works listed below can be seen as an indication of al-Jāḥīz's intention to stress this point by showing that he was still indispensible for the ʿAbbāsid cause. It must be stated here that this era of al-Mutawakkil was not homogeneous oriented. In the first five years of his rule (232-237) which had not yet witnessed the decision of al-Mutawakkil to remove from office the Muʿṭazili qāḍī Muhammad b. Abī Duʿād, the son of the famous Ahmad b. Abī Duʿād, and when I'tizāl could still be praised, we see al-Jāḥīz benefiting from this opportunity by making a second entry among the caliph's courtiers, of course via the like-minded Muʿṭazili Qāḍī Muḥammad b. Abī Duʿād.

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If al-Jahiz had been successful in his first entry to the caliphal court in the time of al-Ma'mun via al-Yazidi, he was not less fortunate this time as he had secured his re-entry by serving good old friends scientifically and theologically, (thus the latter portions of K. al-Ḥayawān [with or without the appendixes] - where ample evidence is put before the reader to demonstrate God's wisdom that underlines His creation), juristically (thus K. al-Fuyā), socially (thus K. al-Bukhāli'), culturally, (thus K. al-Bursān and K. al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn), and politico-religiously by responding to the officially backed anti-Rāfidi campaign, (thus K. Aṣḥāb al-Iḥām and K. Fāḍl al-Īṭiṣāl).

But when the State policy decides to get rid of its Muʿtazili adherents, we find al-Jahiz swiftly adapting to this change by offering to show his support, theologically (thus K.al-radd ʿalā al-Nasārā, and Ḥujaj al-Nubuwwa) and politically (thus K. fi Manāqib al-Turk).

1. Kitāb al-Futyā:

With his usual swiftness, al-Jahiz adapted to the growing influential orthodox presence in the ʿAbbāsid court, and it is very likely that a person of al-Jahiz's knowledge could have produced the juristic work K. al-Futya, which has been described by al-Ḥājirī as one of the earliest works in the discipline of Islamic jurisprudence.1378

Here al-Jahiz while offering this work - which he regards as being highly based on Kitāb and Sunna 1379 - to the Muʿtazili Qāḍī Ahmad b. Abi Duʿād, does not forget to congratulate him on being selected by al-Mutawakkil for presiding over the Diwān al-Mazālim, and holding the office of Qāḍī al-Qudāt, which puts him in the ladder of politico-religious authority next after the caliph,1380 and it is not accidental- in our author's professed endeavour to scan the various schools of jurisprudence - when he alludes to the fact1381 that the Muʿtazili Qāḍī's prime concern was to promote Sunna and orthodoxy, as if al-Jahiz now, after expressing his sincere

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1380 Ibid, p. 313.
yearning to be accepted as sharing with him in the consultative policy making and juridiciary planning, and also bluntly praying to be one of his closest advisers, is throwing light on the orthodox element of I’tizāl and the usefulness of the Mu’tazila who will soon be strongly undermined by their Sunnī enemies. This will encourage our author to double his efforts in this respect and therefore produce the orthodox-targetted works of ‘Fadl al-I’tizāl’ and ‘al-Radd ‘alā Aṣḥāb al-Ilhām’.

2. K. al-Bukhālā’

al-Jāhīz’s anti-Shu’ūbī concern that was briefly sketched above in al-Ḥayawān, may have been resumed in this work in which al-Jāhīz’s fondness of the virtue of generosity among the Arabs must have inspired him to limit the danger of the Shu’ūbī socio-cultural infiltration into the ʿAbbāsid society, as symbolized by the unwelcome trait of miserliness.1382

As far as the question of Imāmate is concerned, al-Jāhīz’s brief allusion to the hatred between the Mu’tazila and the Shi‘a1383 is noteworthy, in confirming Ibn al-Riwandi’s identical definition of the Mu’tazila, which we shall discuss later. It would have been interesting to attempt a political analysis of the miserly figures al-Jāhīz picked, except for the fact that these figures evidently combine all the known politico-religious parties of al-Jāhīz’s time, including al-Jāhīz’s own school of I’tizāl

1382 For a full sketch of this interpretation of K. al-Bukhālā’, see M. ʿAli al-Khatīb, al-Sirāc al-ʿAdabi maʿ al-Shuʿrālīya, (Beirut: Dār al-Ḥadātha, 1983). al-Hājiri in his edition of K. al-Bukhālā’, however, is more conservative on this line of interpretation. See al-Bukhālā’, p. 32. Since the bakhils of al-Jāhīz’s Bukhālā’ happen to include Arabs as well as non Arabs, a modern study of al-Bukhālā’ agrees with al-Hājiri on the difficulties created by the attempt to discover a political aim in al-Jāhīz’s work or to make these bakhils representative of any political school. As the Khurāsānians only constitute 10% of al-Jāhīz’s anecdotes, the study is hesitant to accept a socio-ethnic interpretation, [ i.e., the equation generosity = Arabs, bukhī = non- Arabs or Khurāsānians] which is believed (by the study) to have been adopted by Pellat, W.T al-Najm, and Bosworth. See Fedwa Malti-Douglas, Structures of Avarice. The Bukhālā’ in Medieval Arabic Literature ( Leiden, Brill, 1985), pp. 151, 155 ff. The originality of Fedwa’s view lies in the way it can simultaneously acknowledge the plausibility of this Shuʿubi logic and interpretation (p.155), that al-Jāhīz’s work can not be obviously emptied from his position on ‘ethnic politics’ while pointing out that the plurality of al-Jāhīz’s characters must rather indicate now that our author was much more concerned in highlighting and analysing the vice of avarice as a despised human (and essentially non-Islamic ) trait, than aiming to attribute it to a specific nation. This global concern in human virtues and vices in the literature of al-Jāhīz has already been studied by me in “ The Views of al-Jāhīz Concerning Nations: An Exposé and a Critique.” (M.A. Thesis, 1989). Sufficient to note here the similarity between the non-ethnic Jāhīzian treatment of the trait of bukhī and the trait of taqālid, which is also globally attributed and mocked among the leading nations of his time in al-Jāhīz’s work “al-Akhbār wa Kayfa Taṣīḥ”.

1383 Ibid., p. 90
(such as the figure of his master al-ṢAllāf).\textsuperscript{1384} al-Jāhīz’s references to the Ghāli miserly woman (Laylâ al-Ṭāṣṭa)\textsuperscript{1385} does not change much of the Muʿtazili hatred for the Ghulāt, but his allusions to the Umayyads are not consistently harsh,\textsuperscript{1386} and those made to the Ḥāshimi Ṭālibites are quite mild. This proves that al-Jāhīz was more concerned in tackling the Shuʿubi infiltration than being driven to inter-Arab political disputes, noting, of course, that within this Shuʿubi concern, al-Jāhīz was not substituting an inter-Arab polemic for an ethnic one, as much as he was very keen to universally expose the vice of avarice, irrespective of its ethnic origin. This final point is confirmed by a modern textual-based analysis of Kitāb al-Bukhālā that concludes:

Certainly, al-Jāhīz did have a position on ethnic politics and in a certain sense that position could be said to be reflected, at least, passively, in his Kitāb al-Bukhālā.\textsuperscript{1387} It would not seem unreasonable to suggest that this position is one of Islamic universalism. His anti-Shuʿūbism would then be seen as an opposition to any form of ethnic boasting, rather than as a downgrading of Persians. All groups have their virtues and vicious members ...\textsuperscript{1387}

3. Kitāb al-Burṣān

One should recall that al-Jāhīz uses the term caliph/Imām and caliphate/Imāmate interchangeably. There is no exception to this conclusion. In this book, there is a passage in which al-Jāhīz is boastful of the fact that up to the date of this book, the reign of al-Mutawakkil\textsuperscript{1388} no Ābbāsid caliph was reported to have been bald-headed. al-Jāhīz makes the same observation on the Umayyad Kings, and dates it back to the King Marwān b. al-Ḥakam\textsuperscript{1389} (64-65/684-85), as baldness is said to have disappeared after that Umayyad “King”.

Such a terminology may have reflected al-Jāhīz’s determination to continue undermining the Umayyad rule, for they are given the deliberately derogatory epithet: mulāk, whereas the Ābbāsid rulers are exclusively described as Ḥulafā’unā.\textsuperscript{1390}

\textsuperscript{1384} Ibid., p. 33
\textsuperscript{1385} Ibid., p. 37
\textsuperscript{1386} Compare Ibid., where Muʿawiya is praised (pp. 70, 156) and p. 99, where the other Umayyads are criticized.
\textsuperscript{1387} See Fedwa Malti-Douglas, Ibid., p. 157.
\textsuperscript{1388} See, al-Jāhīz, K. al-Bursān wa al-ʿUrjān wa al-ʿUmyān wa al-Ḥulān, Ed. A. Hārūn, (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1410/1990) p. 320 where the reign of al-Mutawakkil is explicitly mentioned.
\textsuperscript{1389} The first Marwānid Umayyad ruler from the branch of Abu-l-ṢĀṣ, who was the direct cousin of Ābu-Ṣūbān.
\textsuperscript{1390} Ibid., p. 320. This does not prevent al-Jāhīz from applying the term mulk to Ābbāsid rule, which is an inconsistency.
Chronology:

The other significance of this work is that it includes a chronological reference to its date of composition (rule of al-Mutawakkil (232-247/847-861) and re-inforces the general inventory of al-Jāḥīz's political works that has been assumed up till now. Another chronological marker, which serves the purpose of dating al-Jāḥīz's works as exactly as possible, is al-Jāḥīz's announced promise in K. al-Burşān that he will furnish the reader with more details on one al-Aḥnaf, in the forthcoming planned work al-Bayān wa-al-Tabyin. Probably al-Jāḥīz's accomplished output in the earlier period of al-Mutawakkil would be:

a. Kitāb al-Ḥayawān (at least first 3 volumes already completed by 233, when it was presented to Ibn al-Zayyāt before that date, and the latter parts completed after 233.),
b. Kitāb al-Futỳā (?with Ibn Abi Du'ād becoming chief Qāḍi),
c. Kitāb al-Bukhalā',
d. Kitāb al-Burşān (before al-Bayān),
e. Kitāb al Bayān (reference in 1st volume of Bayān that al-Ḥayawān is still under composition by al-Jāḥīz and reference in last volume of Bayān that Kitāb al-Ḥayawān has been completed.

f. Kitāb al-Bighāl (continuation of al-Ḥayawān),
g. Kitāb al-Nisā' (continuation of al-Ḥayawān),
h. Kitāb al-Mu'allāmin (? continuation of al-Ḥayawān),
i. Orthodox-targeted works:
   -(? )Kitāb al-Futỳā,
   -Kitāb Faḍl al-I'tizāl,
   -Kitāb al-Radd 'alā Ašḥāb al-Ilhām.

1391 See Ibid., p. 318.
1392 According to Pellat, the time of composition is between 245-250, but according to Ḥājirī it is around the beginning of al-Mutawakkil’s reign and toward the end of al-Zayyāt’s days. See Pellat’s Inventory (Arabica, 1984), p. 134, and al-Ḥājirī, K. al-Bukhālā’ (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1958), p. 38, and F. Malti-Douglas, op. cit., p. 35. I incline to place K. al-Bukhālā’ within the package of anti-Shūʿbī works that al-Jāḥīz composed as Ḥājirī suggests (ca. 232), although Pellat’s timing is not too far fetched (both differ in putting this work as marking the beginning or end of al-Mutawakkils’ reign).
1394 See al-Ḥājirī, Ibid.
1395 Ibid., p. 437.
This means that K. al-Ḥayawān’s composition has in fact been stretched over a considerable period; started during the period of Mu’tazilī political triumph, and partially given as a present to Ibn al-Zayyāt (d. 233, one year after al-Mutawakkil came to rule). al-Ǧāḥīz, in this proposal, is expected to have continued writing the other volumes of al-Ḥayawān; as previously suggested, it is not difficult to assume that the composition of the latter portions of al-Ḥayawān was synchronic with the simultaneous writing of (1) al-Burṣān (2) al-Bayān, given al-Ǧāḥīz’s attestation above.

al-Ǧāḥīz’s zoological and anthropological concern for the topics yet not covered in ‘al-Ḥayawān’ must have made him write K. al-Nisā’ and Kitāb al-Bighāl, as he has promised the reader of al-Ḥayawān.1396 These themes and topics are strongly related to al-Ḥayawān such that al-Ǧāḥīz states in al-Bayān that al-Ḥayawān was finally completed. One can suppose that K. al-Nisā’; and K. al-Bighāl could have been written after the latter portions of al-Ḥayawān, and that all of the ‘Ḥayawān’ topics were written simultaneously during the composition of al-Burṣān and al-Bayān, such that al-Ǧāḥīz’s Kitāb al-Ḥayawān and appendixes were completed, as al-Ḥājirī suggested, before the completion of al-Bayān, which immediately followed the completion of the encyclopaedic al-Ḥayawān. Thus we have the following inventory:

1396 See al-Ḥayawān, 1: 4 and 6: 14. This double reference to an un-accomplished wish is an evidence for al-Ǧāḥīz’s inability to fulfill his broad encyclopaedic concern, which was fulfilled later as suggested above.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Work/Event:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mu'tazili Triumph (before 232)</td>
<td>K. al-Ḥayawān (1st 3 volumes or early portions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>232</td>
<td>al-Mutawakkil becomes caliph, Sunnism becoming triumphant over Mu'tazilism^{1397}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>233</td>
<td>Death of Ibn al-Zayyāt (To whom early portions of Ḥayawān had already been given), Ibn Abī Duʿād succeeds as chief Qādi, receives Kitāb al-Futiā.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>233-237</td>
<td>This period includes the synchronic composition of: (the latter parts of al-Ḥayawān), al-Bursān and al-Bayān:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- al-Ḥayawān (vols. 4, 5, 6, 7): definitely completed before al-Bayān was finished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- al-Bursān: definitely completed before al-Bayān was started.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- al-Bayān: written within the same period of al-Ḥayawān (4,5,6,7,) and (?) of al-Nisā', al-Bighāl.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- al-Nisā' and al-Bighāl: may have been written with al-Ḥayawān, or after al-Bayān was completed.</td>
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</table>

^{1397} The theological concerns of al-Jāḥiẓ being suppressed, al-Jāḥiẓ could still make use of the common religious thread that could still connect him to the ʿAbbāsid court. His concerns now encompass the same pro-ʿAbbāsid outlook, as will be reflected in K. Fadl al-Iḥtīyāt, Ashāb al-Iḥām (anti-Rāfiḍi policy), al-Radd ʿalā al-Nāṣārā (anti-Christian), Manāqib al-Turk (pro-ʿAbbāsid unifying outlook). His writing of al-Ḥayawān and al-Bayān, now at a time when criticism of Umayyad figures can not be freely exercised as before given the growing forces of the Ḥanbalīs, means that al-Jāḥiẓ could even bring forward the Umayyads, Shiʿites and Khārijites (usual enemies of the State), in order to use them within his proposed powerful package of Arabic eloquence to score more points against the non-Arabs. See al-Mulūḥī, Min Kitāb al-Ḥayawān li al-Jāḥiẓ, pp. 17, 150.
Hence a period that witnessed the writing of the latter parts of al-Ḥayawān (and probably but not certainly of Nisā', al Bīghāl) had already witnessed the simultaneous writing of K. al-Bursān and al-Bayān. The latter parts of al-Ḥayawān seem, however, to follow in time these works, (al-Bursān and al-Bayān).

A modern scholar suggests that K. al-Bursān represents a new style in al-Ḥāfīz's aspirations: Whereas he has been addressing his works to a large group of audience and readers, this work (and his later works ?) start to reflect his disappointment in this audience which makes him now direct his works to a small group of 'ulamā'.

4. Kitāb al-Bayān

We have already pointed that during this era of Mu'tazili political decline, in which al-Mutawakkil is said to have encouraged the triumph of Sunnism over other sects, al-Ḥāfīz's activities, given the non-Mu'tazilī tastes of al-Mutawakkil, avoided works such as those of 'al-Nābita' or 'Khalq al-Qur'ān', which would have certainly triggered the anger of the new caliph; al-Ḥāfīz however, focussed on matters that would still link him to the court, or more precisely, those issues that he was commissioned to write on, such as, Manāqib al-Turk, Ḥujaj al-Nubuwwa, and al-Radd 'alā al-Naṣārā'. Kitāb al-Ḥayawān, which is believed to have been completed during the composition of al-Bayān, would definitely fit with al-Ḥāfīz's continued and unshaken determination to back the Arabic rule of the 'Abbāsid stock of the Ḥāshimi Qurayshites. This anti-Shū'ūbi concern, despite its explicit and implicit political affiliations to the issue of rulership, will not be discussed here.

I. Status of Khulafā'

al-Ḥāfīz reports the saying that Khulafā' and Imāms are superior to their subjects; similarly the judges (hukkām) in general are more meritorious (afdal) than those judged for or against, simply because they are more knowledgeable in religion

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1399 al-Mutawakkil is said to have put a ban on dialectical discussion.
1400 Explicit reference is made here to the Turkish vizier al-Fath b. Khāqān and his loyalty to the caliph al-Mutawakkil. See 'Manāqib al-Turk', Rasā'il, 3: 164. The terms Imām and caliph are used interchangeably with Sultān.
and more active in maintaining their rights, and more beneficial to Muslims. In this sense, the Knowledge of caliphs and judges is more significant and influential than the worship of all worshippers because the benefit of the latter does not extend beyond their heads whereas the benefit of the former affects everyone, on the assumption that the recommended worshipping need not cause foolishness, as al-Jāḥīẓ ascribes this solely to those who voluntarily choose loneliness and avoid social activities and the circles of Ḥulāmāʾ.¹⁴⁰¹

al-Jāḥīẓ comments in another instance on the reason why the Khulāfāʾ have chosen to live in prestigious places and dress likewise by saying:

What other than this measure would make enemies stunned and those dissidents fearsome and fill the public with extreme veneration?...Is anything other than this suitable for curing them? Does their welfare exist in other than scaring them? Would they ever accept all that is conducive to their fortune except by a course of action and policy that combines the element of love and awe-inspiring appearance (hayba)?!¹⁴⁰²

II. Anti-Umayyad position

In one section of al-Bayān, al-Jāḥīẓ recycles his anti-Umayyad position expressed previously in al-Nābita, but this happens to be the exception to the policy he has undertaken in this work as he seems to generally forget such political enmity (even with Khārijites) in order to fight back the Shuʿubi addressee by scoring more points to the credit of the model of Arabic civilization (culture, language, habits), continuously mentioning the eloquent pieces of literature of those Umayyads, Ṭālibites and Khārijites. In one section, however, ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān is presented as the first Umayyad caliph to have abandoned the practice of allowing subjects to speak directly before the caliph, thus claiming that he differs from ʿUthmān, the oppressed caliph (al-Mustadʿaf), and from the hypocrite caliph, Mūʿawiyah (al-Mudāhin) and his son Yazid. Here al-Jāḥīẓ quotes al-Nazzām’s comment on this anecdote:

Without your (Umayyad) lineage to that oppressed (caliph), and your link to that hypocrite, you would have been as far from the caliphate as the Capella star is away from us. You would have never taken office by virtue of heredity (mirāth), nor by precedence in Islamic deeds (sābiqa,) nor from acceptable noble lineage (qarāba); furthermore such an office as the caliphate can never be assumed by consultation (shūrā) nor by designation (waṣīyya).¹⁴⁰³

¹⁴⁰² Ibid.
¹⁴⁰³ al-Bayān, 2: 244-245.
Of course, al-Jāḥīz’s reporting of al-Nazzām’s opinion serves two purposes: It first undermines the Umayyads and second it expresses the Muʿtazilite basis for claiming the post of caliph as deemed by al-Jāḥīz’s teacher. From his comment one can say that noble lineage (qarāba) had been unjustly claimed by the Umayyads, and that it belongs solely to the ʿAbbāsids. But his view on Shūrā is strange, for it undermines the Rāshidūn’s rule, and finally his denouncement of wasiyya is a direct attack on the Shiʿite doctrine in this matter, and equally on the first ʿAbbāsid version of legitimizing their rule (as passed from the Ḥanafī line to the ʿAbbāsi line).

From the above, one has the feeling that al-Nazzām’s criterion for the ʿAbbāsid claim to the caliphate does not differ from that cherished by the extremist Rāwandiyya.

But in spite of al-Jāḥīz’s eagerness to refute the Shuʿubiyya, his political position on the Umayyads and Shiʿites could still be expressed by his choice to include the Khārijite oracle of Abū Ḥamza who was an ʿĪbādíte who revolted against the last Umayyad ruler in 129/746. By including such a sermon, not only the Umayyads are vehemently attacked: “Banū Umayya are the group of the astray... who rule by all that God has not decreed”, but also the various Shiʿite groups or “the Shiya... that publicly lied on behalf of God ... and believe in a return from death and rajʿa to this life...”.

Furthermore, Muʿāwiya’s knowledge of the death of al-Ḥasan b. ʿAli b. Abī ʿṬālib is described as not upsetting him, while it brought Ibn ʿAbbās to tears!

III. Ghulāt in al-Bayān

To continue al-Jāḥīz’s previous scanning of ghuluw, we are informed in K. al-Bayān of the ghāli figure of al-Muqannaʿ al-Khūrāsānī, who claimed that God’s spirit had transmigrated to him from Adam via the Prophets, until it passed through the Prophet Muhammad and thereafter to ʿAli and his line, and then rested in his body. His Ghāli followers, al-Jāḥīz comments, are the only group among whom the doctrine of tanāsukh was held.

1404 Ibid., 2: 124.
1405 Ibid., 4: 71-72.
1406 Ibid., 3: 102-103.
1407 Ibid. These details are given by Hārūn, editor of K. al-Bayān.
Other ghulāt are briefly mentioned, such as the poet Bashshār b. Burd’s claim that all Muslims became non-believers after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad, and that Satan was right in judging fire to be superior to clay.\textsuperscript{1408} The poet al-Kumayt al Asadi (1267/744) is also described as Shi‘i min al-Ghāliya.\textsuperscript{1409}

An Ibādi-Rāfidi tolerance as opposed to the Ibādi hatred for Shi‘ites described by al-Jāḥiz is acknowledged with amazement, when al-Jāḥiz reports the friendship of the Rāfidi Hishām b. al-Ḥakam and one Ibādi figure.\textsuperscript{1410} Moreover, together with two other Shi‘i narrators, Ibn `Umayr is described as aghlā mashāyikh al-Shiya’.\textsuperscript{1411}

These references to ghuluww do not mean al-Jāḥiz did not quote eloquent expressions narrated by moderate narrators, such as al-Jārūd b. Abi Subra (d. 120 A.H.) whom al-Jāḥiz recognizes as an important Shi‘ite figure (min rijāl al-Shi‘a) who was also amongst the most eloquent and gifted narrators and poets of his time.\textsuperscript{1412}

Some lines of poetry are ascribed to Ma‘dān al-Shumaytī, the Rāfidi poet who belonged to the Shumayṭiya, after Shumayt, associate of al-Mukhtār. In them Ma‘dān says that al-firqa al-nājiya is definitely not Khārijites, nor nawāșib\textsuperscript{1413} i.e., (the nickname given by the Shi‘ites against those who hated them), nor associates of Wāṣil b. ʿAtā’.

IV. al-Jāḥiz’s Pro-ʿAbbāsidism

al-Jāḥiz in Bayān extensively quotes Ṭalibite and ʿAbbāsid figures known for their eloquence, as if he was recycling the pro-Ḥāshimi style seen in K. Faḍl Ḥāshim. But as detected in Taṣwīb ʿAlī, the Ṭalibites must never overshadow the ʿAbbāsids, and in this respect we find Ibn ʿAbbās’s prophetic advise to ʿAlī not to approach Ṭalḥa on his march to Baṣra, and to meet al-Zubayr instead.\textsuperscript{1414}

\begin{flushright}
1408 Ibid., 1:16. al-Manṣūriyya and al-Mughiriyya are also cited among the ghulāt.
1409 Ibid., 1:46.
1410 Ibid.
1411 Ibid., 1: 84.
1413 Ibid., 1: 23. In 3:356, Nawābit are mentioned in place of Nawāṣib.
1414 Ibid., 3: 221.
\end{flushright}
5- Annex to Kitāb al-Ḥayawan

1. Kitāb al-qawl fi al-Bighāl

I. Setting:

Pellat depends on al-Jāḥīz’s own reference to this work, in which an allusion is made to the fact that - given the illness of al-Jāḥīz that dominated the latter portion of his life - his intention to include K. al-Bighāl within K. al-Ḥayawān was interrupted by that factor, such that the former was independently written. 1415 If al-Jāḥīz has presented K. al-Ḥayawan before 233 (the year his addressee Ibn al-Zayyāt died), then K. al-Bighāl should have been written after 233 or, more exactly, after the completion of K. al-Ḥayawan (if the latter portions of al-Ḥayawan were written after 233). 1416 Pellat and Hārūn say, however, that K. al-Ḥayawan was written and presented in total to Ibn al-Zayyāt, i.e., before 233.

Benefiting from al-Jāḥīz’s reference to the interruption in time between the two works, 1417 Pellat suggests that K. al-Bighāl could have been written between 240-245 A.H. 1418 (al-Mutawakkil’s reign). al-Jāḥīz’s major references to the mule in the latter portions of al-Ḥayawan also indicate al-Jāḥīz’s growing concern with this animal which seems to reflect the possibility that he intended to pay special attention to it in a separate work, in his attempt to fill some lacunae in his encyclopaedic Kitāb al-Ḥayawān.

2. Analysis:

It is quite useful here to recall al-Khayyāt’s heresiographical observation made by him in K. al-Intiṣār, as we have seen above in analysing K. Fāḍilāt al-Muṭṭaẓila, when he was trying to defend al-Jāḥīz against Ibn al-Riwandi’s misunderstanding of al-Jāḥīz’s intentions behind his historiographic notice on how the Rāfīḍites were criminally involved in attributing to the Ṭālibites that which does not belong to them, and narrating that which has not been uttered by them. 1419

1416 This is my suggestion. See above for justification.
1417 Kitāb al-Bighāl, p. 16.
1418 Ibid., p. 5.
1419 See al-Intiṣār, pp. 98-99
In that context, al-Khayyāt - on behalf of al-Jāḥiz - has explicitly named those fabricators; here al-Jāḥiz himself gives the following additional remark on what he evaluates as an outspokenly tendentious historiographic activity. The value of this statement is significant as it provides one with an insight into the status of Shi‘ite historiography as judged by the "first non-Shi‘ī non-heresiographer to mention ghulūww and Ghulāt"\(^\text{1420}\) in Muslim Literature, i.e., in reflecting their role in the re-writing of history for obvious political reasons. It should be noticed here that the names of Shi‘ite narrators are different from the ones traced by al-Jāḥiz in "Faḍilat al-Mu‘tazila"; al-Jāḥiz narrates the following anecdote:

Two Qurashite clans clashed, so ʿA‘īsha, the mother of the believers, came riding a mule. When Ibn Abī-ʾĀṭiq (Abū Bakr’s son) saw her, he said: "where to? -may I be ransomed for your sake". She said: "to solve the issue between the two clans". He then told her: "By God we have not finished with the consequences of the day of the Camel; what if we are to face the day of the mule?!"\(^\text{1421}\)

al-Jāḥiz comments that this tradition is invalid and a fabrication of the Rawāfiḍ "min tawlid al-Rawāfiḍ"\(^\text{1422}\) and makes the following comments:

How can one accept that ʿA‘īsha had to go in person to the heads of disputes, and should not they come to her? Who were those clans? What was the issue? ʿA‘īsha’s status was more significant than to accept this unknown incident, with the ambitious tribes ... the Ḥadīth, furthermore, has no Ḥisnad (chain of transmitters) ... It must have been the fabrication of Abū Mikhnaf,\(^\text{1423}\), or al-Sharqī b. al-Qutāmi,\(^\text{1424}\) or al-Kalbī,\(^\text{1425}\) or Ibn al-Kalbī,\(^\text{1426}\) or Laqīṭ al-Muḥāribī,\(^\text{1427}\) or

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1421 K. al-Bighāl, p. 23.
1422 Ibid.
1423 His full name is Lūṭ b. Yahyā al-Azdi (d 160/777) a Kūfī Rāwi who narrated on behalf of Ja‘far al-Sādiq. The author of the study "Marwiyāt Abī Mikhnaf fi Ṭārīkh al-Tabari" concludes from the judgement of historians and traditionists that he was very unreliable. See Ibid., pp. 28, 43-46.
1424 His full name is al-Walid b. al-Ḥusayn al-Kalbī. Sharqī was his nickname, al-Manṣūr is said to have brought him to Baghdād as a tutor for his son al-Mahdī. al-Jāḥiz mentions him among the Rawāṭ and scholars descending from Qaḥṭān. See al-Bayān, 1: 360.
1425 al-Kalbī is Muhammad b. al-Sā‘ib al-Kalbī, d 1467/63, famous for his Tafsīr.
1426 The son of the above (fn.1425) d 204/819, famous for his genealogy (nasab).

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Finally, the following doctrinal constant should be noted here. al-Jähiz's scepticism of the above Shi‘ite historians in al-Mutawakkil's time reflects his previous cautiousness of them, as expressed by him in Risālat fi Taşwīb ʿAlī, during the time of al-Ma’mūn. In Taşwīb, one should mention, al-Jähiz categorically denies that he had made use of the "highly tendentious reports circulated by Abū Mikhnaf, Ibn Da'b, Shawkar, who were preceded by al-ʿAttābī (?)/al-ʿUtbi and Rashid al-Hajari (?). al-Jähiz also classifies al-Kalbi, Ibn al-Kalbi, Ibn Ju‘duba, ʿAwāna and al-Madā‘inī as highly unreliable sources. al-Sha‘bi, however, is singled out among the reliable narrators.

3. The condition of ʿAbĪsid Historiography

It is worth mentioning here Rosenthal's view of Muslim historians, who as he says - in spite of certain cases where every bit of historical writing was strictly partisan 1434 "did not intend to color history in this manner ... Authors did not consider themselves justified to change the details of, or to reinterpret a transmitted factual report."1435 Rosenthal cites al-Jähiz's implicit censure of the (fictitious) historian 'Ibn Sharyah' in Kitāb al-Bukhāl and judges it as in accordance with the above, meaning that al-Jähiz's criticism should not mean that history was coloured by the historians, as no historian would consciously commit mujāzafa, but only Ikhtīṣār.1436 Rosenthal extends this even to the political history of the Alid Shi‘a, whose historians are said to have been confined to focussing on contemporary events only.1437 It is quite obvious that this view is the antithesis of that forwarded above by

1428 Shawkar, according to al-ʿAsqalānī's Lisān al-Mizān, was a Baṣrī Shi‘ite narrator and historian. In volume 4 of the Lisān (India: Ḥaydarābād, 1330 AH), p. 409, Ibn Ḥajar says: He used to fabricate Ḥadīth in the Sind exactly as Ibn Da'b used to do in Medina.
1429 A poet who was contemporary to the poet Bashshār.
1430 His full name is ʿĪsā b. Yazīd b. Bakr b. Da'b, genealogist and historian, frequented the court of the caliph al-Ḥādi. He is accused of fabricating Ḥadīth in Medina.
1431 al-Jähiz quotes from him frequently and one wonders why he is put here, d. 225-231/840-845.
1433 See Taşwīb, parag.55, 121-122.
1435 Ibid.
1436 Ibid.
1437 Ibid.
Peterson, Pellat and Watt. I think Rosenthal's judgement of Muslim history needs some revision. The alleged esteem for the concept of history, which was "transmitted facts," could - as he has noticed - be disrupted by evil intentions on the part of historians. But the latter constitutes the exception to the rule (which is esteem for historical facts). When he cites al-Jähiz again he is quoting al-Isfaräyini's remark that suspects in al-Jähiz's work a scent of unorthodoxy.1440

As we have mentioned before, al-Jähiz's judgement of those narrators lacks the implicit censureship felt by Rosenthal, and therefore al-Jähiz - who was not totally free from al-Isfaräyini's claim that al-Jähiz was trying to impose his own brand of Mu'tazilism,1441 should be credited here for detecting the equally fictitious efforts practised by the pro-Alid historians mentioned by him above.

2. Risāla fi-al-Nisā', (& Risāla fi al-Mu'tallimīn.)

The following works could have been immediately put after the treatise Jawābat, and before Maqālat al-Zaydiyya, Tašwīb, and Nābita because of their closer doctrinal affinity to the former and not the latter works i.e., in these works al-Jähiz is still emphasising the basic role of the Imām in maintaining the unity and solidarity of his subjects.

These works, although lacking a direct political title, could have been considered among al-Jähiz's early works on Imāma because of their striking resemblance in the political doctrinal stand of al-Jähiz, namely in their reference to the unity of the caliphal post1442 and the role of the caliph to be exercised under the flag of that unity. al-Jähiz could have written these works later in his life, during the Mu'tazilī decline, but if this was the case, al-Jähiz then may be seen as maintaining a significant doctrinal constant within his political theory. There is contextual Jähizian evidence that substantiates this possibility i.e., that Kitāb al-Nisā' (among other works) was written after K. al-Hayawān, in the era of Mu'tazīlī decline.1443

1438 As we have seen in our analysis of al-Jähiz's 'Tašwīb 6'Ali'.
1439 Ibid.
1440 Ibid., p. 57.
1441 Ibid.
1442 See al-Jähiz, 'Risālat fi al-Nisā', Rasā'il, 3:149-152. It has been suggested by al-Ḥājiri, that this treatise was completed after Kitāb al-Ḥayawān (al-Ḥājiri, al-Jähiz, p. 437). If this suggestion is true, the findings above can be used to indicate al-Jähiz's doctrinal constant as regards the necessity of Imām/Imāmate.
al-Jāḥiẓ’s view that the community will only derive benefit when it has only one leader or Imām is emphasised in his treatise on women. In this he is building up a picture of how the family and the women of the family should be led by one man, the husband and master of the family. To do this he explains that the people will only attain their interests when they are led by one leader who unites them, protects them from their enemies and prevents the strong from exploiting the weak. He maintains that a small group with an effective organisation will always be stronger than a large group whose organisation is diffuse and which has no leader. He uses the animals to illustrate this idea, pointing out that each group of animals needs a leader from among them to sustain them and all follow such a leader. 1444 This makes him go on to maintain:

If God had not established for mankind men with the power to deter authoritatively, men who give protection as kings and men who take care of the people as Imāms, they would become diffuse without having any leader ... God compensated for the people’s weakness with the strength of those whom he required to enjoy such strength. He compensated for the people’s ignorance with the knowledge of those who knew how to protect and defend them. Therefore he made as a duty (faraḍa) for the Imām to protect the mob by protecting and guarding them and by preventing the strong from (exploiting) the weak, the ignorant from (harming) those with knowledge, the oppressor from (oppressing) the oppressed, and the insolent from (harming) the mild-mannered. Without the driver, those who need to be driven are lost. Without the strength of their shepherd, the flock is destroyed. 1445

3. Risāla fi al-Mu‘allimin

al-Jāḥiẓ has referred to the educators as having the role next to the Imāms. In other words, Imāms are both educators and successors of Prophets 1446 in the way they mediate between man’s passions and God’s laws. In this al-Jāḥiẓ acknowledges the role played by tutors and educators, especially in their capacity of leading to the correct use of reason i.e., Istinbāt leading to certainty and confidence, for knowledge is the path to every goodness, and through it halāl and harām are known. Furthermore, the following reference to the value of the leader (Sultan) is made:

Know that the most rational of the people is the Sultan and man of authority and those whom he needs to work on his behalf, to the extent of his need for them, the ability to reason is made accessible to them and they are guided to proofs. The merit of the shepherd over the flock is like that of the driver (Sā’īs) over the animals whom he drives. If it was not for the

1444 al-Qādī Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798) is said to have proposed this outlook of likening the Imām to the shepherd overseeing his flock. See E.I. 2, S.v., “Khalifa”, p. 949 (a)
Sultân the people would devour one another, just as if it was not for the shepherd, wild beasts would attack the flock. ¹⁴⁴⁷
al-Mutawakkil's Period II.

Change in al-Mutawakkil's policy: (236/850), Official anti-Rāfīḍī Campaign:

(i) Kitāb Faḍilat al-Mu‘tazila
(ii) Kitāb al-Radd ʻalā Aṣḥāb al-Ilhām.

Kitāb Faḍilat al-Mu‘tazila

1- Setting
2- Content

3- Shi‘i concepts regarded by Ibn al-Rīwandi as moderate:
   I- ‘Iṣma.
   II- Ijmā‘ on Qur’ān, Sunna and Ḥujaj al-‘Uqūl.
   III- Badā‘.
   IV- Raj‘a‘.
   V- Ilhām of the Imām.
   VI- Attitude of respect to Companions, Salaf & the Umma.
   VII- Defence of Shi‘ī Transmitters.

4- Shi‘i concepts regarded by Ibn al-Rīwandi as wild and rejectionable:
   I- Deification of ʻAlī.
   II- Shatm al Salaf.

5- Wild Shi‘ī (Rāfīḍī) concepts criticized by al-Jāḥīz:
   I- Biased narration and blasphemous theses of the Rāfīḍī Ruwāt (on behalf of their infallible Imāms).
   II- Content of fabricated narrations that had been circulated by Rāfīḍī and Ghāli Ruwāt:
      A. Ilhām and Divine status of the Ṭāllibite members as freeing them from obligation to learn and act virtuously.
      B. Deification of ʻAlī.
      C. belief in raj‘a‘.
      D. belief in naṣṣ on the Divinely appointed Imāmship of ʻAlī.
E. departure of the Rāfīda and the Ghāliya from Ḥijr

6- Determination of al-Jāḥiz’s view of Ghuluww in the context of Qur’anic, Sunni and early Shi‘i perspectives.

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Kitāb Faḍilat al-Mu‘tazila

1. Setting:

It should be clear now that al-Jāḥiz’s anti-Shī‘ite writings like Kitāb al Tarbi‘, K. Faḍilat al-Mu‘tazila, Kitāb al-Radd ʿalā Aḥṣāb al-Ilhām and to a lesser degree K. al-Bayān and al-Ḥayawān should provide enough evidence for the observation that al-Jāḥiz’s anti-Shī‘ite writings constituted a doctrinal constant which was independently undertaken in the era of political Mu‘tazili flourishing and was officially resumed - despite the misfortunes of Ḥizal - in the state-backed anti-Rāfidi campaign. The placing of Faḍilat al Mu‘tazila in the time of al-Mutawakkil, specifically in the first five years of his rule (232-237), when Ḥizal could still be praised, is very likely. This will also give ample time for al-Jāḥiz’s adversary, Ibn al-Riwandi to refute it in his famous “Faḍḥat al-Mu‘tazila”. To this we have a historical allusion to an order by al-Mutawakkil to arrest the state enemy,1448 Ibn al-Riwandi, of course not for attacking Ḥizal, but for his non-Sunni and un-orthodox positions.

In both eras, al-Jāḥiz has assumed the responsibility of counteracting the premises of the Rāfīḍa, thanks to the openness of the era of Mu‘tazili triumph that had allowed, since the time of al-Ma‘mūn, the appearance of dialectical discussions and treatises between the Mu‘tazilites and their ideological opponents;1449 a trend that had survived the first years of al-Mutawakkil’s caliphate.


1449 Dr. A. al-A‘sam has carefully traced such confrontations. The Mu‘tazila had been under severe attack since 150 A.H, by such Shi‘ites as Muqāṭil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767), Hishām b. al-Hakam (d. 179/795-796), Ibn al-Tammār (2nd Century A.H.) and Muḥammad b. Umayr, (d. 217/852). In this context, al-Jāḥiz’s anti-Shī‘ite works should not appear as an unexpected novelty but a reaction of one school against another. See Dr. al-A‘sam’s doctoral thesis, Ibid., pp. 19-22. A review of the works of the Mu‘tazila in Ibn al-Nadim’s Fihrist
al-Jähiz’s own reference to this Kitāb, in his preface to Kitāb al-Ḥayawān, could be seen as a contextual evidence for believing that Kitāb Faḍilat al-Muʿtazila preceded the full completion of al-Ḥayawān.\footnote{1450} Faḍilat al-Muʿtazila, as Dr. Aṣam says, “best represents the Muʿtazilite reaction against Shiʿism,”\footnote{1451} in the same way that “al-Nābita” had represented the Muʿtazili reaction to the pro-Umayyad party in the ʿAbbāsid community.

The unfortunate thing is that what we know today of Faḍilat al-Muʿtazila, is not based on al-Jähiz’s own writings but depend on excerpts that exist in other peoples’ works, namely his adversaries and supporters such as Ibn al-Riwandi’s refutation "Faḍiḥat al-Muʿtazila" and al-Khayyāṭ’s refutation of Ibn al-Riwandi entitled "al-Intisār". As for the date of Ibn al-Riwandi’s refutation of al-Jähiz’s K. Faḍilat al-Muʿtazila it should be noted that in this refutation Ibn al-Riwandi seems to have been addressing al-Jähiz and his disciples,\footnote{1452} as if al-Jähiz had already died. If this was the case, one may understand the reason why al-Jähiz could not refute his adversary, a task which was undertaken by al-Khayyāṭ (d.300/912).\footnote{1453} The other possibility is that the polemical work of Ibn al-Riwandi should belong to a period when al-Jähiz was still alive. This is consistent with the conclusion reached by Aṣam - the editor of Ibn al-Riwandi’s Faḍiḥat al-Muʿtazila - on the date of the latter’s death (although it is obscure, it is suggested to be in 245/859-860). This allows 5-10 years during which al-Jähiz could easily have commented on it; nevertheless, it remains unknown why al-Jähiz kept silent. If al-Khayyāṭ did live during the second half of the third century (A.H.) then it would be possible to assume - despite Aṣam’s suggestion - that Ibn al-Riwandi may have equally survived al-Khayyāṭ, and to have lived during the same period that al-Khayyāṭ

\footnote{1450} Although one may argue that such a preface is doubtful as al-Jähiz has referred to a book that has not - at least up to the writing of the 3rd printed volume of al-Ḥayawān - been really written. See my forthcoming article “al-Jähiz’s Anthropological Endeavour: An analytical study of his views of Coloured people (al-Sūdān); proceedings of the Fifth Biennial Conference of the School of ʿAbbāsid Studies, St. Andrews, July, 1993, p. 5. For further evidence that Kitāb al-Ḥayawān was written over an extended period of time (that he was currently engaged in other books, such as K. al-Bayān when al-Ḥayawān had not been completed yet and that he finished al-Ḥayawān before al-Bayān, see Ḥājiri, al-Jähiz, pp. 423-425.}

\footnote{1451} See Aṣam’s thesis (Faḍiḥat al-Muʿtazila), p. 23.

\footnote{1452} Ibid., p. 141.

\footnote{1453} al-Khayyāṭ’s company of Ibn al-Riwandi is attested by the former’s reference “that I heard him when he was still amongst the Muʿtazilite circles.” See al-Intisār, p. 76.
existed, i.e., 250-300. Whether Ibn al-Riwandi survived al-Jähiz (d.250-260) or died after him (255-295),\textsuperscript{1454} it would be useful to find out the exact nomenclature that was used in the Muṭazili-Shiʿi polemic when reference was made to the existing sects in al-Jähiz’s (d.250-260), Ibn al-Riwandi’s (d.245-298) and al-Khayyāt’s time (300).

2 Content:

Although we do not know the real nature of this book’s criticism of the Shiʿites, we are indebted to Dr. Aʿsam’s efforts in identifying four certain extracts of al-Jähiz’s work, that are retrieved from:

a) Ibn al-Riwandi’s Faḍiḥat al-Muṭazila (which in turn has been lost and reconstructed by Dr. Aʿsam), contains one extract.\textsuperscript{1455}

b) al-Khayyāt’s Kitāb al-Intīṣār has two extracts. The first deals with the relation between the Shiʿites and their Imāms,\textsuperscript{1456} the second is concerned with the nature of al-Jähiz’s criticism of the Shiʿites.

c) al-Sharif al-Murtadā’s al-Shāfiʿi al-Imāma\textsuperscript{1457} has one extract which briefly covers the Muṭazilite views concerning participants at the war of the Camel.

On examining those extracts, Dr. Aʿsam concludes:

K. Faḍilat al-Muṭazila was written by al-Jähiz in order to tackle two points: Firstly, to defend the Muṭazilites and to show their glory in the Muslim polemics in their dispute against the Shiʿites. Secondly, to complete his picture concerning the Shiʿites, he exposed many theses held by some of them, without distinguishing between the moderate Shiʿites and those who exaggerated in their beliefs and were conceived as extremists (ghulāt). In addition to these, al-Jähiz criticized the fundamental beliefs of the Shiʿites such as al-Imāmah, al-badāʿ, ar-rajāʿ, ar-īsmah, etc.\textsuperscript{1458}

\textsuperscript{1454} See Aʿsam’s thesis (Faḍilat al-Muṭazila), pp. 6-7, where according to Abū al-Fidāʾ Ibn al-Riwandi died in 293, and according to Ibn Kathir he died in 298.

\textsuperscript{1455} See Aʿsam’s thesis, Text, CXX (pp. 146-173 of Thesis).


\textsuperscript{1457} Lithograph, (Tehran, 1301) kindly provided to me by my Supervisor, Dr. I. K. A. Howard, pp. 14, lines. 3-8.

\textsuperscript{1458} Aʿsam’s Thesis, Kitāb Faḍilat al-Muṭazila, p. 30.
Kitāb Faḍīḥat al-Muʿtazila, supposed by its editor to have been written around 243/857-8581459 against the Muʿtazilites' theses and attacks on Shiʿism, exposes one to the highly polemicized nature of those sectarian debates that were taking place during the 3rd/9th Century, polemical in the sense that one school of thought is exclusively singled out as al-ṣīra al-Nājiya, which is rightly guided and on the right path.1460 To Ibn al-Riwandi - whose defence of the Shiʿite dogma is undertaken in the name of the whole Shiʿite sect1461 - it can not be other than Shiʿism. As an ex-Muʿtazilite, he has noticed that the fanatical criticism of the Shiʿites by the Muʿtazilites "has made the term Shiʿa odious and obnoxious to the common people, who were kept ignorant of the merits of the moderate Shiʿite dogma because of the political predominance of the Muʿtazilites who tried to convey the impression that they were the only school of thought which has the right to defend Islam."1462

More significant is the observation made by al-Aṣam on the value of Ibn al-Riwandi's works. Despite their overt support for Shiʿism, al-Aṣam stresses that his works have never been given due consideration.1463 ʿAbd al-Jabbār is quoted here as saying that Ibn al-Riwandi was the first Shiʿi theologian who expounded the subject of defending the Imāmate of ʿAli.1464 Without openly acknowledging him, ʿAbd al-Jabbār adds that Shiʿites had adopted his hypothesis on the Imāmate of ʿAli, and that given the merging of Fitīzāl and Shiʿism in the 5th/11th century,1465 it was therefore not so desirable to credit him because they found in his works an attack of Fitīzāl. The only exception was made by al-Sharif al-Murtadda (d.436/1044) who dared to

1459 ‘Faḍīḥat’, pp. 32-34.
1460 i.e., that they are the only true thinkers and deliverers of Umma from error. See al-Jāḥiẓ’s adamant view of the merits of Muʿtazilites and their indispensible value to society in K. al-Hayawān, 4: 206 and compare it to the alleged divine Ṭālibid status, in Intisār, p. 112.
1461 Ibid., p. 40. Ibn al-Riwandi’s endeavour to present a moderate and defensible view of their case is explained by al-Aṣam because during that period, the Shiʿites had no great mastery of the techniques of theological debate due to their reliance on the direct knowledge of their Imāms. Ibid., p. 37.
1462 See Ibid., p.37.
1463 Ibid., p. 65. Although Ibn al-Riwandi is believed to have been a contemporary of the 9th and 10th Imāms, Muhammad al-Jawād and ʿAlī al-Hādi. al-Aṣam could not find any link between them and Ibn al-Riwandi, as the former Imām died when the latter was 14, who was sent to prison by al-Mutawakkil.
1464 See Ibid., p. 71.
1465 Ibid., p. 68.
defend Ibn al-Riwandi's faith and refute 'Abd al-Jabbâr's al-Mughnî in his "al-Shâfi fi al-Imâma", with particular reference to the topic of Imâma.\textsuperscript{1466}

In Kitâb Faḍḥât al-Mu'tazila Ibn al-Riwandi is highly concerned - besides pinpointing the contradictions and heterodoxies of the major Mu'tazilite figures - in re-establishing the soundness of what he viewed as constituting the fundamental principles of Shi'ism and the main beliefs of the Shi'ites, such as belief in God, al-Badâ', al-ra'fa', al-Imâma, al-'Iisma, and attitude to Companions of the Prophet,\textsuperscript{1467} most of which had been categorically rejected by the Mu'tazilites and classified as an extreme deviation from orthodoxy, ghuluww,\textsuperscript{1468} whereas they should, as Ibn al-Riwandi says, be quite independant of the Mu'tazili accusation of ghuluww, and should not "affect the truth of the beliefs of the moderate Shi'ites."\textsuperscript{1469}

The main polemical issue that imposes itself in such dialectics, is in being capable of drawing the line between moderation and extremism after settling the point of who has the exclusive right to judge in these matters. In my opinion, whether that right was exclusivley Shi'ite or Mu'tazilite should not hide the fact that (a) extremism was simultaneously rejected by both\textsuperscript{1470}, and (b) therefore, what remains to be settled is to compare and contrast al-Jâhiz's and Ibn al-Riwandi's criteria for moderation and extremism, at least for what has relevance to the issue of Imâmate.

It is not clear why Dr. A'sam has failed to notice in other than the person of Ibn al-Riwandi, the attempt to denounce extremism among the Shi'ites. It is more than obvious that such was the main concern of al-Jâhiz, too. Such a failure, in my opinion, makes the discussion to be academically futile, in its polemic attempt - outlined by A'sam - to "reverse the Mu'tazilite criticisms of the Shi'ites against themselves ... because there were also many extremists in the Mu'tazilite movement,

\textsuperscript{1466} Ibid., p. 69. al-A'sam says: "Inspite of ash-Sharîf's importance among the Shi'ites, they appear to have ignored his judgement on Ibn ar-Riwandi," and that although he did much to further their cause they were ungrateful to him. He was nevertheless welcomed by the (proto-) Sunnites (such as Ibn Qutayba and al-Ashcari) in their polemic efforts to quote his attacks on Mu'tazilites.\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 71,74,75.

\textsuperscript{1467} See \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 39-40.

\textsuperscript{1468} As we shall see below.

\textsuperscript{1469} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 53

\textsuperscript{1470} This point is exclusively attributed by al-A'sam to Shi'ites i.e., he says: "Ibn al-Riwandi differs from al-Jâhiz in drawing a distinction between the views of the moderates and of the extremists amongst the Shi'ites. See \textit{Ibid.}, p. 53.
he (Ibn al-Riwardi) uses the same line of attack against the Mu'tazilites by claiming that their extremist thinkers were not different from the Shi'ite extremists. 1471

As the present research is confined to the issue of leadership/Imāma, pursuing the ‘theological’ aspects of ghuluww in the camp of the Mu'tazila or the Shi'a naturally goes beyond our concerns, and we shall therefore limit ourselves to the political aspects of that ghuluww by proposing a comparative study between al-Jähiz’s and Ibn al-Riwardi’s view of Shi'ite ghuluww, which has been undermined by al-A'isam. It is a promising endeavour that furnishes us with the common thread that has - apparently - connected the two camps in their simultaneous praise of the moderate Shi'ites and their denouncing of the extremists; 1472 one should nevertheless be ready to encounter criteria of moderation/ghuluww which are viewed very differently by Shi'ism and I'tizāl.

3. Shi'i Concepts related to Imāma that are judged as genuinely moderate by Ibn al-Riwardi:

From reviewing Ibn al-Riwardi’s reconstructed work of Fadihat al-Mu’tazila and comparing it to al-Khayyāt’s quotations from the same work, I have been able to single out the following concepts as belonging to moderate Shi'ites, according to Ibn al-Riwardi’s standard of moderation:

I- 'Isma.

II- Ijmā' on Qur'ān, Sunna and Ḥujaj al-‘Uqūl.

III- Badā‘.

IV- Raf'a.

V- Ilhām of the Imām.

VI- (?) Attitude of respect to Companions and Umma. 1473

VII- Defence of Shi'i Transmission as sound.

1471 Ibid., pp. 53-55.

1472 Compare the introductory phrases of Ibn al-Riwardi’s reconstructed K. Fadihat al-Mu’tazila, p. 115 to al-Jähiz’s phrases quoted by al-Khayyāt, Intisār, p. 117. In both instances, the moderate Shi'ites and moderation in Tashayyu‘ are distinguished from the extreme Shi'ites and Ifrāt in Tashayyu‘. Further references are seen in ‘Fadihat’, p. 252 and in al-Jähiz’s Introduction to Kitāb al-Ḥayawān.

1473 Ibn al-Riwardi here will try to make a defence of moderate Shi'ism that is actually not true.
I  

‘Iṣma:

Ibn al-Riwandi cherishes the belief in ‘Iṣma of the Imām as he says in his sarcastic critique of the Mu’tazila:

If they say: The Shi‘ites maintain that there is always in every age one man on earth who is infallible (maḍ‘īm) and is never mistaken or in error, (we shall say to them) that Abū `I Hudhayl and Hishām al-Fūṭi maintain that the community has always in every age twenty infallible men and that God preserves them from errors which he did not preserve the Apostles ... Therefore should not the reproaches addressed to the Shi‘ites for claiming that there is a single infallible man be multiplied for the Mu‘tazilites for claiming that there are twenty? 1474

II. Belief in al-Qur‘ān, Sunna of Prophet and Ḥujaj al-‘Uqūl.

In another polemical attempt to differentiate moderate Shi‘ite doctrines from those of the extremists, Ibn al-Riwandi claims to be critical of the extremists’ break from the Ijmā‘ of the Umma, but such a critique should be examined twice by studying the context and method in which it is developed. For instance, on reading the following type of reasoning:

But if they say: “the extremists among the Shi‘ites have broken away from the consensus (IJmā‘) of the community in a number of their theses”, we shall say to them: “How does this affect the moderates among them (ahl al-Ijtishād minhum) if they hold by the book of God, al-Qur‘ān, Sunnah of the Prophet and the arguments of reason,”(ḥujaj al-‘Uqūl)? 1475

One may naturally assume that belief in Ijmā‘ of the Umma is being held up as a primary thesis of the moderate Shi‘ites. But a closer examination of Ibn al-Riwandi’s reply, shows that it does not specifically acknowledge Ijmā‘ among the other binding criteria. This is, because as a matter of fact, according to Ibn al-Riwandi, immediate reference is made to the Mu‘tazila’s identical rejection of Ijmā‘ of the Umma in a number of theses exclusively enjoyed by them, such as their belief in tawallud and in al-manzila bayn al-manzilotayn. 1476 Such theses are enough proof to Ibn al-Riwandi that the Mu‘tazilites have equally put themselves outside the circle of Ijmā‘, the charge raised against the extremist Shi‘ites. So the Mu‘tazilites should be blamed for what they are accusing others of; and if they are outside Ijmā‘, the

1474 Ibn al-Riwandi, ‘Fadihat’, Text, CLXXXIV (p. 251 of thesis). The polemic is exaggerated when even al-Jāḥīz is accused of claiming that Prophets intentionally committed acts of disobedience. Ibid., p. 216. This is a polemical misinterpretation of a probable Mu‘tazili belief in outstanding members who are rationally gifted.

1475 Ibid., p. 252.

1476 See Ibid., p. 170 and in holding the finite nature of paradise and hell, and that ‘Uthmān was never imprisoned, (husira) etc. See Ibid., pp. 171-172.
moderate Shi'ites should boast that they enjoy belief in Qur'an, Sunna and ḥujaj al-ʿUqāl (arguments of reason).

But if the surface meaning and direct impression that Ijmāʿ, could have been one of the moderate Shi'ite dogmas of Ibn al-Riwandi’s time is not really intended and is only polemically cited, it remains a matter of historical inquiry to determine whether Ijmāʿ, could have really been cherished by Shi'ism, and in what sense, before it finally took the Imāmite form of Ijmāʿ ahl-al-Ṭāʿifa on their particular occulted Imām, which had to wait and emerge with the event of the major occultation.

The impression given here out of this Rāfiḍi-Muʿtazili polemic is that although the Muʿtazilites and the extreme Shi'ites have been seen as equally breaking from Ijmāʿ, at least the Muʿtazila and equally moderate Shi'ites have not broken from believing in Qur'an, Sunna and powerful proofs, a statement that obviously reflects a strong competition between ʿItizāl and Tashayyuʿ to identify themselves with the mainstreams of orthodoxy.

III. Badāʿ

As regards Badāʿ, Ibn al-Riwandi narrates on behalf of the most learned among the Shi'ites that Badāʿ is identical to what the Muʿtazila define as Naskh. He wonders why should:

...the errors of those who were mistaken in what they said about ... al-Badāʿ prove the falseness of the doctrine that (they hold to the effect that) the Ḥāshimites are the most inspired among men and that they are superior in virtue and knowledge. They may have been mistaken in this doctrine, but this does not hinder their being right in defending the Ḥāshimites.

IV. Rafa (return from death)

Ibn al-Riwandi emphasizes the soundness of the belief in rafa, saying:

Concerning the thesis of al-rafa, (sic) the Shi'ites maintain that it contradicts neither monotheism nor Divine Justice; it does not make (Divine) Power impossible, nor does its operation

1477 Imāmites hold that Ijmāʿ has never occurred
1478 “Fadihat”, p. 154. Badāʿ means that God may change a previous decision if it pleases Him. See Ibid., p. 306.
1479 Ibid., p. 147. In p. 148 one notices that although Hishām b. al-Ḥakam may have made a mistake on such an anthropomorphic description of God, that had been discredited by other Shi'ite theologians, the fact should not mean they were wrong in everything or that al-Tashayyuʿ for the Imāms of Banū Ḥāshim is false.
nullify (His) Wisdom. Things of this kind are not rejected by reason, and can only be invalidated in their view, if they are invalid by (what has been accepted by) as-samā’. There are three ways of as-samā’... the Qur’ān, ... the unanimity (of the Muslim Community), and ... information that leads necessarily to knowledge. 1481

Here he enumerates certain Qur’anic verses1482 that are related to raj’a, and then he uses Jesus’s restoration of the dead to this world as an illustration of the “unanimous agreement” concerning raj’a, and finally says that despite the Umawiyya’s obstructive efforts, true information have been passed to us with detailed commentaries... 1483

V. Ilhām of the Imāms.

Ibn al-Riwandi seems also to believe in inspiration as a vital road to the Knowledge of the Imām. His elaboration of this is, however, not explicit as the polemic elements of his following argument show:

(al-Jāhiz) said that they (the Shi’ites) wronged the descendants of the Messenger of God - peace be on him - preventing them from seeking for knowledge, and leading them to believe that God would grant them this through “inspiration” (Ilhām). Thus he did not mean to refer to the majority of the Shi’ites, because he knows that not all the Shi’ites acknowledge inspiration. As for those of them who do, they maintain that the only way in which all people acquire knowledge is through “inspiration”. They do not single out the descendants of the Messenger of God - may the blessing of God be upon him - in this to (the exclusion of) other men ... Inspite of this, they search for knowledge, and pursue it ardently... There is no one among them who does not maintain that the descendants of the Messenger are commanded to be instructed by the heads of their families and the prominent men among them. 1485

Ibn al-Riwandi says that al-Jāhiz had uttered such accusations because of the “hate he shared with his predecessors against 6Ali b. Abī Ṭālib.”1486 From this text one can feel that a development was occuring within the mainstream of developing Shi’ites. al-Jāhiz’s accusations may have been sensible during his time when Shi’ites were dependant on their ruwāt and Imāms. It seems now, in Ibn al-Riwandi’s time, things have gone differently, as the Shi’ite masses were instructed to use Kalām and

1480 The Shi’ites believe that Ijma has never happened; authority rests in the Imām, not in the Umma. Later on the Ijma of al-Ṭa’ifa (community) emerges with the major occultation and acceptance of a particular Imām.
1481 Ibid., p. 234.
1482 Süra 2: 259 and 40: 11.
1483 Fadihat, pp. 234-235.
1484 The Shi’ites or the rest of the descendants (suggestion of editor).
1485 Ibid., pp. 247-248.
1486 Ibid.
scholastic reasoning, which was not previously favoured in view of its incompatibility with the faculty of Ilhām of the Imāms.

VI. Attitude to Umma/Companions.

But if they accuse the Shi'ites of holding the possibility that the Umma may have unanimously agreed on erring (against the Prophetic tradition that the Muslim Umma would never collectively agree on sinning), Ibn al-Riawandi reverses the accusation against the Mu'tazilites after describing such an attitude as "Kufr" in the eyes of Shi'ites. The Mu'tazilite rejection of the belief in the vision of God and of His willing evil, and their refutation of the non-createdness of the Qur'an, all reflect how the Mu'tazilites viewed the majority of the Ummā's attitude as an error equal to Kufr, as they did not share the contrary views held by them. Most of the Companions and their followers (Tābi`ūn) are viewed as agreeing on a sin when they desisted from rebelling against Mu'awiya and Yazīd, and from rebelling against the Umayyad rule. Ibn al-Riawandi relieves the Shi'ites who had implicitly cherished the view that most of the Companions have erred, by turning the charge back to the Mu'tazila in order to elevate its soundness.

When quoting Hishām b. al-Ḥakam's thesis that the majority - but not the totality - of the Umma went astray by leaving ʻAlī and following other Imāms, Ibn al-Riawandi cites the involvement of all the sects of the Umma in viewing the majority of the Companions as errants; as if to make way for Hishām's thesis, which is built on the polemic distinction between the majority and the totality of the Umma.

Attitude to Companions:

As for the alleged Shi'ite negative attitude to the Companions of the Prophet, Ibn al-Riawandi denies it as follows:

As for the accusation he (al-Jāḥīz) makes against them (Shi'ites) of having held the Companions to be non-believers and having found fault with or slandered them, I know of no dissension among the Shi'ites about the fact that those who hold this view are non-believers.

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1487 This we have seen in al-Jāḥīz's 'Risālat al-Nābita'.
1488 See Fadihat, p. 168.
1489 Ibid., pp. 159-162.
themselves ... al-Jähiz must either have slandered this sect or else been ignorant of what they said. 1490

Here Ibn al-Riwandi cleverly picks out the Zaydiyya’s view of Abū Bakr, “some of whom maintained that ‘Ali appointed Abū Bakr, and that Abū Bakr was his subordinate. Thus Abū Bakr, in their view, was right and acted correctly in taking over power.” 1491

The (moderate) Shiites, Ibn al-Riwandi concludes, do not at all maintain the possibility that the Companions may have had unanimously agreed on Kufr; 1492 earlier, above we have seen him defending Ibn al-Ḥakam’s thesis that the majority of the Umma has erred but not in its totality. Hence, one may safely assume that according to Ibn al-Riwandi:

a) the majority of Companions/Umma erred and went astray but not to the level of leaving the circle of Islamic beliefs. Once more, the problem of historicity rises again, this time concerning the (moderate) Shiite attitude to the Companions: was it one of respect as the Zaydites are described, or one of doubt and criticism, as Hishām b. al-Ḥakam is said to have maintained? In fact, it can be concluded from Ibn al-Riwandi’s analysis above that his defence of what he labels as Shiism/moderate Shiites, encompassed both opinions: the Zaydi and the Rāfidi, with an emphasis to make the theses of the latter as definitely “moderate” and “sound” as possible. In this respect, is to be understood his report ascribed to the Shiites then that they viewed as non-believer anyone who sees the Companions as being Kāfirīs. 1493

Another reading of the above reservations of Ibn al-Riwandi (that it is Kufr to accuse Companions of Kufr, that no Shiite maintains the Companions’ consensus on Kufr, and that the majority but not the totality of them have gone astray (dallū), reminds one of the later Imāmī and more explicitly developed doctrine of Kufr al-Ṣahāba, as exposed by the Imāmite figure al-Shaykh al-Mufid. In his work entitled ‘al-Jamal: al-Nuṣra fī Ḥarb al-Basra, 1494 on the battle of the Camel, is to be found

1490 Ibid., p. 237. and Arabic text, p. 158. This statement is polemical and is not true. He means to say two kinds of Kufr, Kufr ridda and kufr milla. (To be discussed below.)
1491 Ibid., p. 238.
1492 Ibid., p. 161.
1493 See Ibid., p. 158.
the Imāmite proposition of the existence of two kinds of Kufr: Kufr milla (which applies to the non-Muslims), and Kufr ridda (which applies to the majority of the Companions: these have not expressed kufr of the Islamic laws but in the sense of having left the true faith by discarding the Imāmate of ʿAli, they are not Muʾmin, but have the status of an erring Muslim whose error is of the type of Kufr ridda; they are members of the community and Muslims in the nominal sense but not muʾmins in the true sense.

This distinction reminds us of Hishäm b. al-Ḥakam's distinction, that the majority of the Umma have gone astray but not their totality. Similarly, al-Mufid exempts a few of the Companions from the charge of Kufr ridda as they accepted at the right time ʿAli’s Imāmship.

Ibn al-Riwandi’s statement which denies that any Shiʿite could have accepted the consensus of Companions on Kufr, is not as developed or fully explained as that of al-Mufid; this may be out of taqiyya since the Imāmite distinction (still in its Rāfiʿite form) was still struggling to establish itself as the standard Shiʿite view. The point of historicity, as to whether the Imāmite dogma can be projected back to Ibn al-Riwandi’s non-Imāmite/moderate portrayal of Shiʿism, is debatable. Ibn al-Riwandi could have been ultra-cautious on these points, avoiding the description of the the kind of dalāl attributed by Ibn al-Ḥakam to the majority of the Companions as al-Shaykh al-Mufid did; such an Imāmite distinction between the two types of Kufr could obviously have spoilt his argument and his concern to present the theses of the Shiʿites, in an attractive or even misleading light; (to maintain Companions were Kāfirs, was never a Shiʿite stand, he says) by suppressing what the Shiʿites really thought of the Sahāba. This is confirmed by al-Khayyat’s statement that discredits Ibn al-Riwandi’s attempt to shield himself from associating Kufr and Shirk to the Sahāba. Such an association, al-Khayyat adds, was evidently practised by all of the Rāfiḍa.

The editor of Ibn al-Riwandi’s reconstructed text of Fādiḥat al-Muʿtazila comments on Ibn al-Riwandi’s above position as follows:

Ibn al-Riwandi’s statement here ... seems to give the impression that the moderate Shiʿites never charged some of the Companions with doubting both Islam and Muḥammad’s Prophecy. It is however, true, that they grouped the Companions in accordance with the latter’s attitude to ʿAli after

1496 See al-Intisār, p. 104.
the Prophet’s death, and thus we find them throughout their history charging the most celebrated Companions with unfaithfulness, e.g., there was a group among the Shiites (i.e., al-lā‘iniyyah) who cursed Uthmān, Ṭalhāh, az-Zubayr, Mu‘āwiyah, Abū-Mūsā al-Ash‘ari, Ā‘isha, etc.\footnote{1497}

VII. Defense of the Sound transmission of Shiite Ruwāt:

Accused of untrustworthy narration and fabrication of traditions, from the Prophet and their predecessors, such practices, Ibn al-Riwandi says, have “lead to suspicion of the Shiites in the minds of many people,”\footnote{1498} but should not reflect negatively on Shiites since various sects of the *Ummā* have been equally involved in transmitting different reports from the Prophet, thus the Shiite transmission should not be doubted because this doubt would apply to all the *Ummā*:

The Shiites’ attribution of their doctrines to their predecessors is no more strange than the attribution by the adherents of ahl-al-millah/ahl-al-Imāmah,\footnote{1499} of theirs, variant and contradictory though they are, to their Prophet. If this attitude of the Shiites falsifies their doctrine regarding their support of the Ḥāshimites, then the Khārijites, Mu‘tazilites, Murjites, Shiites and Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth, by attributing their doctrines to al-Muṣṭafā - peace be on him - falsify their doctrines on monotheism and on the acknowledgement of Muḥammad (as Prophet).\footnote{1500}

We have seen above in his exposition of *Badā‘* how Ibn al-Riwandi is picking the moderate Shiites (Shi‘a of Banū Ḥāshim, i.e., the group attached to the Alid house of Banū Ḥāshim) as the group undermined by other sects, that should be given its rights. He does the same here.

4- Wild Shiite Concepts and Practises that are rejected by Ibn al-Riwandi.

Ibn al-Riwandi’s hyper-concern to exonerate the upholders of the above principles from the accusation of extremism, and his manifested eagerness to classify them as moderate Shiites, did not make him ignorant of the existence of the real extremists. It is interesting to find in Ibn al-Riwandi’s work the distinction between Shi‘a (i.e., the moderates), and Ghāliya, who seem to have penetrated Shiite circles. In his classification of the sects of the *Ummā*, only the term Shi‘a\footnote{1501} comes with the

\footnote{1497} Faḍīḥat’, p.318. The editor adds Ibn Qutaybā’s remark that the Shiites depended on a Prophetic Hadith which proves that not all the Companions were faithful. See *Ibīd.*, p. 319.

\footnote{1498} *Ibīd.*, p. 237.

\footnote{1499} This reading has been preferred by Dr. A‘sam, although ahl al-millah is found in other sources quoting same passage.

\footnote{1500} *Ibīd.*, p. 236.

\footnote{1501} See *Ibīd.*, pp. 158-159.
other sects (Khārijites, Murji’ites, Mu’tazilites, Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth), with very few references to the Zaydiyya and questionable ones (i.e., not his) to the Rāfiḍa.

I. Delification of ʿAlī

This concept is categorically refuted by Ibn al-Riwandi and is regarded as unbelief (kufr). Two lines by the Kaysāni poet al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī are quoted by him to refute al-Jāḥiz’s claim that there are some Shiʿites who maintain that ʿAlī is God:

“They Said: He is God - nay , God, our Creator, is greater than that He should be the son (of any of his creation) or a father.” 1502

II. Ṣhatm al-Salaf

al-Jāḥiz’s accusation that the Shiʿites had ‘slandered the predecessors (salaf) is rejected and turned against the Muʿtazilites who shared the Khārijite’s consideration of ʿAlī, ʿUthmān, Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, Ṭalḥa, ʿA’isha, as non-believers, in addition to abandoning ʿAlī (before Tahkim), ʿAmr, Muʿāwiyah and Ibn ʿAbbās, etc.1503 It may be argued here that Ibn al-Riwandi is trying to forward a defence of ‘moderate’ Shiʿism which is actually not necessarily true, and may not have been really cherished by the group of Shiʿism he is defending. This is substantiated by al-Khayyat’s confirmation that out of all the sects of the Umma, none but the Rāfiḍa attacked the majority of the Ṣahāba.1504 Furthermore, al-Khayyat is highly doubtful and cynical of Ibn al-Riwandi’s claim that exonerates the Shiʿa from charging the Ṣahāba (but for 5 or 6) had committed infidelity and polytheism: Kafarat wa Ashrakat”.1505

As such, Ibn al-Riwandi’s criterion of ghuluww is exposed, and consequently his standard for the moderate Shiʿites has been detected, as the propositions held by the former extremists should not be mistakenly attributed as “forming any part at all

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1502 Ibid., pp. 243-244.
1503 Ibid., p. 239.
1504 See al-Intisār, p. 101
1505 Ibid. p. 104.
of (moderate) Shi‘ite dogma, by which the Shi‘ites are distinguished from all other sectarians.”

5- al-Jāḥīz’s criticism of the (wild) Shi‘i concepts (of al-Rawāfiḍ) related to Imāma:

Of course, al-Jāḥīz’s critique below suffers from the disadvantage of being, like Ibn al-Riwandi’s, reconstructed, this time from al-Khayyāt’s polemical work al-Intiṣār, which contains valuable quotations from al-Jāḥīz’s Kitāb Fadilat al-Mu‘tazila and al-Khayyāt’s refutations of Ibn al-Riwandi’s Kitāb Fāḍiḥat al-Mu‘tazila.

I. The biased and fictitious narration and the blasphemous theses of ruwāt al-Rāfiḍa on behalf of their infallible Imāms.

al-Khayyāt does not accept Ibn al-Riwandi’s misunderstanding of al-Jāḥīz’s criticism of the fabricated traditions ascribed to the Prophet by the Rāfiḍi narrators. Instead of assuming that a similar fabrication has been practised by the other non-Shi‘i sects of the Umma - to an extent that makes their acknowledgement of the Prophet Muḥammad and their acceptance of Tawḥīd highly doubtful - al-Khayyāt ventures to clarify al-Jāḥīz’s point on those ruwāt, whose forgery (ta‘zyīf) on behalf of their infallible Imāms who are expected to eliminate such forging and preserve religion from being changed and the Sunan from being lost, should demolish their basis for the necessary existence of the Imām, and invalidate their proof of the necessity of Imāma (wa-hādha naqḍan li-dalilihim fi tathbit al-Imāma).

II. Blasphemous content of fabricated narratives:

A. Claiming Ilhām and the divine status of the house of Abū Ṭālib as saving them from religious learning and virtuous deeds:

The Jārūdiyya sect is singled out from the various sects of the Rawāfiḍ, as an illustration to what al-Jāḥīz often describes as their criminal offence against the descendants of the Prophet and the house of Abū Ṭālib (Janaw ʿalā wild Rasūl Allāh. wa Āl Abū Ṭālib) by circulating views that blocked their pursuit of Knowledge,

1506 Ibid., p. 174.
1508 Intiṣār, pp. 110-11.
by pretending that God grants them this by a process of direct inspiration (*Ilhâm*), thus preventing them from following the reasonable channels of religious Knowledge: (*al-Tafaqquh fi al-din*).1509

* al-Jähiz realizes that not all Râfidites believe in *Ilhâm*, but those who do, may be extreme quietists or active militants. The *Järüdiyya* is cited as the most militant inspirationalist *Râfidi* sect and is severely criticized. al-Khayyât, who has taken the liberty of clarifying al-Jähiz’s stand, says:

> al-Jähiz has forwarded this criticism against the *Järüdiyya* sect of *râfida*, who believed in *Khurüj* (backing Alid/Tâlibid descendants by the sword). al-Jähiz’s point was simply this: as you (Järûdites) have had the guts to encourage the descendants of 6Ali to join the battle fields and expose them to all the dangers there, (you should have equally) refrained from preventing them meeting (the nonthreatening) scholars by encouraging them to attend their circles ... nay, you should instead have urged them to pursue Knowledge normally from its sources and studying books of scholars, so that they can be on equal footing with those enemies that you intend them to fight ... al-Jähiz has explicitly stated in *Fadilat al-Muʿtazila* that it was this specific sect of the Râfida - and not any other - who believe in *Khurüj*, who have also maintained that as Fâṭima preserved her chastity, God rewarded her offspring by saving them from hell-fire, in anecdotes (*akhbâr*) that they narrate on behalf of those who are like them, that eventually free the house of Abû Tâlib from the need for *'im* and *'amal*, by persuading them that sins can not harm them as any Tâlibid can intercede (*yashfa'â*) on the behalf of his own group. Their crime was two-fold: They cursed the Prophet’s Companions and frustrated the efforts of the Tâlibids (to whom they attached themselves) from learning and aroused a dislike for virtuous deeds amongst them.

> You simply can not accuse al-Jähiz of hating the Alids as you are quite aware of the high esteem of al-Jähiz and his Muʿtazilite teachers for `Ali’s *faḍl*, and how they placed him in the noble status in which he deserves to be placed...1511

The following passage in al-Khayyât’s *Intisâr* clarifies the above point, i.e. the blasphemous theses inherent in those concocted traditions:

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1509 Ibn al-Riwandî, *Fâdihat al-Muʿtazila*, p. 147, where he opposes al-Jähiz’s claim and states that Shîites pursued knowledge ardently.

1510 The *Järûdiyya* sect, was named after Abî al-Jârûd, Ziyâd b. al-Mundhir. The partisans of this sect have similarities to the Zaydites and Râfidites. Like the former, they hold the same principle of *Khurüj* (holy war against the tyrant, as Muʿtazilites hold). Like the Râfida, they believe in the *Ilhâm* of the Imam and that the Prophet had designated 6Ali, but implicitly, and that the Companions were impious as they distanced themselves from 6Ali. Unlike the Râfida, they maintain the right to Imamate of any militant and competent candidate from the house of 6Ali, i.e., they do not confine it to the Husaynid branch as the Râfida do. The author of al-Hûr al-īn cites, (against al-Jähiz’s observation below) three groups of the Järûdiyya that believed in the return (*rajâ'a*) from occultation (*ghayba*) of (a) al-Nafs al-Zakiyya (Muhammad b. 6Abd Allâh b. al-Hasan ...) who was seen as the expected *qaʿīm* during the caliphate of al-Manṣûr (b) Muhammad b. al-Qâsim b. 6Ali b. 6Umar b. 6Ali b. al-Husayn b. 6Ali b. Abî Tâlib, viewed as the expected *Mahdi* after al-Muʿtâṣîm imprisoned him.(c) Yahyâ b. 6Umar b. Yahyâ b. al-Husayn b. Zayd b. 6Ali b. al-Husayn b. 6Ali b. Abî Tâlib, who was the expected *Mahdi* after his revolt against al-Mustaʿîn (248-252/862-66). See al-Hûr al-īn, p. 156.

1511 al-Intisâr, pp. 110-111.
... al-Jähiz's real intention was to notify us of al-Räfidi's criminal offence against the majority of the house of Abü Talib, by virtue of the (highly suspicious and concocted nature of) narratives pertaining to anthropomorphism (tashbih), ... proofs of baclä', belief in raj ca, charging the Umma with unbelief (Ikfdr al-Umma), violating the authentic Prophetic Traditions (mukiuilafat al-Sunan), and rejecting the Qur'än (al-Ta`n fi al-Qur'dn), so much that they alienated themselves from a big portion of the community (or caused themselves to be deserted and suspected by upholding such wild views). That was what al-Jähiz really aimed at, as is manifestly evident in his Faḍilat al-Muctazila ... If you want to be certain about that, I ask you to examine the narratives circulated by the group of Räfidi narrators such as Ibn Numayr1512 Šafwän al-Jammäl, 1513 Sudayr, 1514 Hibbän b. Sudayr, 1515 Mucdwiya b. Ėmmār,1516 and their like. Then review what is transmitted by (a Räfidite sect known as) al-Mamtūra1517 and al-Qaf`iyiya,1518 on behalf of JaCfar (al-$ädiq) and Müsä (al-Käzim) b. JaCfar; you would be surprised to find yourself faced with undeniably wondrous anecdotes, that no objective examiner can accept, which makes him conclude that al-Räfida have excelled all humanity in fabrications and lying ...1519

The above passage is a useful key for understanding the roots of the differences between al-Jähiz's and Ibn al-Riwandi's criteria of ghuluww. al-Jähiz's awareness of the non-orthodox activities of those Räfidi ruwät needs not to be doubted as a concocted insertion from a-Khayyät into the mouth of al-Jähiz, for we have seen above how al-Jähiz was critical of the same wild views cherished by "al-Rawāfiḍ" in his treatise entitled "Hujaj al-Nubuwwa". But, of course the above passage is not comprehensive in detecting all of the wild/ghäli points of the Räfida, and hence we depend on al-Khayyät's further quotations to retrieve al-Jähiz's fuller views of the ghuluww of the Rawāfiḍ in his Faḍilat al-Mu`tazila. al-Jähiz's

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1512 Unknown Shi'ite narrator, though al-Jähiz narrates on his behalf eloquent pieces of Arabic wise sayings. See al-Bayān, 1: 84 where he is described as “Muḥammad b. ĖUmayr, min aghlā mashāyikh al-Shiya'”.

1513 Šafwän, according to the editor of al-Intisār, was mentioned by al-Ṭūsī in his Fihrist, (p. 171) as Šafwän b. Mahrān b. al-Mughira al-Jammāl.

1514 Unknown Shi'ite narrator.


1516 He is judged by al-Ṭūsī to be equally reliable as his father, from the transmission point of view.

1517 al-Mamtūra (also known as al-Wāqifa) is the nickname given to the group who denied Mūsā al-Kāzīm's death and believed in his return. This name was given by the group known as al-Qaf`iyiya that accepted ĖAli al-Ridā as Imām after al-Kāzīm. See al-Nawbakhtī, Fīraq al-Shī' ā, pp. 68-69. Obviously al-Khayyāt's notion of the Qaf`iyiya is incompatible with the Imāmite source.

1518 Qaf`iyiya is defined by Watt in line with the above Imāmite view. This group is said to have 'decisively' asserted that Mūsā al-Kāzīm was dead - in contrast to the position of the Wāqifa who believed that he would return someday - and that Mūsā was succeeded by his son ĖAli al-Ridā. Moreover, Hīshām b. al-Ḥakam is reported by later Imāmites as a Qaf`ī. See Formative, pp. 160-161,188.


1520 The use of Rawāfiḍ as such is identical to al-Khayyāt's observation on the diversity of the groups of al-Rāfiḍa. See Ibid., p. 99.
alleged exposition of each Rāfiḍī sect, one by one, was for the sole reason of making
the people aware of the strictly non-orthodox theses (for al-rafd is described as
encompassing such a broad domain of Kufr and takhlīṣ that are circulated by ruwāt
al-Rāfīḍa and ruwāt al-ghāliya, that had not been adopted by any other sect."1521)

It should be clear that the following Rāfīḍī concepts criticized by al-Jāḥīz
have been constantly linked with and attributed to the activities of those extremist
ruwāt, such that this detailed layout of the dogma and practises of Rawāfīḍ
constitutes a further clarification of the content of their concocted narratives:

B- Deification of 'Ali:

The point criticized here is that al-Rāfīḍa had regarded their Imām ('Ali b.
Abī Ṭālib) with excessive veneration, and went beyond the legally prescribed limits,
as the Christians have regarded Jesus, peace be upon him. For some of the Rida
thought that their Imām was God or the mediator between God and His creation, or
that he was either a messenger or a Prophet.

The problem of mixing Shi'ites and Rāfīḍites reappears here, as al-Jāḥīz’s
intention not to blame the moderate Shi'ites for the blasphemous theses held by the
extremists is stressed throughout al-Intisār.1522 al-Ḥimyari’s rejection of the
deification of 'Ali should not hide the fact that such a claim has been outspokenly
and explicitly cherished by the Rāfīḍa,1523 namely by one extremist sect (firqa min
al-ghulāt), that is said to have come to 'Ali with that claim, so he burnt them.1524

C- Blasphemy of raj'a: (Return from death to the world)

Whereas the Jārūdiyya were responsible for circulating Ilhām, and
abandoning virtuous deeds, here they are excepted with the Zaydiyya from
upholding Raj'a (return from death). This belief is solely attributed to a Rāfīḍī group
known as ahl al-Imāma, who made all the Muslim Umma regard its holders as
"Kāfirs", says al-Khayyāṭ:

1521 al-Intisār, p. 112.
1522 See p. 112.
1523 See p. 107.
1524 Ibid.
Don’t you know that Khârijites, Murji’ites, Mu’tazilites, Hashwites, Zaydites and Jârûdites and all the Ummat525 - but for ahl al-Imâma - have rejected the belief in Rafâ (return from death), and considered as Kâfir anyone who holds it, and even throw him out of Islam? For this, and because of the Râfiḍite’s knowledge of if they openly declare their belief in Rafâ, they would be identified by the Umma as blasphemers, the Râfiḍites have agreed to hide their belief and not to disclose it in their assemblies nor in their books, except for those secret books that they dare not circulate.1526

D. The Divinely appointed Imâmship of ٦Ali: (al-naṣṣ) and the verdict of unbelief on the Umma (including the Sahâba who opposed it):

The moderate members of the Râfida claimed that ٦Ali was extremely knowledgeable1527 of the needs of his subjects, that nothing could escape his awareness ... (and) that God had taken the responsibility of raising him (as Imâm), but the Umma removed him from that post and put someone else in his place such that they described as ‘Kâfir and Mushrik” whoever had opposed him or refuted his Imâmship. Such is the view of the Râfiḍa in their Imâm.1528

In addition to passing the verdict of Kufr and Shirk on those who opposed the Imâmship of ٦Ali (i.e., all the Muhâjirûn and Ansâr, except for five or six people in a statement ascribed to Hishâm b. al Ḥakam1529), the Râfida describe those categories of people that had not accepted ٦Ali’s Imâmship as going astray:

... the unique claim of al-Râfidâ was that the Umma had been explicitly instructed to stand by the side of a specific designated Imâm and support him (al-Umma Ṽusṣat wa-waqqifat ٦alâ Imâm beazeynihī wa Ismihi), but had hidden that (divine designation) and pretended the contrary just as they were equally made aware of the Sunan but kept them secret and narrated their opposite.1530

1525 Even the ٦Āmmâ, See Intisâr, page 97.
1526 Ibid., pp. 96-97. The exclusion of the Jârûdiyya from the belief in Rafâ (although acknowledged by al-Ḥimyâri in al Ḥûr al-5In ) has been justified by H. Yehyâ Muhammad, who found that al-Jâhiz’s criticism of Rafâ above does not mean return from ghayba (occultation) but return from death. Only the latter, says Yehyâ, is refuted by al-Jâhiz. See ‘Ghâhîz et le Chi’isme’, op. cit., p. 127. Benefiting from al-Ḥimyâri’s citation of the Jârûdiyya - who believed that none of their Imâms died, and that, hence, the Imâm is alive and in ghayba, therefore he is expected to come from ghayba not from death so that al-Jâhiz’s exclusion of the Jârûdiyya above (in the belief of return from death) is justified. See Ibid., p. 125.
1527 Dr. A’sam interprets this as reflective of those Shi’ites who see the Imâm as the most knowledgeable man amongst his people, knowing all sciences. Ibid., p. 332 of thesis: ‘Fadihat’. Does this point not resemble the Mu’tazilite view that the ruling Imâm should be the afdal?
1528 Intisâr, pp. 116, and 117. The other name of this Râfiḍ group is ahl-al-Imâma. See Ibid., p. 117.
1530 Ibid., p. 115.
E. Departure of Rāfiḍa and Ghāliya from Ijmā‘

al-Jāḥiz’s initial portrait that aims at distinguishing between moderate Shi‘ism and extremist Shi‘ism i.e., what can be accepted as moderate and as reflecting an orthodox view of the house of ʿAli from that which should be rejected, comes to completion when he reaches the conclusion that as the above Rāfiḍi theses intrinsically lack any moderation and are outspokenly wild and extremist, and that they have thus invited the Umma to regard them as leaving its consensus (Ijmā‘):

al-Jāḥiz’s criticism should not be interpreted as being directed against the moderate pro-Alids (ahl al-Igtīṣād minhum) for those (who are really moderate) would not have cherished the doctrines (circulated by the extremists) that Prophet Muhammad, may the blessings of God be upon him, had specified a successor (caliph) to follow him, that ᵇΑli b. Abī Ṭālib was mentioned by name and lineage and was explicitly designated ... The supposition that the Umma had purposely dethroned him from that post, with the intention of openly defying the Prophet’s order and mocking it, and (the no less objectionable belief) that the Umma had played with the Qur’ān and Sunan by adding and hiding: is not reflective of Igtīṣād but expressive of Ifrāt. (Ibn al-Riwandi) should be reminded: How can all people upholding the doctrine of al-Imāma (ahl al-Imāma) not be removed from the circles of Ijmā‘ of the Umma, after defying most that has been divinely ordained on the Umma (al-Sunan, al-farā‘id)? Check that by reviewing their position in ablution, prayers, adhān, number of prayers, attestation of tawḥīd, and their view of al-farā‘id, and you will eventually assume that the Prophet that was sent to us is different from the one sent to them: For this and (the like), Muslims have removed ahl al-Imāma from Ijmā‘.1531

6. Fixing al-Jāḥiz’s view of ghuluww in the context of the Qur’ānic, Sunnī and Shi‘i perspectives:

I. Foreword

Wadād al Qādi views the term ghuluww as something specific with a background in the language of the religious tradition itself:

The verb ghalā, which linguistically means to go beyond limits in anything is mentioned twice in the Qur’ān (4: 171 and 5: 77)1532 and although it has a general meaning of going beyond

1531 Intisār. p. 117. There is an important fragment in Kitāb al Shāfi‘i fi al-Imāma of al-Sharif al-Murtada‘ that touches on this point of Naṣṣ. Here, al Murtada‘ is criticizing Qādi ʿAbd al-Jabbar’s note that the idea of naṣṣ is not authentic but was fabricated by the Shi‘ite theologians (Hisham b. Al-Ḥakam, Abū ʿĪsa al-Warrāq, Ibn al-Riwandi). See Tārikh Ibn al-Riwandi al-Mulhid, Ed.ʿAbdul Amir al A‘sam, (Beirut: Dār al Āfāq, 1975) pp. 104 ff. Ibn al Murtada‘s critique rests on raising the issue concerning the dubious originality of ʿizāl by saying: “We know that the doctrine of Divine Justice and al-Manzila bayn al-Manzilatayn have preceded the time of al-Nazzām and al-ʿAllāf; similarly, the concept of naṣṣ had existed before those Shi‘ite theologians endeavoured to circulate, defend and support it by their arguments. See Ibid., p.105.

1532 In 4: 171, the Qur’ānic verse reads: “Lā taghlī fi dinikum wa lā taqṭūlā ʿalā Allāh illā al-ḥaqq”. In 5: 77 , “Qul yā ahl al-Kiubah lā taghlī fi dinikum ghayr al ḥaqq”.

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bounds in religion there, it has a specific significance suggested by the context in which it appears, and that is: the raising of the position of Jesus above human level to the point of deification, as was done by the Christians. The Qur'an takes a strong stand against this ghuluww, and orders the Christians not to engage in it (lah taghlū fi dinikum). The ghuluww of our first Muslim Ghulāt should then be sought in some form of 'raising beyond human level' of some human figure of high significance to them. 1533

Historically, al-Qādi - judging from the literature on al-Mukhtār and on Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya - excludes them from being the first figures, and concludes that ʻAlī was most probably the person to whom the ghuluww of the Ghulāt may have been initially directed, namely by the founder of Saba‘īyya, i.e., ʻAbd Allāh b. Saba‘ (whose reaction upon getting the news of ʻAlī’s assassination has been preserved by al-Jāhiz in his Kitāb al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn, (vol.3: 81), i.e., that ʻAlī did not die, and their belief that he was still alive, and would not die until he drove the people with his stick) and the Kaysāniyya that emerged from the Mukhtāriyya and recycled one basic ghāli idea of the Saba‘īyya, 1534 i.e., the return of the living Imam. We shall see below that the Imāmi Shi‘ites (who developed from the Kaysāniyya) will reject the deification of any of their Twelve Imāms, while preserving the other elements suggested by (Saba‘īyya-Kaysāniyya) 1535 about the future State to be erected by the returning Mahdi.

II. The Development of the term Ghulāt in Shi‘ite Heresiography:

al-Qādi suggests that the Shi‘i criterion of ghuluww in the first century A.H. differs from that in later centuries. The major criterion of ghuluww in the former century rested on “the belief in the concealment (ghayba) of the Imām (instead of his actual death), and the conviction of his return (rafta) in a resurrection before the Day of Judgement.” 1536 This conclusion “was clearly pushed aside” by the early

1534 See Ibid., pp. 299-300.
1535 See Ibid., p. 303.
1536 Ibid., p. 305. This conclusion is based - not on any 1st century documents which cared to point this out - but on al-Qādi’s induction from the activities of the old Saba‘īyya, after ʻAbd Allāh b. Saba‘ rejected the news of ʻAlī’s assassination and denied his death, professing that he was still alive - and the remnants of al-Mukhtāriyya who were quickly developing into Kaysāniyya that was endorsing the basic ghuluww idea of the Saba‘īyya, in 81/700, when their Imam Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya died, thus restoring the old idea of the Saba‘īyya (of him) and claimed, before the end of the first century, that he did not die but was only concealed (ghdh‘ib). They combined that with the idea of the future State they had been dreaming about, thus bringing to completion, for the first time in the history of Shi‘ite thought, the idea of the living Mahdi, who will come from concealment before the end of time to fill the earth with justice, as it had been formerly filled with injustice and despotism.” Ibid., pp. 300-301. The fact that Kaysāniyya’s endorsement of the concept of return of the Saba‘īyya was not
second century Shi`ite authors (and even the third century), because of the increasing popularity of this belief among the Shi`ite sects. It was quite inadvisable to denounce it as ghuluww because “it would have meant stripping Shi`ism of many of its adherents ...” But when other much more exaggerated beliefs in the imams started to emerge, this one appeared to be relatively ‘moderate’.

III. Implications of the term Ghulät in Sunni heresiography and Literature:

It is evident that whereas the 2nd-3rd century Shi`ites were involved in stressing the moderateness of those Shi`ites upholding ghayba and rafa against the excessiveness of those holding wilder views, the Sunni non-heresiographers, however, could not ignore the elements of ghuluww inherent in that claimed moderateness, i.e., the force of the Qur’anic reproach to those ‘raising beyond human level’ a specific figure of high significance to them, could not be alienated or abstracted from the alleged ghayba and rafä, unless such a raising is believed, because of its obvious going beyond the bounds of religion. But as Watt says, the term Shi`a, however, should not mean it is not a good and mild word:

Ahmad b. Hanbal, for example, wanted to claim that the Ahl al-Sunna wa-al-Hadith were the true Shi`a of 6Ali since they had due affection for the family of Muhammad and recognized the rights of 6Ali ... Shi`a, unlike most early names of sects did not originate as a nickname given by opponents but was normally used by men of themselves. Moreover it was not objectionable to the main body of Traditionists, as is shown by Ibn Qutayba’s list ... Ignaz Goldziher pointed out that Tashayyu` or affection for the house of 6Ali might be either good or bad (Tashayyu` hasan, qabih) and only became heretical when it went to excess.

In this context, one can understand the reasons underlying al-Jäliiz’s and Ibn al-Riwandi’s incompatible standard for ghuluww and moderation. As al-Qädi puts the issue:

documented and as it was not classified as a ghäli sect in the sources is explained by Qädi by the fact that non Shi`ite heresiographers (during 1st and 2nd century A.H) were following and copying the broad classification of the first three sources on Shi`a sects (which would not obviously regard Mahdism of Kaysäniyya as ghäli) before we meet the Sunni independent standard of ghuluww. See Ibid., pp. 301, 308.

Ibid., p. 306. That is when contrasted to the wild beliefs such as deifying the imams, transmigration of the spirit of one imam to the body of the following Imam (tanåsukh), or, if it is God’s spirit hulal, the negation of the day of judgement, dropping of Shar`a duties (ihdål al-harâm) and seeking the criterion of good and bad from the Imam only. Such was the criterion of ghuluww as conceived by the earliest Shi`ite heresiographers: al-Nawbakhti, (-301/913) and al-Qummi, (-300/912).

For the Sunnis, the Shi‘ites (including the Imāmis) were already divergent from the right path in religion, and the Ghulāt constituted simply an exaggerated divergence within a divergence. The case was different for the Imāmis: the Ghulāt, with their wild ideas, were harmful to the image of Shi‘ism, and therefore these ideas had to be exposed in order to be refuted.

The polemic clash between al-Jāḥiz and Ibn al-Riwandi was therefore inevitable: their vision and understanding of the distant past had to be reflected in the present, and Ibn al-Riwandi’s concern to defend the Shi‘a and those moderate amongst them, was categorically distinct from al-Jāḥiz’s (and the traditionists’) eagerness to unfold the paradox: it was not the mild and good sense of the term Shi‘a that was attacked by them, but it was that Shi‘a that was camouflaged by its mildness, claiming moderation while it was an outspoken form of neo-ghuluww.

al-Jāḥiz is classified as the “first non-Shi‘i non-heresiographer to mention ghuluww and ghulāt” in the Sunni sense implied above. His concept, however, is described as reflecting the ‘very flexible and hazy’ dimension the term ghulāt assumed during the early phases of its use, i.e., in the sense of “freely applying the term ghuluww to whomever went beyond bounds in religion. al-Jāḥiz’s standing does not, however, reach the even stricter position of al-Muhaddithūn.

To sum, al-Jāḥiz’s reconstructed presentation of the various theses of the Rawāfid has a two-fold significance, as it reflects the highly disjointed and extremely fluid state of Shi‘ism and the correspondingly diverse set of positions each Shi‘i group had. As described by Dr A’sam:

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1539 This is due to the Kaysāni belief maintained by the extremists, that (a) religion meant exclusive allegiance walâ’ to the house of ʿAli, and hence ʿAli’s opponents (viewed as the first three caliphs) among the Sahāba had to be excommunicated (barâ’a), (b) Prophet Muhammad is alleged to have hid (Katama) nine tenths of the Qur’ān, thus implying prophecy was possible after him. See al-Qādir, op. cit., pp. 298, 317.
1540 Ibid., p. 309.
1541 The term Shi‘a has now been restricted to the followers of ʿAli and the Alids (who believed that the Imamate only belongs to family of ʿAli) ... such that by the later ninth century Ibn al-Riwandi was prepared to accept it as a fundamental division of the Islamic community'. See Watt, Formative, p. 59.
1542 See al-Qādir, p. 306.
1543 See Ibid., p. 310.
1544 Ibid., p. 309. al-Jāḥiz’s use of the term was quite sharp and to the point; judgement on this application will be postponed until we examine his other views.
1545 For they describe as ghālii anybody who spoke out against ʿUthmān. In this, al-Jāḥiz was joining the Mu‘tazilites, who condemned his last six years of rule. Ibid., p. 316.
1546 Watt, ‘The Significance of the Early stages of Imāmite Shi‘ism,’ Early Islam, p. 163.
This period in the history of Shi'ism was “a very confused one,” and “indeed a time of great trial.” Traditional Shi'ism (or the creed of the moderates according to Ibn al-Riwandi) had not been completely established. Indeed, this establishment did not take place before the accession of al-Hasan al-Askari (d. 260/873) the eleventh Imám, and until the disappearance of Muhammad al-Mahdi (born in 256/870), the twelfth Imám.¹⁵⁴⁷

These groups can be deduced from al-Jähiz’s Faḍila as containing:

I. The moderate Shi'ites (pro-Alid and pro-Ṭalibid) as reference is made to the house of Abū Ṭalib (Alid/Ja'farid) and the house of Prophet Muḥammad.

II. The Zaydiyya (upholding Imāmate of Abū Bakr)

III. Groups of Rawāfīd, including ghulāt:

a) ruwāt engaged in narrations and blasphemous reports (al-Mamṭūra, al-Qafiyya): on behalf of al-Kāzim and al-Ṣādiq.


c) ghulāt, deifying ʿAlī.

d) ahl al-Imāma (another ghāli sect of Rawāfīd): divine naṣṣ of ʿAlī, raj'a, slandering Companions and Umma, assuming a different Qur'ān and set of Sunan.

Comment:

Do Ibn al-Riwandi’s references upset the above conclusion on the fluidity of Shi'ism? A statistical survey of Ibn al-Riwandi’s allusions to the Shi'ite groups gives us the following:

In the fragment that is preserved, no reference to Rāfiḍa by name is made; Hishām b. al-Ḥakam’s claim that the Umma went astray in its majority (not totally)¹⁵⁴⁷ i.e., the followers of Ithnā ʿAshariyya, who maintain that al-Mahdi lived until the second quarter of the fourth (10th) century and is still alive and in hiding since the year 329/940-941, when he had to flee from his enemies, who are still waiting for his reappearance up to the present date. (‘Faḍihat’, op. cit., pp. 66-67.)
is preceded in al-Khayyat’s Intisär by the remark: "This is the famous Râfiḍî premise;” however, this nickname was not used by Ibn al-Riwandi at all.

The references to Shiites are the following:

-Three references to the Zaydiyya: In the first one they are described as the group who believed that 6Ali had appointed Abû Bakr as an Imam and that Abû Bakr was wise in accepting the post. (p.159 of Fadiha, and here an additional note is made by the editor, that is ascribed to al-Khayyat, reading: "The Zaydi stance is completely different from and is unrelated to that of the Râfiḍa." The second reference cites a report ascribed to Hishâm Ibn al-Ḥakam that the Zaydiyya viewed God’s Knowledge as pre-existent (Qadim, p.125). In the third instance Ibn al-Riwandi mentions the Zaydiyya in the closing paragraph of Faḍiha (p.173) where he says:

If I may be charged with kufr because of this book, why do they not charge al-Jâhîz (with this) when he was quoting the position of the Zaydiyya and equally al-Nâzûm ...

-Three similar references to “ahl al-Imāma” (also read as ahl al-milla), “aṣḥāb al-Imāma,” “al-qawl bi-al-Imāma’1549; the first and third titles point to those attached to the Imamship of 6Ali, or attached to a specific Imam from his house.

- ahl al-Iqtisâd min al-Shi‘a (3 times, pp. 167-169 of Faḍiha).
- Shi‘a (i.e., moderates) and tashayyu6 (24 times).
- Ghâliya and Ghulât (3 times, pp. 167, 169 of Faḍiha).

By combining al-Jâhîz’s and Ibn al-Riwandi’s references, we can safely assume now that - with the exception of the militant Jârûdiyya, Shi‘ism, which was still undergoing developmental changes and exhibiting a variety of opinions, could be described as focussing on an apparently quietistic approach (such as indulging in the transmission of reports and circulation of politico-religious theses, in the fashion exposed by al-Jâhîz above) that can hopefully keep it surviving and intact against the heterodoxies of some of its followers (Ibn al-Riwandi can be seen as preceding al-

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1548 See al-Intisâr, p. 101, and ‘Fadihat’, p. 159. The only other instance in which the term Râfiḍa is mentioned is included in a corrupt passage and could also be part of al-Khayyat’s reference to Ibn al-Riwandi. See Ibid., p. 158.

1549 This qawl is attributed by Ibn al-Riwandi to the Mu’tazili figure 6Ali al-Iswārī but is categorically refuted as false by al-Khayyat. See Intisâr, p. 75.
Nawbakhti in this cleansing endeavour) and at the same time able to defend the
growing Shi'ite group-consciousness against the attacks of the authority-backed
Mu'tazilites that were upset by the circulated Shi'ite theses and hence critical of the
potential transfer of moderate Shi'ism to the Ghali dogma after the penetration of
the latter and its growing popularity in the circles of the former, in the undeniably
unsettled situation that engulfed all Shi'ism (moderate and Râfidi).

The outspoken extremism of those Ghulât could have naturally raised doubts
on the potential threat that they were beginning to pose, as may be evident from al-
Khayyât's allusion to their policy of not disclosing their belief in ra'ja after they
found themselves removed from the Ijmâ' of the Umma;\(^{1550}\) it seems that their
claimed quietism, and alleged contentness with the spiritual but not political
dimension of the Imâmate, had been undergoing a rapid process of change in the
sense of jumping over the prescribed limits of ideological disputes by challenging
the orthodox premises and the political basis of the 4Abbâsid caliphate. The Shi'ite
confinement to the spiritual Imâmship (i.e., who was to represent the house of Abû
Tâlib, the cousins of the 4Abbâsids), besides their apparently limited concern in
theological matters, was reflective of the embryonic Imâmism that was beginning to
emerge from the mainstream of (Râfidi) Shi'ism.

If al-Khayyât's quotations - as we have tried to establish above - reflect al-
Jâhiz's own standpoint as it may have been put in his Fadilât al-Mu'tazila, and not a
projection of a post-Jâhizian disposition onto the time of al-Jâhiz (for al-Khayyât is
said to have lived during the latter portion of the 3rd century A.H.), one should
nevertheless acknowledge the disadvantage of moving the research from its intended
contextual and historical context (the alleged writing of Fadâil is before 233 A.H, or
in the couple of years following al-Mutawakkil's accession: 232-236), into a period
that may have extended up to the end of the 3rd century A.H.); but, as outlined
above, and owing to the unavoidable difficulties of having to depend on post-

\(^{1550}\) See Intisâr, p. 97. Add to this their open policy to claim other Râfidi theses, which shows
that they have gone beyond their spiritual quietism to a confrontation with the 4Abbâsids,
(such as those views on Qur'ân and Sahâba) that were aimed as Watt says: "at weakening
the position of the Sunnite Traditionists and Jurists" (See Watt, 'the Râfidiites', p. 119.) by
forwarding their own religio-political version, after the emergence of the competing visions
of the Umayyads, 4Hanbalites, 4Abâsids and Mu'tazilites. The distant past had to be
reshaped in order to suit the needs of the present (as reflected by al-Qâfîyya and al-
Mamûta, who heresiographically speaking stood to al- 4Sadîq and al-Kâzim in the same way
that al-Nawbakhti was going to stand in relation to Muhammed al-Mahdi (12th Shi'ite
Imâm).

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Jāḥizian authors to retrieve and reconstruct the lost but significant work of "Faḍilat al-Muṭazila", we hope that our approach is practically justified.
al-Mutawakkil’s Period III
Orthodox and Sunni Policy of al-Mutawakkil, Official Mu‘tazili Political Decline (237-247/851-861); Era II-Sunni Triumph and decline of I’tizāl

1 al-Radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā

al-Jāḥiẓ seems to have compensated for the blow to the Mu‘tazilites by singing the praises of the ʿAbbāsids and responding to al-Mutawakkil’s vizier al-Fath Ibīn Khaqān’s wishes, that were aggravated by the first Christian rebellion that threatened the ʿAbbāsid sovereignty in Armenia, given its proximity to the Roman lands.\textsuperscript{1551} If we add to this al-Mutawakkil’s retaliatory measures against the militant Christians\textsuperscript{1552} we can appreciate how useful was al-Jāḥiẓ for the Sunnī and anti-Mu‘tazili minded caliph, al-Mutawakkil, in his attempt to counteract the dogmatic infiltration of the Christian minority into the minds of the ʿĀmma, as evident in al-Jāḥiẓ’s treatise in which he was also keen to express his anger towards the equally anthropomorphistically minded groups of al-Nābita and al-Rāfiḍa.\textsuperscript{1553}

1 al-Radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā (refuting the Christians):

al-Jāḥiẓ here is continuing his role as defender of the Islamic religion, as in the case of the work entitled Ḥujaj al-Nubuwwa. The important thing here is that this treatise was written under the reign of al-Mutawakkil who abolished the Miḥna and I’tizāl and favoured Sunnite views.

Although the State no longer upheld Mu‘tazilite doctrine, it is remarkable that al-Jāḥiẓ was able to maintain his links with the ʿAbbāsid court. Perhaps, though, the ʿAbbāsids could not do without him then despite their new attitude towards the Mu‘tazilites.\textsuperscript{1554} At that time we should remember that the ʿAbbāsid State openly

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{1551} al-Ḥājirī, al-Jāḥiẓ, p. 359.
\item \textsuperscript{1552} Ibid., p. 361.
\item \textsuperscript{1553} See al-Jāḥiẓ, ‘Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā’, Rasā’il, 3: 351. The anthropomorphic view of God, i.e., that God has a form, was rejected by Ibīn al-Riwandi as it does not reflect Shi‘īsm but only the view of one unspecified partisan. See ‘Faḍīḥa,’ p. 241.
\item \textsuperscript{1554} See al-Ḥājirī, al-Jāḥiẓ, p. 359.
\end{enumerate}
changed its friendly policy to the Christians after the latter revolted in Armenia which was bordering the Byzantine empire then.\textsuperscript{1555}

al-Jāḥīz himself states, in the introductory address to this epistle to the Turkish vizier al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān, that he has received his message about the Christians, especially the confusion in argumentation which has come into the minds of the young and the weak, and the fear that they may not be able to answer their questions, and asking how to help with good answers.\textsuperscript{1556}

The same letter is mentioned by Yāqūt, who quoted al-Tawhīdi's reference to this official invitation by al-Faṭḥ, at the suggestion of al-Mutawakkil "who is always pleased when your name is mentioned, and would prefer that you accompany him in his court ..."\textsuperscript{1557} In the same letter the vizier promised al-Jāḥīz to give him one year's earnings in advance. In this letter al-Jāḥīz reflected this tension as follows:

\begin{quote}
And this Umma's trouble with the Christians is greater than the one it had experienced with the Jews, Magians and Sabeaens, for they follow what is contradictory in our traditions, and weakly transmitted traditions, they then privately commune with the weak and ask the public about them\textsuperscript{1558} ... this is the result of the Christians' violent and persistent struggle against us, and their unremitting anxiety to set traps for us ... The Christians have done the Muslim community much harm and they continue to make converts..."\textsuperscript{1559}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1555] A. Amin's interpretation is that al-Jāḥīz was able to escape from the general lot that befell the Muʿtazilites as he was flexible enough to praise the Turks in his famous epistle; see Zuhr al-Islam, 1: 39.
\item[1557] Ḥājirī, al-Jāḥīz, p. 362, quoting Yāqūt.
\item[1558] al-Jāḥīz, 'al- Radd, Rasāʾil, 3: 320 and 349-350. What is significant is that al-Jāḥīz remained a necessity for the ʿAbbāsids, despite the change of the state's attitude to Fitāzāl.
\item[1559] al-Jāḥīz's 'al-radd ʿalā al-Nasārā' as translated by Hawke, in Life and works, p. 88.
\end{footnotes}
2- Manāqib al-Turk (Virtues of the Turks)

This work was written to flatter the court favourite, al-Fath b. Khāqān, the Turkish vizier of al-Mutawakkil, by singing the praises of the military excellences of the Turkish garrisons,1560 who happened to play a key role in the 6Abbāsid army and caliphate, such that he points out through his Khurāsānī interlocutor that there are, in reality two groups known as the helpers, (al-Anṣār anṣārān), for:

The Aws and Khazraj supported the Prophet in the early days (fi awwal al-zamān) and the people of Khurāsān (ahl Khurāsān) will support his inheritors on the last day (fi ākhīr al-zamān).1561

We should recall al-Jāḥiz's generalisation that the 6Abbāsid State was "Khurāsāniyya A'jamiyya" whereas the Umayyad one was 6Arabiyya and A'rābiyya.1562 A catalogue of the virtues of the Khurāsānians, who are credited by al-Jāḥiz for the role played by them in the 6Abbāsid propaganda and revolution, is also given.1563

Lassner doubts whether al-Jāḥiz's appeal for the acceptance of the Turks and the creation of a united society - as long as they are legitimately integrated within the 6Abbāsid imperial army and within the society at large - was an accurate reflection of the 6Abbāsid military organisation then, or whether 'it represents the idealised creation of a highly inventive literary mind.'1564 He concludes, however, that despite al-Jāḥiz's need for a literary license in the era of al-Mutawakkil, the treatise need not be dismissed as it does not fall short of a historical truth.1565 Lassner's examination of the treatise is noteworthy. He cites al-Jāḥiz's acknowledgement that the treatise

1560 They were a factor in changing the capital from Baghdad to Sāmarrā', during the reign of al-Mu'tasim.
1563 See 'Manāqib al-Turk' and Lassner, op. cit., pp. 125-129. According to F. cOmar, the term Khurāsānī should not be confined to the local (Persian) Khurāsānians but also to the emigrating Arabs that settled with them, whom he believes to have played the basic part in the 6Abbāsid Da'wa. It is inconceivable - despite the claims al-Jāḥiz cites on behalf of the Persian Khurāsānians, who were the noble Persians that were collaborating with the Umayyad regime in taking taxes from the emigrant Arabs in Khurāsān - that should they be given the greater credit in the overthrowing of a regime that they were greatly benefitting from. See F. cOmar, Tabī'at al-Da'wa al-Abbāsiyya, (Beirut: Dār al- Irshād, 1970), pp. 133-134, 159-160, 301.
1564 Lassner, Ibid., p. 119.
1565 Ibid., and p. 121.
was composed in al-Mu'tasim's reign but was presented to the Turkish vizier of his son, al-Mutawakkil. The point stressed here is that the treatise "could have been composed over a stretch of time encompassing almost three decades. Because this was, by and large, a turbulent period, [Lassner resolves the chronological problem by suggesting that], the basic lines of Manâqib could have been formulated as early as the reign of al-Mu'tasim, the text indeed reflects even earlier conditions. For, with the exception of the Turks, who are the subject of the treatise, it is not al-Mutawakkil's or even al-Mu'tasim's Sâmarrâ' based army that is being described, but that of the Baghdad Caliphate of an earlier time, i.e., before the cumulative effects of the great civil war, and before the move to Samarrâ', for the imperial army that served the early Baghdad caliphs, represented, by and large, the integrated fighting force of a relatively stable and unified empire... and a very attractive model in contrast to the turbulent reign of al-Mutawakkil, which was to end with the Caliph's assassination, the murder of al-Faṭḥ b. Khâqân and shortly thereafter the eruption of still another civil conflict between elements favouring Baghdad and the partisans of the new capital."1566

Lassner correctly concludes that al-Jähiz's appeal for the acceptance of the Turks and the creation of a united society, and his vision which was longing and 'calling for a new era, one whose values were to be rooted in the early years of the 'Abbâsid regime' which was 'devoid of messianic overtones that characterised early 'Abbâsid propaganda' (which was based on the legacy of a still earlier time ... the birth of Islam), 'was, however, not destined to be realised.'1567

The only point of disagreement with this analysis is that it pre-supposes al-Jähiz to have stemmed from the groups of clients, and hence portrays the alleged client of Banû Kinâna, our author, as a pressurised person that needed to "overcome his ethnic origin by excelling in the language (and singing the praises) of his acquired patrons."1568 I agree with Lassner that al-Jähiz's treatise was a successful "means of entry into courtly circles,"1569 but the corollary following that premise is far fetched, as it sees "the virtues of the Turks as a reflection of the author's search for an integrated society and his personal niche within it."1570 I am sure that al-

1566 Ibid., pp. 122,136.
1567 Ibid., p. 136
1568 Ibid., p. 121.
1569 Ibid.
1570 Ibid.
Jāḥīz's output could have been saved from being evaluated from a specific ethnic perspective, first because there is no evidence that can for certain substantiate al-Jāḥīz's real origin, 1571 and second because there is no harm in accepting al-Jāḥīz's 'Manāqib' in Lassner's words "as a metaphor for a much wider polity, namely the sum of Islamic society," 1572 without taking the ethnic affinities of the author into account.

Qualities of the Caliph

In this treatise al-Jāḥīz refers to the eminent qualities that could not be shared by any figure other than the head of the Umma, 'al-Imām al-Akbar wa al-Ra'is al-Afzam', who should be best in every respect:

We can never doubt that the highest Imam and greatest leader, who has been privileged by noble traits and endowed with noble descent, such as unmatched tolerance and unique knowledge, perfection in willpower, together with being facilitated to best practise that post, by virtue of his merits and those qualities of ri'āsa and siyāda and hence success and infallibility that are accompanied by God's backing and support; evidently God would not have bestowed upon him the charisma of Caliphate and the crown of Imāmate, and with the greatest bounty ... as He has made him the cause for achieving God's happiness and avoiding His wrath, had the caliph not been exclusively enjoying the highest degree of tolerance and forgiveness, that can not normally be reached by other tolerant and meritorious members of the community. 1573

This passage certainly expresses al-Jāḥīz's continuous belief in the ideal Imām, al-afdal, and hence may be taken as an indication of a doctrinal constant in his doctrine of the Imāmate.


1572 Lassner Ibid., p. 121. al-Jāḥīz cites in the treatise the 6Abāsid caliph al-Manṣūr and the 6Abāsid figures of Muhammad b. 6Ali (father of al-Saffāh and Mansūr) and 6Ali b. 6Abd Allah, who are described as models in treating the clients with great respect and modesty. See 'Manāqib', Rasā'il, 1: 23-24.

1573 'Manāqib', Rasā'il, 1:39.
3. Kitāb al-Akhbār wa-Kayf Taših

Pellat suggests that this work could have been written before 232/847. As a further illustration to al-Jāhīz’s thesis in this work - that all civilized nations are subject to fall into the trap of blind imitation “taqlīd”, in matters of religion, such as the Arabs, Romans, Indians and Persians- al-Jāhīz here gives us a heresiographical insight into the religio-political convictions of the ʿAbbāsid community in different geographic sites, as regards their opinion of the Rashīdūn and Umayyad caliphs, which he describes as “a religious attitude”. This description is significant as it explains the interwoven link between the distant past and present political convictions which - remarkably - have been raised to the level of “religious belief (din)”. All religious upholders among all notable nations known at his time are thus condemned by al-Jāhīz simply because of their blind imitation and following of their fathers, thus cutting themselves off from the path and norms of reasoning. When he comes to the Arab nation and after covering the odd pre-Islamic practises of the Arabs, he swiftly pinpoints the prevailing politico-religious sentiments of Muslims in his time, in what may be regarded as a demographic document on this topic in the 3rd/9th century:

Another illustrative example that can be taken as proof of the careless and un-meditated way people approach religion ‘din’, which can reflect how often they glorify their leaders - due to their blind acceptance of their enviromental norms and assimilation of their social environment, and their rush to “Aṣabiyya”, selfish whims, loving all that has become familiar to their hearts and hating to meditate, reflect, intellectualize and weigh things. This phenomenon is observed in the way the majority of Başrans exclusively regard ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān as the best (ahead of ʿAļī), most meritorious and worth of precedence, and in the way the majority of Kūfans put ʿAļī b. Abī Ṭālib ahead of ʿUthmān, and in the way the majority of Syrians follow and cherish the (political) religion of Banū Umayya, venerating ʿUthmān and fanatically loving Banū Marwān so much that some observers have wrongly explained such fanaticism and attributed these tendencies as caused by the Stars, others said ‘t must be the influence of the soil, in the way you can relate a certain mode of behaviour, ethics, appearance, fashion, kind of industry and language feature to the prevailing quality of water, air, and the soil-given properties. This is not - may God honor you - the case!.

The heart of the matter is that each of the above tendencies is a function of blind imitation of these communities for their charismatic predecessors (taqlīd al-Salaf), and is a product of a passionate exaltation of certain figures, by virtue of the simple fact that their hearts have given blind affection to whoever has made the first entry, and once there, those figures have saturated their hearts so much that by imitating their fathers (and environment) they in fact have imprisoned their faculties from choosing freely, and such an exalted regard for certain charismatic figures in effect blinded them from the truth and made them virtually deaf (from noticing merits of other leaders)...

It is only their insistence to blindly imitate and follow that has saturated their hearts and killed their common sense! Had the matter been a function of fortune or soil, then Divine amr or Nahy would have become meaningless, and consequently the motive for good deeds, thanksgiving,

reproach, *thawâb* and *iqâb* and even sending Prophets would have collapsed. If such factors were responsible for such convictions, they must - therefore - be working universally among the right and wrong doers, and among those who intellectualize as well as those who blindly imitate. 1575

After this Jâhizian stance, our author completes his view on the politico-religious commitments of the Muslim communities of his time. What is significant here is to note how the term "Uthmāni" is coined and used:

What has eventually made the majority of the Baṣrans *Uthmāniyya*, is the fact they were the product of a policy enforced by three governors" The first being *Abd Allāh b. Āmīr*, the second *Ziyād* (b. Abīh), the third al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf. These three were the extremes in the venerating Uthmān and the Umayyads. They used every measure to put *Uthmān* ahead, and encourage people to exalt him ... Due to Ibn *Āmīr*’s policy, Ṭalḥa, Zubayr and *A’isha* rushed to the Baṣrans calling for avenging the blood of *Uthmān*. Another reason for exalting *Uthmān* and putting him ahead of *ʿAlī* is that *Aqīl* had fought them (Baṣrans), killed the most notable among them and shattered them." For this reason one of the most distinguished Basrans said of *ʿAlī* "How can I like one (i.e., *ʿAlī*) who has killed eleven hundred of my tribe, in one day!? 1576

al-Jâḥîz seems to have used the term *Uthmāni* in a sense that is very different to the one we have seen him in K. al-*Uthmāniyya*. In the previous treatise, the original meaning of *Uthmāni* (as cited by Lammens, i.e., those loyal to *Uthmān* and those who followed the Umayyads by virtue of the common aim to avenge the blood of the assassinated caliph), which is displayed in the above text of K. al-Akhbâr, is missing.

In other words, al-Jâḥîz’s group of *Uthmāniyya* were not, judging from the *Uthmāniyya* work of al-Jâḥîz, holding any Umayyad affections. So how come al-Jâḥîz offers us two different versions of the same group al-*Uthmāniyya*? Once they are anti-dynastic (anti-Umayyad, anti-ʿAbbâsid), and here they are outspokenly pro-Umayyad. Of course, I think al-Jâḥîz, in citing the arguments of K. al-*Uthmâniyya*, was not completely comprehensive, as those pro-Umayyad *Uthmānis* whose presence in the ʿAbbâsid community is traced back to the influence of the Umayyad governors and as such al-Jâḥîz must have deliberately ignored to mention them to the caliph by limiting his discussion to the other brand of *Uthmâniyya*, who seem to have been upset by the political mechanism of succession as now held by their adversaries, al-Râfiʿa i.e., al-Jâḥîz was focussing on the remnants of the Zubayrid party who were living in the ʿAbbâsid period who were dismayed by the fact that Khilâfa had turned into a dynasty and were potentially calling for an Alid one too. The fact that al-Jâḥîz did not refer to the Umawi-ʿUthmânis (versus the Zubayrid-

Uthmānis) in K. al-‘Uthmāniyya does not mean the former were non-existent then. Hence K. al-Akhbār, that was alluding to these ṢUmawi partisans, could be fixed later than al-‘Uthmāniyya when the politics of the ʿAbbāsid state under al-Mutawakkil have become more tolerant and acceptable to the Ḥanbalites who share with the Ṣumawi ʿUthmāniyya their respect for the Umayyads.

al-Jāḥiz was therefore justified in selecting the Zubayrid brand of ʿUthmāniyya for al-Maʾmūn and using their arguments to persuade the caliph of the dangers of going too far in his pro-Alid policy. The Umayyad ʿUthmānis were quite unsuitable for that purpose. Here, presumably under al-Mutawakkil’s reign, when the Ṣumawi ʿUthmānis have assumed a prominent position in the anti-Alid pro-Sunnite era of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate, al-Jāḥiz could not any longer ignore them and he depicts them, alongside other religious factions in the community as reflective of the same despised phenomenon of taqlid.

To conclude, al-Jāḥiz says:

If that fanaticism was caused by balanced reflection and just reasoning, then you would not have observed the people of Oman turning to the Iḥādiyya sect, and the others becoming Murjīʿa, and the children of Christians, Jews and Manichaens would not have embraced Christianity, Judaism and Manichaim respectively... It is evident that the religious and (political) sect is a function of blind imitation not of balanced reasoning (nazar), and everyone knows that when imitation and reasoning race to the truth, the reason always precedes and wins!1578

1577 also there is nothing to prevent us assuming their existence at the time of writing al-‘Uthmāniyya.
There are two significant passages in this work. The first one relates to the duties of the Imāms ‘who should protect the Umma exactly as their predecessors had’, ... and the duties of the masses, ‘who should obey their Imāms in all that they order, but for that which is evidently a sin.’

The other passage refers to the situation maintained by the Rāfiḍī faction of the Shi‘ites (al-Rawāfiḍ.) al-Jāḥiz is boastful of the fact that the Qur‘ān is to be credited in its capacity of gathering the various Muslim factions, ‘the Mu‘tazila, the Shi‘a, the Khawārij and the Murjia’, around it namely, around the reading of Zayd b. Thābit; al-Jāḥiz then adds: ‘If someone objects that al-Rawāfīd in their totality exclude themselves from such a consensus, reject it in its present form and (believe in another), we reply:

Those outcast Rawāfīd do not relate to us at all, ..., because a group whose call to prayer, prayer, and divorce differ from ours, whose reasoning is unlike ours, whose fuqahā‘ are different from our fuqahā,’ and whose Imām is other than our Imām, whose (Qur‘ānic) reading is unlike ours, whose ḥalāl and ḥaram are distinct from our ḥalāl and ḥaram then (it is sensible to declare) that they do not belong to us nor do we relate to them.

It seems to me that this observation by al-Jāḥiz respresents a step further in the activities of those Rāfiḍites, whose divergence and retreat from the mainstream of the Ṣabbāsid society he has openly declared. al-Jāḥiz recognizes the existence of those Shi‘a who come under the umbrella of sound and accepted groups of society, but when it comes to al-Rawāfid, he dissociates himself from their unorthodox beliefs. H. Yehyā Muḥammad suggests that, judging from the title of the treatise, the Zaydiyya are not concerned in the blame al-Jāḥiz is putting on the Rāfiḍa, who refused to accept Zayd b. Thābit’s reading of the Qur‘ān.

The Rāfiḍa now seem to have gone further in their beliefs and activities such that they appear to have attracted all extremists under their banner in the sense that they have now an independant Qur‘ān, distinct prayer and different group of fuqahā‘. The reference to their having a separate Imām is significant as this passage may be taken as a proof by the argumentators of the authenticity of Imāmism, not only theologically but even politically. Nevertheless, the theological independance of

1580 Ibid., pp. 233-234.
the Rāfiḍa has been further illustrated by al-Khayyāt’s defence of al-Jāḥiz’s anti-Rāfidite works.

In his Kitāb al-Intisār, al-Khayyāt says:

al-Jāḥiz simply wanted to inform us about the crimes of al-Rāfiḍa against the Ṭālibites, when they falsely narrated - on their behalf - matters such as anthropomorphism (Tashbih), proofs of Badāʿ, belief in Rājaʿ, accusing the Umma of being non-believers, rejection of traditions of the Prophet (ṣaḥāḥ al-Sunan), and doubting the Qur’ān. 1581

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

ERA III

Short lived Pro-Alid policy
(reign of al-Mutawakkil's son: al-Muntasir(247-248)

Risāla fi al-Awtān wa al-Buldān

Setting:

We have seen above that al-Mutawakkil's anti-Alid policy had not started until four years after becoming caliph, i.e., in the year 236 which according to al-Ṭabarī's chronicles, marked the beginning of his anti-Alid policy. Watt notes that this new policy was not endorsed by all the influential persons at court, and that the group of opponents had as their figurehead the caliph's own son and heir apparent, al-Muntasir, who led a plot against him that ended in his death. During the six months of al-Muntasir's reign he is said to have showed himself more favourable to the admirers of ⁶Ali and to his descendants. Pilgrimages to the tomb of al-Ḥusayn were resumed.¹⁵⁸²

The reason for putting al-Jāḥīz's treatise 'fi-al-Awtān' under al-Muntasir's reign, i.e. in 247-248/861-862, is solely dictated by the fact that al-Jāḥīz in his treatise has provided us with a useful chronological marker, that coincides with Muntasir's reign, which is evident from al-Jāḥīz's count of the ruling years of the ⁶Abbāsids (put under Banū Ḥāshim)¹⁵⁸³ since they first appeared, without counting the rule of ⁶Ali b. Abi Ṭālib and al-Ḥasan b. ⁶Ali, up to the time al-Jāḥīz was writing this treatise; these were 116 years since the rule of Abū al-⁶Abbās al-Saffāh. Thus 116 + 132, the year al-Saffāḥ started ruling, brings this treatise exactly under al-Muntasir's reign (248).

¹⁵⁸³ See al-Jāḥīz, 'Min Kitābihī fi al-Awtān wa al-Buldān', Rasā'il, 4: 122, cited by Masūdī in Murūj, 1: 99-100 as "Kitāb al-ʾAmsār wa ʾAjāʾib al-Buldān".
As this treatise marks the last of al-Jähiz's established political works, preceding his death by seven years, it should be noted here that al-Muntaṣir's time represents the period of anarchy, when he is believed to have been poisoned, then succeeded by al-Musta‘in, (248-252/862-866) who is said to have suppressed an uprising in Kūfa and later in 865 took certain pro-Alid measures to gain further popular support. Having fled to Baghdad, owing to a quarrel with senior Turkish generals, al-Mu’tazz was proclaimed the new caliph in 866, and is said to have resumed al-Mutawakkil's strict watch over the prominent pro-Alids; he was himself deposed by the same Turkish officers in 869, the death date of al-Jähiz. Thus one can conclude that during this period the professed `Abbāsid boast of their unshaken and sacred rule was experiencing serious blows and challenges. But going back to the time of this treatise, how does al-Jähiz relate to the pro-Alid sentiments of the short lived pro-Alid policy and rule of al-Muntaṣir and what political doctrines al-Jähiz was still keen at expressing towards the end of his life?

In the hierarchial category of virtues that al-Jähiz lists in this treatise, in which he postulates in what aspects the Arabs are distinct from non-Arabs, how the tribe of Quraysh is distinct from the other Arabian tribes, and finally how Banū Hāshim have an established record of distinction from the other Qurayshites, he says:

The first trait -which distinguishes Banū Hāshim from the rest of Quraysh - is that of Prophecy, al-nubuwwa, the total container of all virtues, in their most beautiful and noble forms. The other trait is the fact that we have found amongst them three men who were respectively cousins to each other at one time, all carrying the name Ḥādi, each one of them enjoying sovereignty, legal knowledge, and was a famous religious scientist; potentially good for the post of leadership and Imāmate ‘yasluhu li-al-Riyāsa wa al-Imnma’, these being Ḥādi b. ʿAbd Allah b. al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib b. Ḥāshim, Ḥādi b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAli b. Abī Tālib b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib b. Ḥāshim, and Ḥādi b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Jaʿfar b. Abī Tālib b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib b. Ḥāshim. The other unique feature of Banū Hāshim is reflected in the fact that we have also found three men that were mutual cousins, at one time, all carrying the name Muḥammad, and each one of them sayyidun, faqiḥun, ʿAlimun, suitable for presidency and Imāmship, these being Muḥammad b. Ḥādi b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-ʿAbbās b. al-Muṭṭalib b. Ḥāshim, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Husayn b. ʿAli b. Abī Tālib b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib b. Ḥāshim, and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Jaʿfar b. Ḥādi b. Abī Tālib b. al-Muṭṭalib b. Ḥāshim. This is the most striking resemblance that can be available in this world at one time, and such a feature has not been shared by anyone other than them and cannot be claimed by anybody else.\[1584\]

There is definitely a subtle message behind this text, which in line with the pro-Alid policy of al-Muntaṣir, flatters the Alid and Ṭālibid descendants, and once again al-Jähiz recycles the pro-Ṭālibid flattering tone we have seen him exhibiting in

K. Faḍl Ḥāshim above (era of Muʿtazilite political flourishing). But if the Ṭalibids had there been collectively included under al-Jāḥiz’s broad notion of Bānū Ḥāshim to count more points against the house of ʿAbd Shams (as clearly illustrated in K. Faḍl Ḥāshim), one notices here how that broadness has shrunk here to be limited to fewer members: of course, the ʿAbbāsids never disappear from either scene but as regards the house of Abū Ṭalib, only the descendants of ʿAli from al-Ḥusayn and the descendants of ʿAli’s brother, Jaʿfar are mentioned here. Such a change in presentation or difference in the tuning of the Ṭalibid wavelength reflects how—with time, and in al-Jāḥiz’s own life span— the broad spectrum of the influential Ḥāshimite members of ahl al-Bayt has changed such that, and despite al-Jāḥiz’s acknowledgement of Ḥusaynid and Jaʿfarīd descendants, the term has been tactfully given a more specific implication and less broader application than before; in short it is now confined to the descendants of al-ʿAbbās by virtue of a de facto ruling that draws its legitimacy from an independant Sunni legal judgement on inheritance. In other words, religion is put at the service of ʿAbbāsid polity, and the subtleness al-Jāḥiz maintained soon unfolds its message in the following way: When we have candidates of equal merits for the post of caliph/Imām, the issue is divinely solved, and by analogy (qiyyās), to the legal ruling on inheritance, the descendants of the surviving uncle come in order of priority and screen the the descendants of the surviving cousin, i.e., the ʿAbbāsids are senior to the Ṭalibids in the question of political inheritance, by virtue of the “fact” that the uncle enjoys the status of the father of the deceased (i.e., the Prophet), says al-Jāḥiz:

Banū Ḥāshim enjoy a unique trait that makes them superior to all people: we do not know in the history of all Arab kingdoms and all other non-Arab kingdoms, even in the seven known climes (Agālim) of a king whose authority stems from one essence and whose power derives its roots from the house of Prophethood, except for that rule which is associated with the Banū Ḥāshim: for their king is al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, the uncle of the Prophet—may the mercy of God fall upon him—and as an uncle, he is an inheritor, “wa- al-ʿAmm wāriihūn” and enjoys the status of a father “wa al-ʿAmm Abūn”! We do not know of any nation that can make a similar claim for its king.

In this fashion al-Jāḥiz spells out the modified version of ʿAbbāsid legitimacy, i.e., not the initial one that was based on their receiving the Imamate by bequest (waṣiyya) from the grandson of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭalib, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya—which, paradoxically has no trace in al-Jāḥiz’s extant works!

1585 The use of the term "king" for an ʿAbbāsid caliph is unexpected but it is used as such because al-Jāḥiz wants to hint that the ʿAbbāsids are rooted in the house of prophecy, such that the term king conveys the sanctity enjoyed by King Solomom who was also a Prophet after David. See Ibid., 4:122.
As regards al-Jāḥīz’s statement "al-`Amm wāriḥun wa al-`Amm Abūn", it is obviously a doctrinal constant in al-Jāḥīz’s political thought. This can be traced back to al-Ma'mūn’s equal boastfulness of the 'Abbāsid legitimacy, and caliphate as one based on inheritance i.e., "khilāfat Rasūlihi wa al-Qarāba bihi,"1586 or alternatively to al-Maṃṣūr’s letter to the Ḥasanid revolter Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Nafs al-Zakīyya, where he denied that God could have given women in Islam (and their descendants) such a political status that He has instead given to uncles and fathers:

For God gave the uncle equal status with the father "Li'anna Allāh ja'ala al-`Amm Aban", but even though you be descended from the Prophet’s daughter, which is indeed a close kinship, this still does not give you the right of [political] inheritance, so how come you claim inheritance of Imamate from the maternal/female line?1587

Hence al-Jāḥīz’s aim behind this seemingly pro-Alid flavoured treatise is clarified: The Ṭālibid figures are acknowledged and highlighted but only for the purpose of being eclipsed by the 'Abbāsid figures, after that the status and image of al-ʿAbbās are supermagnified in the way reflected above, and stressed below - now in the line of his offspring, without whom the community would not have been freed from plagues that had preceded their coming and disappeared with their accession to power:

Banū Ḥāshim’s period of rule goes back - since they first ruled this generation, without counting the days of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and his son al-Ḥasan - up to this moment, one hundred and sixteen years. Their first blessing was that God freed people from plagues and massive deaths, after a long time of being subject to them.1588

This way of counting carries once more the Jāḥīzian message, i.e., the distinctiveness and seniority of the 'Abbāsid rule without having to disregard the authenticity of the rule of ʿAlī and his son, while making no reference whatsoever to the Umayyad rule. In other words the 'Abbāsid-Alid rule is acknowledged in the order explained above so as to reflect that the 'Abbāsids have taken over rulership on behalf of the house of Ḥāshim, and to restore Islam from the retreat manifested by the Umayyads, who “were presented as both the cause and effect of all evil in the

1586 See al-Balādhuri, Futūḥ al-Buldān, p. 132.
1588 al-Jāḥīz, K.al-Awtān, Rasāʾil, 4: 122. This proves that the date of this letter is 248 (116+132)
Islamic community, and above all the bitter evil of internal strife and disunity, "1589 and with such a professed capacity of living up to the Islam of Prophet Muḥammad, it is understood how God has rewarded them by such a blessing. Such a baraka is keenly linked to the past, and as a modern scholar puts it, it is the baraka of the awaited blessed turn (i.e., the ʿAbbāsid dawla) where the wheel of fortune will come to a full circle with their accession.1590

We should recall here that an identical allusion to the ʿAbbāsid blessing has been made in K. Faḍl Ḥāshim where al-Ǧāḥīz said: "Ḥāshim (as a tribe) boasts that no one had really found ninety consecutive years that were free from plagues until the ʿAbāssids had taken over!"1591

al-Ǧāḥīz's present treatise "al-Awtān" hence reflects a doctrinal constant to his loyalty to the ʿAbbāsid cause, expressed twenty two years before this treatise's date, in the sense that he was not only singing the praises of his patrons, but also flattering the ʿAlids in a diplomatic way that nevertheless, keeps the line of accession in the ʿAbbāsid family.1592

Sharon has noticed that the doctrine of wirātha was first introduced by the ʿAbbāsids after their accession to the throne, to "invalidate any Alid claim based on ʿAli being the Prophet's cousin or on Fāṭima being the Prophet's daughter. Hence the super magnification of the status of al-ʿAbbās as the Prophet's uncle." This magnification is not upset by al-Ǧāḥīz's immediate enumeration of the virtues of the house of Abū Ṭālib, first embodied by Abū Ṭālib himself who is purely Ḥāshimite from his mother and father, then by his four sons, Jaʿfar, ʿAqil, Ṭālib and ʿAli, each of whom differed in age from the other by ten years, and then by the fact that these ʿṬālibids produced more male offspring than anyone else except the people of Khurāsān and those who live beyond them. al-Ǧāḥīz adds that only their children are known for their energetic crawling and liveliness. Historically, Ḥusayn's murderer, ʿUbayd Allāh b. Ziyād, died on the same day in the year following his murder, and

1590 See Sharon, op. cit. 24 and B. Lewis, "Islamic concepts of Revolution", in Revolution in the Middle East, pp. 30-31.
1591 al-Ǧāḥīz, Fadl Ḥāshim, pp. 80-81.
1592 This line of reasoning in which the ʿAbbāsid legitimacy is portrayed has been criticised by al-Maqrizī (776-845/1364/1442) in his work: Kitāb al-Nizāʾ wa al-Takhāsum fi ma Bayn Bani Umayya wa Bani Ḥāshim, Ed. H. Muʿnis, (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1988). His view of the Umayyads and ʿAbbāsids is much less subjective than that of al-Ǧāḥīz.
this too is a remarkable Tālibid phenomenon; not to forget ʿAli’s established record for killing more foes than any other Companion, besides being mentioned whenever precedence in Islam, fiqh, zuhd and generosity are brought out for discussion.¹⁵⁹³

But of course, such an acknowledgement of the Tālibids, and such an image of ʿAli which repeats the tune of Taṣwīb and opposes that of al-ʿUthmāniyya, is made as we have suggested for pure political purposes that please the ʿAbbāsid pro-Alid policy without having to make any concession to the Alids and that is how the Tālibid house /charisma is summed up - this time in its totality - simulating the broadness given to it twenty two years ago in K. Faḍl Hāshim (to which al-Jāhiẓ refers the reader to consult), but only to double check that not only are the Ḥusaynid and Jaʿfarid lines less senior than the ʿAbbāsids, but that the ʿAbbāsid superiority of political inheritance should be extended to cover all the house of Abū Tālib (ʿAlid and Jaʿfarid), and any other Ḥāshimite pretender. This means that the doctrine of wirātha was actively employed during the composition of this letter (248/862). But it is suggested by Sharon that this line of argumentation, i.e., (the ʿAbbāsid claim that the paternal uncle takes precedence when it comes to inheritance over a cousin and even over a daughter) has proved short-lived, and that the ʿAbbāsids had to modify their position to one that is based on waṣīyya, in view of the ʿAlid rejection of al-ʿAbbās's entitlement to inherit from the Prophet on the ground that al-ʿAbbās was only the half uncle of the Prophet, whereby Abū Tālib was the full uncle. Hence al-ʿAbbās's right to inherit is questioned, and even if the ʿAbbāsids could prove their ancestor's entitlement to inheritance, it should be restricted to family and personal matters, and as ʿAli had allegedly been claimed to be the Prophet's waṣīyy i.e., "the only person whom the Messenger of Allāh had allegedly chosen as his successor, granting him patronhood (wilāya) over the Islamic Ummah"", the ʿAbbāsids according to this analysis should have promptly adopted this concept from their political rivals to elevate their situation from wirātha to waṣīyya, i.e., from one based on material inheritance to political leadership and spiritual succession.¹⁵⁹⁴

But this latter concept of ʿAbbāsid legitimacy does not often recur in al-Jāhiẓ's treatises, and the only instances we can detect are al-Jāhiẓ's treatise "Taṣwīb ʿAlī"¹⁵⁹⁵ where it is combined with wirātha in a hypothetical manner, and K. Faḍl Hāshim¹⁵⁹⁶

¹⁵⁹⁴ Sharon, Ibid., pp. 96-97.
¹⁵⁹⁵ Paragraph 15.
¹⁵⁹⁶ Rasāʾīl, page 105 (Sandūbi's edition).
where it is referred to as a dispute between Zayd b. Ālī b. al-Ḥusayn and Jaʿfar b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥasan. That is why I am not sure about the exact date when wasiyya was first circulated by the ʿAbbāsids, and this point is problematic for it could not have waited until the year 248 when al-Jāḥīz seems to have been using it in a relaxed manner, unaffected by the argument of the ʿAlid partisans described above by Sharon (at least as early as the rule of Hārūn al-Rashid). Conversely the currency of wirātha and wasiyya could have been much earlier than 248, i.e., they could go back to the era which witnessed an outspoken onslaught on Shiʿite titles and doctrines, that of al-Manṣūr (literally the ‘victorious over the Alids’), and his son al-Mahdi, (the only Mahdi apart from the Ḥasanid rebel al-Nafs al-Zakiyya). This assumption could have been the case, as al-Jāḥīz’s treatise Taṣwīb refers to wirātha and wasiyya collectively, and as such the absence of wasiyya from this treatise (al-Awtān) could simply be attributed to its being not extant in the present edition of K. al-Awtān, so that al-Jāḥīz could have included it in an excerpt that has not reached us.

Thus al-Jāḥīz was recycling the views expressed in his K. Fādil Ḥāshim once more in this pseudo-geographical treatise, given the pro-Alid policy of al-Muntasir, which probably echoed that of al-Maʿmūn in its attempt to effect a reconciliation between the ʿAbbāsids and ʿAlids.

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1597 Sharon, op.cit.-p.44. (Ḥishām b. al-Ḥakam is said to have circulated the idea of wasiyya during the rule of al-Rashid).
PART THREE
CHAPTER FOURTEEN

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND SUMMING UP: (OF 2 ERAS)

Era I of Political Mu'tazili Triumph

1. Ma'mūnid Period (198-218)

2. Post-Ma'mūnid (al-Mu'tašim, al-Wāthiq)

Era II of Political Mu'tazili Decline, Sunni Triumph.


Era III

1. al-Muntasir's reign (247-248).

Now that we have chronologically examined twenty seven of al-Jāhīz's extant political works, in the laborious yet promising analytical way which had to cut through a period of exactly half a century (198-248/813-862), with this precursor of early Islamic Political thought and equally with a package of politico-religious and socio-cultural events that had witnessed and brought about these Jāhīzian writings, the time has come to give a final comment on al-Jāhīz's political thinking vis-à-vis the question of Khilāfa (Imāmate).

Of course, al-Jāhīz's works have contained a spectrum of positions and sayings (which were not consistently homogeneous) in each of the two major politico-religious eras examined, and consequently it could be very useful here to (1) briefly summarize al-Jāhīz's positions, and (2) catch the doctrinal constants and/or variants, and finally (3) try to give an account of these fluctuations and reconstruct a reasonable synthesis out of these apparently incompatible views, in what may be indicative of al-Jāhīz's real political doctrine/philosophy/theory of the question of Khilāfa.
Brief Exposé and Critique of al-Jähiz's political views:

The following table aims to provide the reader with a brief inventory of al-Jähiz's political works, that are chronologically reconstructed and tied to their historical setting to the best of my knowledge.
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<td>3. al-Mutawakkil's rule</td>
<td>Era of political decline of I'tizāl</td>
<td>- fi al-Jidd wa al-Hazl</td>
<td>strong language against Ibn al-Zayyāt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18- K. al-Bayān</td>
<td>- before al-Bayān (contextual reference)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19- Annex to Ḥayawān (al-Bīghāl, al-Nīsā', fi al-Mu'tazzīmīn)</td>
<td>- reference in 1st vol. of Bayān that Ḥayawān in progress, in last vol. of Bayān that Ḥayawān has been completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>234</td>
<td>- Lifting of Mīḥna</td>
<td>-(? ) K. al-Futya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>236</td>
<td>- al-Ḥusayn's tomb demolished; official anti-Rāfiʿī campaign</td>
<td>20- K. Fadāl al-Mu'tazila</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21- (K. al-Radd ʿalā Aḥāb al-Ilhām)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Effective period :</td>
<td>Official Political Mu'tazīlī Decline:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23- K. al-Akhbār</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24- fi Ḥujaj al-Nubuwwa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25- Manāqīb al-Turk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period/Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Work(s)</td>
<td>Clue/Indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. al-Muntaṣir:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>247</td>
<td>death of al-Mutawakkil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[after 233]-255.</td>
<td>before Zanj revolution</td>
<td>28- Fakhr al-Sūdān ćalā al-Bīdān</td>
<td>See my forthcoming article.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the above inventory, the following Exposé of al-Jāḥīẓ’s spectrum of political views can be inferred:
## An Exposé of al-Jāhiz’s Spectrum of Political Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ERA I</th>
<th>Political Mu'tazilī</th>
<th>Triumph (198-231)</th>
<th>Political Mu'tašim &amp; al-Wāthiq</th>
<th>Decline (227-231/841-845)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>al-Ma'mūn</td>
<td>198-218/813-833</td>
<td>218-227/833-841</td>
<td>227-231/841-845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>al-Jawābāt</td>
<td>7 Nafi al-Tashbih</td>
<td>10 Fadl Hāshim</td>
<td>14 K. al-Futayy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Maqālat al-Zaydiyya</td>
<td>8 Khalq al-Qur'ān</td>
<td>'alā 'Abd Shams</td>
<td>15 al-Bukhālā'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 K. al-Ma'rifa</td>
<td>9 Madh al-Tujjār</td>
<td>11 Taṣwīb 'Āli.</td>
<td>23 al-Radd ‘alā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 K. al-'Uthmāniyya</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>al-Nāṣārā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5 K. al-'Abbāsiyya</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>al-Nābīta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ERA II</th>
<th>Last Phase of ʿĪzāl</th>
<th>Decline (232-236/846-850)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>al-Ḥayawān vol. 1-3</td>
<td>16 al-Bursān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>K. al-Futayy</td>
<td>17 al-Bayān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>al-Bukhālā'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>al-Bursān</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>al-Bayān</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>al-Bighāl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>al-Nisī'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>al-Mu'allimin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Fādilat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Aṣḥāb al--liḥām</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ERA III</th>
<th>Pro-Alid revival:</th>
<th>al-Muntaṣir</th>
<th>Decline (237-247/850-861)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>al-Radd ‘alā</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>al-Nabitā</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>al-Nubuwā</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Manāqib</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>al-Awṭān</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Fakhr al-Sūdān</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Guide

where the circles are superimposed, the one at the top indicates al-Jāhīz’s main priority

- **Pro-ʿAbbāsid**
- **Pro-Umawi**
- **Pro-merit**
- **Pro-Alid**
- **Non Ethnic Politics**
- **Anti-Shuʿubi**
- **Entry to Caliphal ʿAbbāsid court and Pro-ʿAbbāsid**
- **Anti-Umawi**
- **Anti Rāfiḍi**


1- A Critical Summary of Jāḥizian positions in Era One (Political Muʿtazili Triumph)

I. al-Maʾmūn’s reign (period I-IV)

In the era of al-Maʾmūn (198-218/813-833), al-Jāḥiz’s main political output was reflected in five extant works: al-Jawābat, Maqālat al-Zaydiyya, K. al-Maʿrifa, K. al-ʾUthmāniyya, and al-Nābita.

A quick review of these works would naturally confront the researcher with the task of interpreting al-Jāḥiz’s intentions behind them, especially when one finds that they happen to constitute a mosaic of positions and a spectrum of views that are not always mutually compatible. For instance, whereas one finds “al-Jawābat”, a speculative treatise on pure political dogma, whose basic concern is centered on proving the necessity of the institution of the Imāmate and post of Imām, with an obvious pro-ʿAbbāsid stamp, we find ‘Maqālat al-Zaydiyya,’ (and thereafter other treatises) marking the hazy demarcation lines between al-Jāḥiz as an original doctrinaire, and the officially hired al-Jāḥiz expressed in the professed role of an ‘objective narrator’, which makes it incumbent to distinguish these roles (the speculative and narrative) as they frequently overlap. In fact, “Maqālat al-Zaydiyya” not only reiterates the celebrated view of that Zaydi faction that al-Jāḥiz must have admired, but also reflects his equal fondness for the doctrine of al-afḍal, while keeping the doors of diplomacy open for the Zaydi concept of al-mafṣūl. Although al-Jāḥiz’s pro-ʿAbbāsidism and loyalty to the freshly established royal links with his ʿAbbāsid patrons, can easily be read between the lines, it remains debatable - and equally so for all the Jāḥizian treatises styled in a narrative form - whether one can certainly catch the doctrinaire and real al-Jāḥiz behind the subtle and elegant curtains of al-Jāḥiz’s eloquent narrations. So this treatise, although outspokenly pro-Zaydi, it is not less strongly pro-ʿAbbāsid as al-Jāḥiz’s respect for the Zaydi concept of al-mafṣūl must not hide his superior delight with the concept of al-afḍal. And if we were to accept at face value al-Jāḥiz’s fondness for the concept of the afḍal, who by definition must deserve the post by virtue of his merit, not by virtue of his qarāba, where can we possibly situate the real al-Jāḥiz? Was he independantly opting for the Islamic principle and the Khāriji doctrine of the most meritorious candidate - irrespective of his genealogical descent - which luckily matched the inclinations of al-Maʾmūn, his heir-apparent and the Zaydiyya, or was he simply singing the praises of his ʿAbbāsid patrons, and trying to win over the Shiʿa via the Zaydiyya to the
Abbasid establishment? In other words, al-Jähiz’s elaboration of the doctrine of al-
Afḍal and maṣfūl makes one wonder whether al-Jähiz by so doing was motivated by an "Abbāsid, Zaydi or even a Khārīji conviction.

Similarly, the remaining treatises of al-Ma’mūn’s era (al-Mārifa, al-
Uthmāniyya, Abbāsiyya, Nābita), reflect seemingly parallel but puzzling features, as al-Jähiz here too simultaneously displays himself as a narrator and an ideologue. For instance, whereas we find him in K. al-`Uthmāniyya attacking the Rāfidi-Zaydi premises of succession, and undermining Umayi-Abbāsi dynastic claims to the caliphate (without forgetting to keep a theoretical concession to the right of inheritance for his "Abbāsid patrons), we find him in K. al-Abbāsiyya highlighting that concession, which was cherished by the extremist group of al-Abbāsiyya, thus making one wonder at the reason that makes al-Jähiz enunciate one and the opposite principle and vary the criterion of Imamate between fadl that is acquired or that which is inherited.

Luckily, judging from al-Jähiz’s literature, one has, in my opinion to start familiarizing himself with this kind of seeming Jähizian inconsistency, which is an inevitable and planned result of our author’s deliberate intention to express 3rd century politics in a subtle manner whereby contemporary politics are approached (a) in retrospect and (b) indirectly, that is to say by way of narrating a certain version of the distant historical past or by way of recycling the contemporary positions of the multitude of politico-religious factions that exist in the "Abbāsid era, thus keeping aloof from any catastrophic consequence that may result from expressing himself in a direct and open manner.

Such a Jähizian narration, would not, however, mean that we have been looking for a missing target or searching for a non-existing Jähizian personal political doctrine, given the multitudes of spokesmen and sects al-Jähiz has systematically ventured to quote. It only means that - and probably due to eminent dangers awaiting those who can openly utter a dangerous political position - the present researcher has had to redouble his efforts to distinguish between two strands in al-Jähiz’s political literature: i.e., between al-Jähiz the ‘objective narrator’, and al-
Jähiz 'the political ideologue', which necessitates using one’s wits to make the best of al-Jähiz’s textual pointers and markers in order to gain an insight which would help solve the task of detecting the degree and intensity (however faint) of the Jähizian
presence, i.e., the doctrinaire al-Jāḥīz that has always existed behind the highly orchestrated mass of quoted spokesmen and views. As a modern Jāḥīzologist puts it:

It has sometimes been suggested (e.g. Pellat E., 2, II, 387) that the style of al-Jāḥīz is one of deliberate disorder; it is time that this view was revised. al-Jāḥīz’s writing is certainly not tightly organised, but there is a definite overall plan which can be recognised easily enough if one looks for it.¹⁵⁹₈

The critical reader can therefore detect the doctrinaire al-Jāḥīz in spite of the multitude of views quoted. This task, however, has required us to read and re-read al-Jāḥīz’s extant literature, to indulge in the task of arranging and re-arranging his works, and even to make use of the non-extant works - only titles of which have survived - in order to re-capture the full spectrum of al-Jāḥīz’s output and appreciate the real messages and themes contained therein. As another modern Jāḥīzologist puts it:

To my mind writings of this nature have certain elements in common with poetry. First of all, for the full richness of al-Jāḥīz’s prose to be appreciated, he should be read and read again (well known as a prerequisite for the proper appreciation of poetry); it is I think a mind of rare quality which will pick up all al-Jāḥīz’s allusions and artifices at a single reading (this not least because it is not infrequent that what turns out to be a subtlety early in a piece is identifiable as such only by what is subsequently presented, so requiring earlier elements to be retained in the mind for their full flavour to be savoured only once passages reached on occasion some time later have been digested). I also suspect, as an obiter dictum that at least one of the processes which I consider poets go through in poetic composition is shared by al-Jāḥīz, namely that of the almost subconscious interaction of words in the head, creating their own context which the author has then subsequently to follow consciously.¹⁵⁹⁹

So we must prepare ourselves to be confronted with a multitude of seemingly incompatible ideas and positions even within the same work or within a group of works that belong to one political period. In K. al-‘Uthmāniyya, after al-Jāḥīz had openly pointed out to his addressee its link to the preceding work ‘al-Ma’rifa’, and the coming work of ‘al-‘Abbāsiyya’, and despite the highly polemic narrative

¹⁵⁹⁹ D. E. P. Jackson, ‘Qissat Muḥammad b. Abi al-Mu’ammal: An Essay in the Practical Appreciation of a story from K. al-Bukhālā of al-Jāḥīz’, BRISMES, St. Andrews, 1992, p. 298. I have greatly benefited from this and the above guidelines, in studying al-Jāḥīz’s anthropological philosophy (See my forthcoming article), and also towards capturing his political philosophy by always looking out for those textual pointers or parallel phrases that are spread throughout his literature (in the same work or between one work and another) that convey a doctrinal overlap or a doctrinal development. al-Jāḥīz does not leave his readers perplexed as to what he is after; as we have shown above in our study of ‘al-Jawābät’ and ‘al-‘Uthmāniyya’, al-Jāḥīz reserves the right to openly and doctrinally pull himself out of the narrative mainstream. A chronological ordering of the whole of al-Jāḥīz’s political output has not only proved necessary but quite promising, for such an analytic assimilation of all the surviving elements allows one to follow the nature of that political curve maintained by our author.
framework of the treatise, al-Jāḥīẓ does not forget to stress that he has here assumed the role of an independent judge and neutral narrator in order to protect himself from being necessarily mistaken for espousing any of the narrated views, while enjoying a safer way than having to express himself directly, i.e., by means of directing and engineering the arguments in the polemic way that best suits him.

So if one is puzzled in al-Jāḥīẓ's work 'al-ṢUthmāniyya,' as to how the same Jāḥīzian pen could make here an attack of Rāfiḍī/Zaydi premises of succession that rests on the unwelcomed ideas of nass and inherited faḍl - without forgetting to undermine the Umawi-ʿAbbāsi dynastic claims to the caliphate and keeping a theoretical concession to his ʿAbbāsid patrons when the issue of qarāba and inheritance is briefly touched - and then how the same al-Jāḥīẓ could elaborate this concession and highlight the premises of inherited faḍl that were cherished by the extremist group of al-ʿAbbāsiyya, i.e., how could al-Jāḥīẓ be simultaneously expressing opposite criteria for the caliphate (acquired faḍl, and Ikhtiyār versus inherited faḍl and nass), the riddle here is diluted the moment we remember that these mutually irreconcilable views had been expressed in the role of al-Jāḥīẓ as the narrator. Thanks to al-Jāḥīẓ's remarks in his preface to K. al-Ḥayawān, such a conflict is completely resolved, as al-Jāḥīẓ himself has warned his readers not to confuse him with a convicted partisan of the extremist group of al-ʿAbbāsiyya, in the same way he asked his addressee of al-ʿUthmāniyya not to mistake him for any of the listed sects.

al-Maʿmūn's open era seems to have invited al-Jāḥīẓ to please his ʿAbbāsid patrons; this time by attacking state enemies in the most direct and aggressive way possible, and it is with the work 'al-Nābita' that the era of Maʿmūn is concluded.

For the sake of simplicity, the following views and doctrines are tabularized below in order to summarize al-Jāḥīẓ's spectrum of political thought and views, with an attempt to catch the doctrinal constants and variants expressed throughout:

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416
## Doctrinal constants and variants in Era of al-Ma'mūn (198-218/813-833)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for Imamship</th>
<th>Ma'rifa</th>
<th>ṢUthmāniyya</th>
<th>ṢAbbāsiyya</th>
<th>Nābita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>al-Jawābāt</td>
<td>by acquired Ḡadl (mostly resembling Prophet)</td>
<td>- acquired Ḡadl versus Ṣass</td>
<td>inheritance (dynastic claim, genealogical descent)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maqālāt al-Zaydiyya</td>
<td>acquired Ḡadl and good deeds: seniority of conversion to Islam, detachment from the world, religious knowledge and war services.</td>
<td>- Ṣaqqiyya &amp; rebellion - ṢAḥd - ṢIktiyār</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma'rīfa</td>
<td></td>
<td>- acquired Ḡadl versus Ṣass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṢUthmāniyya</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>rebellion by meritorious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṢAbbāsiyya</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṢAbbāsiyya</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nābita</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ways of accession to Imamate
- quite balanced
- balanced but brief
- critical?
- critical (dubious)
- attack
- heavy attack
- attack
- pro-ṢAbbāsīd
- pro-ṢAbbāsīd
- pro-ṢAbbāsīd
- very pro-ṢAbbāsīd
- pro-ṢAbbāsīd

### Image of ṢUthmān
- quite balanced
- balanced but brief
- critical?
- critical (dubious)

### Image of ṢAll
- quite positive
- negative
- negative, does not accept as Imam
- critical
- balanced

### Position to Rāfīda
- one reference without any (extant) comment.
- attack
- heavy attack
- attack

### Position to ṢAbbāsīds
- pro-ṢAbbāsīd
- pro-ṢAbbāsīd
- generally critical but all allowing some priority
- very pro-ṢAbbāsīd
- pro-ṢAbbāsīd

### Position to Khawārij
- critical of those who need no Imam
- critical of those who need no Imam
- neutral
- critical
- highly critical

### Necessity of Imamate
- (Man - Imam - God) Intellectual + Religious Proof
- (Man - Imam - God) Intellectual + Religious Proof
- (Man - Imam - God) Imamate is vital
- stressed

### Unity of caliphal post
- one versus many or none
- one versus ten
al-Jāḥīz’s output in the Post-Ma‘mūnid era exhibits striking resemblances to the political Jāḥīzian curve that dominated Ma‘mūn’s time. The anti-Umayyad/pro-Hāshimite and pro-Alid works of Fāḍl Ḥāshim and Taṣwīb Ṣāliḥ that are followed by the anti-Rāfiʿī work al-Tarbi‘ wa al-Tadwir, remind one of the pro-Zaydī work Maqālat al-Zaydiyya that was followed by the anti-Rāfiʿī/Zaydī work al-‘Uthmāniyya, and the anti-Umayyad work al-Nābita, which substantiates the observation that al-Jāḥīz had continuously succeeded in pleasing his Ṣaḥḥāfī patrons by echoing their conciliatory efforts with the moderate Shiʿītes and their non-compromising policy with the extremist Rāfiʿīs, the ideological and potentially dangerous enemies of the Ṣaḥḥāfī regime in addition to the Umayyads, their political enemies.\(^{1600}\)

al-Jāḥīz’s contribution to Ṣaḥḥāfī politics and the running of State affairs was indeed a complex task in view of the number of political entities and criteria that had to be tackled, incorporated and worked out by his political genius, to reach a more or less satisfactory political formula without having to upset the existing status quo.

In such a diverse and rich output, it is not difficult to detect a constant doctrinaire al-Jāḥīz who was consistently keen to prove his usefulness to the Ṣaḥḥāfī authorities, and perform that semi-official political role as an Ṣaḥḥāfī apologist, polemicist, shaper of public opinion (ideologically and historiographically) and possibly of Ṣaḥḥāfī polity as well.

To start with the first works of this era (fi Nafy al-Tashbih and Khalq al-Qur‘ān), al-Jāḥīz resumes the anti-Umayyad campaign already waged in al-Nābita against these constant State enemies, but with a greater momentum, to blemish the religious and theological records of the Umayyads, which can be clearly seen in the pro-Hāshimite works Fāḍl and Taṣwīb, that aim to destroy the Umayyads’ reputation in the Islamic and Pre-Islamic eras while striking an Alid-Ṣaḥḥāfī (Hāshimi) alliance

\(^{1600}\) One must recall that at the two extremes of the political curve of the Post-Ma‘mūnid period are to be found the politico-theological anti-Umayyad works (Nafy, Khalq) and the quasi-scientific quasi-literary work of al-Ḥayawān.
and highlighting a package of superior virtues\textsuperscript{1601} that are deliberately denied to their inferiors, from ʿAbd Shams.

al-Jāḥīz could be seen as aiming to inflict a theological \textit{Mihna} on the pro-Umayyad block (Nābita, Ḥashwiyya, traditionists) after the Muʿtazila’s efforts to impose a political \textit{Mihna} had been checked in al-Maʾmūn’s time (Muʿāwiya could not be publicly cursed and that had to be confined within the caliph’s court). al-Jāḥīz achieved considerable success in attacking the upholders of anthropomorphism and rejectors of the concept of the createdness of the Qurʾān, who were coupled with the Ṣafidiya as having equally distanced themselves from orthodoxy. Evidently al-Jāḥīz’s pro-ʿAbbāsidism grew out of proportion when he equated this pro-Umawi block with \textit{Kufr}, although the Muʿtazili description given to the grave sinner was confined to \textit{fisq}.

\textsuperscript{1602} The high frequency of attacks against the Umayyads that cover the whole era of political Muʿtazili triumph and are unsurprisingly exhibited by the State polemicist, have led us to examine their historiographic value. As this deformed image of the Umayyads have been passed to later historians through the unfriendly ʿAbbāsid prism, it has been incumbent to study al-Jāḥīz’s share in the promotion of this and to unveil al-Jāḥīz’s role in the shaping of historical traditions.

It is surprising to find F. Rosenthal in his comment on Muslim historians, after acknowledging the fact that ‘in the treatment of early Muslim history every bit of historical writing is strictly partisan’,\textsuperscript{1603} excluding al-Jāḥīz from this accusation, although he adds that ‘the attitude of the early ʿAbbāsid historians towards the Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid history were to become the standard for all later historiography.’\textsuperscript{1604}

This charge, in his view, could only be raised against those historians who had deliberately intended to color history by way of pleasing their masters, but this is the exception as such a deliberate colouring contradicted the majority’s concept of

\textsuperscript{1601} Even if it proved necessary to speak highly of one Ḥashimi leader, ʿAli b. Abī Ṭalib, which was the theoretical price incurred in order to overshadow the alleged superiority of Muʿāwiya.

\textsuperscript{1602} In any examination of the anti-Umayyad attacks launched by al-Jāḥīz against Muʿāwiya, one must notice how the latter is given the following incompatible labels: \textit{Kāfir} in Nābita (and Ṣafī al-Tashbih, Ḫalq al-Qurʾān), \textit{munāfiq} in Faḍl Ḥāshim and \textit{fasiq}, (not \textit{kāfir}) in Taṣwīb.


\textsuperscript{1604} Ibid.
history as transmitted facts and except for certain cases in the biased treatment of early Muslim history, historians never consciously allowed themselves to change details or reinterpret a factual report. I strongly disagree with Rosenthal’s choice of al-Jāhīz to illustrate his view of a ‘revered’ package of ‘transmitted facts’ versus a ‘biased concocted history’, as al-Jāhīz’s historiographic manipulation and interventions as they have been outlined above (in our analysis of Fadl Hāshim and Taşwīb ʿAlī) categorically contradict Rosenthal’s view of al-Jāhīz.

al-Jāhīz’s views on the necessity of the institution of Imāmate expressed in ‘al-Jawābāt’, which concerns political theory proper, may have been recycled - as another scholar proposes - by classical political theorists in the one and half centuries following al-Jāhīz. But as the issue of discussing the full impact of al-Jāhīz’s political thought goes beyond the set limits of this research, it is sufficient to notice that al-Jāhīz’s impact was not always a positive one, and thus his role in the shaping of early Muslim history should not be overlooked.

For example, in K. Fadl Hāshim al-Jāhīz does not mind - in his determination to rid the ancestors of the Umayyads of any virtues - to indulge in reinterpreting a factual report on ʿAbd Shams’s absence from Ḥilf al-Fudūl in order to undermine his socio-economic status. But as we have shown, his participation in the Ilāf of Quraysh’s annual travels contradicts al-Jāhīz’s eagerness to emphasize the alleged enmity between the two brothers and the alleged inferior status of ʿAbd Shams vis-à-vis Hāshim.

By portraying the Umayyad rule as an inherited tyrannical mulk, al-Jāhīz could obviously be charged with applying double standards. It does not take much effort to realize that al-Jāhīz’s deliberate elaboration of the ʿAbbāsid basis to rule by the sacred right of mirath bi ḥaqq al-ʿAṣaba, could be equally applied - in the light of a wider definition of ʿAṣaba to accommodate relatives of the Prophet from above like the Umayyads as well as relatives from below, like the ʿAlids. So if

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1607 This wider definition has already been noted by Bosworth and Schacht (see our analysis of K. Fadl Hāshim).
inheritance was the criterion for rulership, why should it be acceptable for one group and denied to others?

It is time to comment on the alleged sanctity of the _qarāba_ factor that was equally used by the Umayyads, `Abbāsids and Shi`ītes. Proving the unquestionable membership of each group in the Prophetic house/family (ahl al-Bayt) has been a major politico-religious concern that guarantees legitimacy of rulership. Except for the `Uthmānis, Zubayris, Khawārij and one Zaydi faction, who based legitimate rulership on the Islamic principle of religious merit irrespective of genealogical lineage to the Prophet, it is astonishing how all other politico-religious parties have limited the right to rule to blood relationship to the Prophet, which entitles them to inherit that privileged type of kinship.

The basic weaknesses of the alleged hereditary right of the exclusive members of _ahl al-Bayt_ are quite obvious: Genealogical relationship need not be necessarily conducive to _Khilāfa_, especially when it is devoid of religious merit. It is not difficult to notice that a considerable abuse of this membership had permeated most of the Umayyad, `Abbasid and Shi`ī criteria for rulership wherein each party excelled one another at narrowing down the Qur`anic term _ahl al-Bayt_ to suit its own political or religious agenda. A wider interpretation of this Qur`anic term - as has been observed by Sharon and Bosworth - means that real membership of the “house” need not necessarily be tied to the house of the Prophet but should also accommodate those who dwell in and those who revere the “House of the Prophet’s God, i.e., al-Ka`ba”, thus transcending the rigid bounds of blood relationship set by many political polemists (like al-Jāḥīz) and hence if the pious members of ‘the House’ are not exclusively tied to the Prophetic family, the applicability of the title _ahl al-Bayt_ logically opens the _Khilāfa_ to any pious Muslim who venerates the Ka`ba, such as the tribe of Quraysh as a whole or the Islamic community in general.

Apart from the alleged sacred membership, the other weakness of this widely canvassed ideological concept of _qarāba_ concerns the element of inheritance. Kremer has suggested that hereditary descent was never a recognized title for spiritual or temporal sovereignty among the (Pre-Islamic) Arabs. He also adds that

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1608 M. Sharon, _Black Banners_, pp. 75-76. Sharon draws attention to the fact that this use of the term has already been mentioned in Ibn Habib’s _al-Munammaq fi Akhbār Quraysh_, (Hyderabad, 1329-1331) p. 68, line 6.

the want of a fixed rule of succession had dominated the ʿAbbāsid scene no less than the Umayyad line of succession. Thus those who have claimed to restore the rule of righteousness by virtue of their innate quality of qarāba (Kinship with the Prophet) through the special status of ʿUmūma to the Prophet, had in fact accelerated the decline of the Islamic principle of merit more than the Umayyads.\textsuperscript{1610}

To return to al-Jāḥiz’s mechanism of handling political debates, his acknowledgement of the politico-religious virtues of the two wings of the Banū Ḥāshim need not be carried so far as to make one conclude that - for once - al-Jāḥiz has adopted the Shiʿī outlook by accepting the cousins of the ʿAbbāsids as equal and genuine candidates for rulership. We must recall how al-Jāḥiz - in his role of historiographic narrator or scanner - has allowed the Zaydis to beautifully express their celebration of ʿAli b. Abī Tālib as the afdal after the Prophet, without forgetting to congratulate those amongst them who did not base Imāma on any blood kinship to the Prophet. Likewise, he allows here the pro-Ḥāshimi spokesman to speak highly of the Ṭālibites,\textsuperscript{1611} but as outlined above only to score more points against the common non-Ḥāshimi Umayyad enemies\textsuperscript{1612} and without meaning to give up his pro-ʿAbbāsid priorities, as these pro-Ṭālibi praises or recommendations (or warnings) have been used for the double purpose of over shadowing the Umayyads and confirming those ʿAbbāsid priorities.

This technique is tactfully followed in ʿTaṣwīb Ṭāliḥ, so that Ṭāliḥ’s faḍl is magnified to cancel the virtues of Muʿawiyah but is also meant to be eclipsed by Ibn ʿAbbas. The narrative and doctrinal roles of al-Jāḥiz do overlap here, and as stated before, it pays to read this work several times in order to develop a feeling for and acquire an insight into the complex mechanism by which al-Jāḥiz literally contributed to ʿAbbāsid politics, especially when the same treatise is full of references to many different groups. In Faḍl Ḥāshim three different groups had to be dealt with: Umayyads, Ṭālibites (basically Ḥusaynids) and ʿAbbāsids, and in ʿTaṣwīb ʿAli, so that ʿAli's faḍl is

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1610} Whereas the Umayyad dynasty had only witnessed four caliphs whose sons directly succeeded them (2 among the Sufyānids and 2 among the Marwānids), the ʿAbbāsids eventually outnumbered them: of the first twenty four ʿAbbāsid Caliphs, only six had their sons as successors, all of whom al-Jāḥiz witnessed. It is therefore unexpected of al-Mil; to have condemned the Umayyad trend of Kingly succession without uttering a word that the ʿAbbāsids were not any much better. See von Kremer, Staatside des Islam, enlarged and amplified by S. K. Bakhsh as Politics in Islam, (India: Idārat Adabiyyat-iDelli, 1975), pp. 110-113.
\item \textsuperscript{1611} Such as highlighting the politico-religious virtues of the Ṭālibites.
\item \textsuperscript{1612} This phenomenon will reappear in his other works (al-Bayān, al-Ḥayawān, al-Awṭān).
\end{itemize}
Ali the reader has been confronted with 6Ali, Mu`awiya, the Khawarij, Rafida and Ibn 6Abbas. In both cases, beneath the outer pro-Hashedimi title of the treatises, lies a greater concern for the 6Abbasid superiority, and although many politico-religious parties are given the liberty of singing their own praise, it is not impossible to dig out and detect al-Jahiz's targets. For instance, "Taswib" could have made the average 6Abbasid reader think that al-Jahiz was all of a sudden contradicting the theses expressed in K. al-6Uthmaniyya, when in reality, and beneath the pro-Alid outer shell of the treatise, existed the same troublesome pro-6Abbasid al-Jahiz who could prove - however 6Ali's image has been elevated and his course of action approved - that he was incapable of outweighing Ibn 6Abbas, who has been constantly portrayed as the wisest after the Prophet.1613 It is the same al-Jahiz who can polemically provide the Umawi spokesman in the latter portion of 'Taswib' with innovative arguments to hypothetically express the alleged right of Muawiya's Imamship, for the purpose of ridiculing those claims and tearing them apart.

al-Jahiz's political formula of conciliating the moderate Shiites, attacking their political opponents, the Umayyads, and confirming 6Abbasid superiority, which involved him in endless historiographic reconstructions of the immediate and distant past, also encompassed no less a concern to spell out the highly unorthodox and extremist beliefs of the Rafida. In this sequence appears K. al-Tarbi6, a masterpiece of ironical writing on that Kaysani pretender who must have achieved some success in gathering pro-Shiite sympathies, probably around his unpublicized role as the hidden Imam, who is sarcastically portrayed as the perfect man to whom all people aspire.

Is it a mere coincidence that the addressee of K. al-Tarbi6 (the mocked prototype of the hidden Imam), according to a report mentioned by al-Tabari, was hoping to be awarded the governorship of Egypt with 100,000 dinars, in the rule of al-Wathiq? Could not this unfulfilled ambition of the Kaysani pretender, who chose to go to Makka instead to spread his dogma, have alerted al-Jahiz to expose the danger he poised?

Such a Jahizian concern has also accompanied al-Jahiz's composition of K. al-Hayawwan, that reflects his determination to refute the officially unwelcomed penetration of gnostic and mythical ideas into the 6Abbasid community, such as

1613 In the treatise Nafy al-Tashbih (Rasai', 1: 300) al-Jahiz never forgets to draw attention to the fact that even 6Umar and 6Uthman had had to seek his indispensible advice.
those of Shu`ubī and Rāfiḍī groups, a task that depended on calling for and making appeal to the rational school of Greek thought, in order to face the growing forces of gnosticism and irrationality, and limit the dangers of the ideological and internal enemies of the State.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for Imamship</th>
<th>Nafy al-Tashbih Khalq al-Qur'an</th>
<th>Faḍl Ḥāshim</th>
<th>Taṣwīb ATEGORY</th>
<th>al-Ṭarbiʿ</th>
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<tr>
<th>Image of Muʿāwiya, Nābita and Umayyads</th>
<th>Image of ATEGORY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kāfir(s)</td>
<td>mūnāṣiq(s) and kāfir(s)</td>
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<td>severely attacked, but seen as fāsiq not as kāfir</td>
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<tr>
<th>Position to Rāfiḍa</th>
<th>pro-ATEGORY</th>
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<tr>
<td>silent</td>
<td>pro-ATEGORY, (and pro-Ḥāshimi)</td>
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<tr>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>pro-ATEGORY, (and pro-Ḥāshimi)</td>
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<td>acutely anti-rāfida</td>
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<td>acutely anti-rāfida</td>
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<th>Position to Khawārīj</th>
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<tr>
<td>critical</td>
<td>pro-ATEGORY</td>
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<tr>
<td>admirable their rhetoric, ascetism but not military rashness</td>
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<tr>
<th>Image and status of Imam</th>
<th>Nafy al-Tashbih Khalq al-Qur'an</th>
<th>Faḍl Ḥāshim</th>
<th>Taṣwīb ATEGORY</th>
<th>al-Ṭarbiʿ</th>
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<td>Ideal</td>
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<td>highly authoritarian, must be revered by subjects, even if they can't understand.</td>
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<td>Sunnis and Shiʿites features (Taqiyya)</td>
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<td>Ironic</td>
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<td>highly authoritarian: must never be questioned</td>
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<th>Nafy al-Tashbih Khalq al-Qur'an</th>
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2- A Critical Summary of Jāhiz'ian positions in Era II: Sunni Triumph and Political decline of Mu'tazila

I- Early Transition Period of al-Mutawakkil

It is a common misconception that al-Mutawakkil's coming uprooted Ictizāl altogether. But this alleged blow to Ictizāl, which is associated to al-Mutawakkil's rule as of 232/846, is not exact. He certainly discouraged dialectical debates, encouraged ahl al-Ḥadīth (in 233/847), and lifted mīḥna (in 234/848), but it was not until the official removal of the son of the Mu'tazīlī Qāḍī (and ex-promoter of Mīḥna, Ibn Abī Du‘ād), in 237/851 that the full extent of the blow became evident. This, therefore, and in addition to al-Jāhīz's instant tuning to the caliphal tastes, would grant al-Jāhīz a few years (232-237) in which he could maintain his royal links, and Ictizāl could still be praised, before it seemed necessary for him to launch his second entry to the court, via the Turkish vizier Ibn Khāqān.

The Shuţūbi threat seems to have bothered our author in this era too, an era that did not involve him in the Arab-Arab dispute of the descendants of ʿAbd Manāf (Umawi-ʿAbbāsi conflict) and he shifted his pen to the growing dangers of the Shuţūbī, atheist and non-orthodox movements in the ʿAbbāsid society.

The latter portions of K. al-Ḥayawān, in addition to K. al Bukhalā', al-Bayān and al-Bursosān, can all be fitted into this ideological Shuţūbī concern: In al-Ḥayawān, he tackled the Arab-Persian ethnic and ideological tension by resorting to his old technique of chairing debates between a representative of each group, in addition to silencing the atheists and enhancing the logical and scientific method in the minds of the masses that had been soaked in mythical beliefs. Another ethnic concern could apply here if al-Jāhīz's voluminous Hayawān also aimed at proving that the Arabs, who have been undermined by the Shuţūbīs, have a zoological output that was no less than Aristotle's.

The superiority of the Arabs was another concern for al-Jāhīz that inspired him to compose K. al Bayān. For the first time in al-Jāhīz's literature, his pro-ʿAbbāsid political sensitivities against the Umayyads, Khawārij and Alids are

1614 This interpretation has been given by al-Ḥumṣi and al-Mulūḥi in Min Kitāb al-Hayawān li al-Jāhīz and M. al-Khāṭīb, in al-Sirāʿ al-ʿAdābī maʿ al-Shuţūbiyya (Beirut: Dār al-Ḥadātha, 1983).

overlooked as their wise and eloquent sayings are all summoned and gathered here to score more points against the literary and ideological attacks of the Shu`ūbis. It is the same al-Jāḥīz that had written al-ʿUthmāniyya, to silence the Rāfīḍa, but for certain ʿAbbāsid priorities, he could allow Alid spokesmen to join the anti-Umayyad campaign in the work of Faḍl Ḥāshim, to strengthen the Ḥāshimi front. Moreover, K. al-Burşān is not void of a Shuʿūbi concern, as al-Jāḥīz intended to prove that physical deformities did not prevent many famous Arabs from leading a noble life.

With the first signs of the blow against ʿItizāl’s politico-theological success, which was reflected in al-Mutawakkil’s lifting of the Miḥna in 234, al-Jāḥīz could understand the political dimension behind that step, and it is in this atmosphere that we hear of the composition of K. al-Futayā, which has been regarded by some scholars as one of the earliest works in the science of usūl al-fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence). This shows the swiftness with which al-Jāḥīz could tune to the more orthodox tastes of the state, so that once the caliph officially launched his Sunnī/anti-Rāfīḍī policy, al-Jāḥīz in 236 quickly supplied the authorities with K. Faḍilat al-Muʿtazila, an unexpected title but whose content matches, in my view, this last round of official Muʿtazili presence, when it was still permitted to praise ʿItizāl inspite of the lifting of the Miḥna, which seems to be an indirect message from a devoted Muʿtazili to a highly orthodox minded caliph who enjoyed al-Jāḥīz’s literature, to prevent or delay a decree against the Muʿtazili presence in the ʿAbbāsid court. Although al-Jāḥīz’s Muʿtazili patron had to be removed in 237 from his post, al-Jāḥīz could still prove his usefulness as an ʿAbbāsid ideological and theological necessity, after he has exposed the heterodoxies of the extremist Rāfīḍīs (such as adhered by Ibn al-Riwandi who is reported to have been declared by al-Mutawakkil himself an enemy of the Sunnite political mainstream, so that an official decree was issued to arrest him),1616 and by supplying the Turkish vizier with an anti-Christian polemic “al-Radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā”, that accompanied al-Mutawakkil’s alleged anger with them.1617

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1617 See al-Ṭabarʾi, Ṭarīkh, (annals of the year 235).
II. al-Mutawakkil's latter years 237-247:  
(Actual period of Mu'tazili Decline)

Here we have seen al-Jāhiẓ excelling in responding to the caliph's orders transmitted via the Turkish vizier and admirer of al-Jāhiẓ's literature, Ibn Khāqān. All the extant works of this era reflect his success in proving himself an ʿAbbāsid theological necessity, "al-Radd ʿalā al-Nāṣārā", K. al-Akhbār, Ḥujaj al-Nubuwwa no less than a military necessity: Manāqib al-Turk. Thus he could secure his second entry to the ʿAbbāsid court, after the Muʿtazili Qāḍī had been dismissed from office, and replaced by the Traditionist Yahyā b. Aktam, by refraining from writing on topics that would anger the authorities.

3- A Critical Summary of Jāhiẓian positions in Era III of al-Muntaṣir (247-248)

The last of al-Jāhiẓ's extant works that preserved a chronological marker to its date (247/861) happens to include a recycling of the pro-Ḥāshimi package of virtues already exhibited in K. Faḍl Ḥāshim. Here al-Jaḥiz throws in a political pun, where three Muḥammads and three ʿAlis from the Ḥusayni, Jaʿfari and ʿAbbāsi lineage of Ḥāshim are equally recommended for Imāmship during the years preceding the ʿAbbāsid revolution. Of course, by now one must not jump to the conclusion that since al-Mutawakkil's son was favouring the Alids, al-Jāhiẓ switched accordingly, for this technique, in my opinion, does not differ in essence and style from that we have studied in the works that had a pro-Alid flavour.

1618 This work (a preface to Ḥujaj al-Nubuwwa) contains a demographic and historiographic scanning of the political tendencies in Başra, Kūfa and Syria that are described as firmly rooted in blind imitation.
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<td>Ideological Shuʿubi concern</td>
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4- Basic Aspects of al-Jāḥīz’s Political Theory:

Before we commit ourselves to reconstructing al-Jāḥīz’s theory of *Khilāfa*, I would like to comment on the previous attempts to formulate a political theory of al-Jāḥīz, which although generally true, could however be sometimes considerably misleading. The reason for this is that such efforts did not initially venture to commit themselves to a global critical study of al-Jāḥīz’s diverse political literature, and it can be easily noticed that those generalizations need not be necessarily equated to a theory, in as much as they carry a very local contextual significance, which may not be Jāḥīzian in outlook; thus sometimes one is faced with a random gathering of unfiltered and unrelated ideas extracted from here and there, that lack a sense of chronological direction and doctrinal development, and thus do not account for incidental changes. This calls for the exercise of extreme caution before accepting these ideas as genuinely Jāḥīzian, in view of the random way they are picked out and the absolute applicability they are given, without troubling to distinguish the former Jāḥīzian output from the latter, the accidental al-Jāḥīz from the mainstream, the narrating al-Jāḥīz from the doctrinaire. This leads to a failure to individually weigh all the political elements and landmarks in al-Jāḥīz’s output that, therefore, need not necessarily be taken to reflect al-Jāḥīz’s doctrine as one static whole. Hence, any attempt to give a comprehensively realistic judgement of al-Jāḥīz’s political thought should first commit itself to a detailed analytic approach to and examination of al-Jāḥīz’s primary sources before hastening to fit them into a theory. It must be clear by now that given the diverse and pluralistic vision of al-Jāḥīz’s literature, where doctrinaire and narrative roles overlap, a real understanding of al-Jāḥīz should always be contextually tied, such that only after a full examination of the Jāḥīzian output is made, may one survey these proposed theories of al-Jāḥīz and not vice versa. The Gestaltian step of moving from the general (a non-exact theory or a common generalisation) into the particular (Jāḥīzian particulars), does not apply here and evidently falls short of providing the full spectrum of al-Jāḥīz’s ideas and unfolding the complete developmental trends they must have undertaken.

For example, the doctrines expressed in K. al-‘Uthmāniyya have been commonly attributed to the era of al-Mutawakkil, but new research has fixed it in al-Ma’mūn’s era. Similarly K. Tašwīb. ‘Ali, which is outspokenly pro-Alid, could have been

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1619 This occasionally applies to certain of Pellat’s, Watt’s and H.Y. Mohamed’s formulative attempts.
related to al-Ma‘mūns’ rule, but we have shown that it was written after al-Ma‘mūn’s rule and before that of al-Mutawakkil.

These shortcomings have therefore strengthened our ambition to subject al-Jāḥīz to a detailed chronological analysis that aims to avoid repeating the misleading generalizations and fitting those valid to where they belong. For example, although Pellat credits al-Jāḥīz with introducing political debates at a time when the theory of Ḥiṣba Khilāfa had not yet been seriously developed, his final verdict is worth recalling: "al-Jāḥīz, nevertheless, succeeded in drawing a doctrine that was vague, imprecise and insufficiently elaborated but already full of promises."1620

In my opinion, had Pellat committed himself to a stricter comparative and chronological approach to al-Jāḥīz’s output, he would have certainly been able to grasp the full momentum of al-Jāḥīz’s political thought, and shatter a great deal of the alleged impression of vagueness and incompleteness. Of course, any attempt to fully understand al-Jāḥīz and reconstruct his output and theory, has to be equally knowlegeable of that vast non-extant Jāḥīzian literature which definitely reflects our author’s insatiable thirst for intellectual and factual knowledge and reminds the scholars of al-Jāḥīz to think twice before committing themselves to judge al-Jāḥīz’s real aims and blame him for not devoting himself to a fully elaborated treatment of one topic.1621

Of course, this does not negate al-Jāḥīz’s tendency to digress from one subject to another, and equally from one type of addressee to another (sometimes caliphs or their advisers, and sometimes their subjects), and between these poles it was natural for him to produce an equally diverse package of political curves and views. How original or passive have these curves been? were they - as Madelung describes Sunni thought on the Imāmate - “continuously reacting to its changing fortunes”?1622 Of course, this statement need not be universally true, and as far as al-Jāḥīz is concerned, one cannot deny that al-Jāḥīz’s political career (and output) has been strongly but not completely linked to the political pressures of his time, and that except for certain original and courageous standpoints scattered here and there, one can say that al-Jāḥīz - even in the era of political Mu‘tazili triumph, given the political pressures of the time - had always to style his new genre of "Mirror of

1621 See Pellat’s Inventory of Jāḥīz’s 245 works in Arabica, XXXI, 1984, pp.117-164.
Princes" in a more or less camouflaged manner, that could relieve him from being a complete political 'Abbāsid parrot, and at the same time maintain a less hazardous access to any unlicensed free expression, by assuming the role of chairing debates and venturing to narrate the diverse positions of those antagonistic parties that flourished in this period.

The basic landmarks of al-Jāḥiz’s political output have been highlighted and mutually compared and contrasted above, and we now need to ask how feasible it is to translate these findings into the discipline of political theory proper, and how much are we justified in extracting from the overall Jāḥizian political spectrum portrayed above a valid and homogeneous theory of al-Jāḥiz’s political thought?

al-Jāḥiz’s commitment to a full review of the politico-religious camps of his time makes it difficult for us to distinguish where he allows others to speak, and where he allows himself. It is redundant to repeat the positions consistently exhibited by him (already summarized in tabular form), and our final concern now is to extract the common doctrinal threads that underlay and motivated al-Jāḥiz’s political endeavour, at a time when “the political occupations had won over doctrinal speculations”, and when the broad lines of a theory of the caliphate had not been determined prior to al-Jāḥiz’s attempt,1623 which reflects his consistent keenness to introduce political science (among many other disciplines) into the growing body of Arabic prose.


In the eras of Muʿtazili triumph and decline, al-Jāḥiz’s deep concern over the significance and necessity of the caliphate never subsided. What is remarkably evident in this concern is al-Jāḥiz’s capacity to base that necessity on both intellectual and religious justifications. Intellectually, he succeeded in showing that man’s predatory nature calls for the existence of a deterring caliph. Religiously, he pointed out that appointing an Imām is one of the foremost binding religious duties on the Muslim community.1624 al-Jāḥiz’s contribution therefore lies in striking a balanced view of the necessity of the caliphate (on religious and intellectual grounds) in the triangular relation discussed above (God-Imām-Man). Such a situation is the most beneficial - al āstālah - and will be criticized by later political

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1624 See our analysis of al Jawābät above.
theorists like al-Juwayni, who regards as sinful the Mu'tazili view that al-aslah is obligatory on God and thus limits it to the community on whose shoulders rest the responsibility and obligation to actualize and sustain the aslah by choosing a caliph. On the other hand al-Jähiz's elaboration of the necessity of Imāma on intellectual grounds seems to have been adopted by the Rāfiḍa, but this of course does not imply that the two camps shared the same attitude to the role of 'aql in choosing the Imām, for this matter had been categorically rejected as the Rāfiḍa rejected man's role and ascribed that mission (of choosing and identifying the Imām) to God. His allusion to the implicit necessity of Imāmate by revelation could be viewed as planting the seeds for the argument of implicit text (al-Nass al-Khafi), and such a reasoning that is expressed in "al-Jawābat" and "al-ʿUthmāniyya," is significant in understanding the formative period of Islamic political justifications.

Equally related to the necessity of the institution is al-Jähiz's exaggerated zeal to place that necessity under the headship of the Abbāsids, to the unexpected level of subjecting a Prophetic ruling to his own political purposes and mixing it with mythology. This was reflected when al-Jähiz's belief in the "permanent nature" of the Caliphate made him describe the Abbāsid presence as a blessing to the community that had freed it from plagues. al-Jähiz states that the wheels of civilization have rested in the hands of the Abbāsids, who were the last inheritors (Ākhir man warithahā) of the moving cycle of human civilization.

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1626 Ibid., p. 24.
1627 Ibn Taymiyya refers to the controversy during Ibn Hanbal's time as to whether Abū Bakr's Imāmate had been based on the community's Ikhtyār or on Prophetic naṣṣ khafi. al-Jähiz's reasoning was linked to such discussions and it will not be too long before we hear the popularity of naṣṣ khafi among the Sunni (ex-ʿUthmāni) masses in response to its earlier use among the Imāmi Shiʿites (ex-Rawāfid), which proves that Sunnis eventually borrowed Shiʿi arguments or terminology. See Ibn Taymiyya's Fatāwā, 35: 47, and Watt's Formative, p. 225.
1628 i.e., that the Imāmate belongs (or belonged) to Quraysh.
1629 See al-Hayawān, 1: 75,85-86 and compare to Sharon Black Banners, p. 26 where reference to the ultimate nature of the Abbāsid dawla is made, i.e., the wheel has made its final turn with their accession. (Ibid., p. 24) before it is handed to Jesus, son of Mary. It must be noted here that Jähiz in no place expresses such an apocalyptic vision, i.e., he does not say that the Abbāsids are the final inheritors. So whether they were the last or final inheritors should be sought in al-Jähiz's attitude to the intellectual heritage of the world, of which he was a great admirer. See my M.A. thesis (al-Jähiz's views of Nations: An Exposé and a Critique, American University of Beirut, 1989). Consequently, one can assume from al-Jähiz's open mindedness and optimistic vision of human intellectual progress that later generations depend on earlier ones and the assertion that future generations will discover more than what has been disclosed to us, that he was (- after fully acknowledging the role of non-Arabic
It is obvious that neither al-Jāḥīz nor his contemporary Ibn Ḥanbal, who insisted that the caliphate must belong to Quraysh until the end of time, seriously considered the possibility - which later political theorists tackled - of a political vacuum when Qurayshites could lose that undisputed right.

2. Duties of the Imām

We have seen al-Jāḥīz in al-Jawābāt stressing the significance of the Imām for maintaining balance and equilibrium at the individual and social levels. Individually, the Imām’s presence is vital as man’s evil inclinations are best resisted in the case when the Imām’s exercise of Qisās (deterring measures) is put into practice. The Imām’s duty is hence to lead people to know their profane and religious interests, regularize their affairs and fight against corruption by resorting to various punishments (ascribing to criminals nicknames, threatening them with an extended imprisonment or exile to a foreign land, in addition to threatening them with eternal hell and loss of paradise).

In al-ʻUthmāniyya, al-Jāḥīz draws attention to the fact that the Imām is the one who is capable to collect Kharāj, fulfil prayers, protect the border cities (al-Thughūr) and implement God’s law.

The Imām’s duty to exercise Amr and Nahy reappears in al-Jāḥīz’s K. al-Hayawān, where targhib and tarhib are simultaneously recommended in view of the identical Divine measure that uses both policies for mankind. Such a concern for the exercise of Qisās is also touched on K. Ḥujaj al-Nubuwwa. Thus it is obvious that such a duty can be seen as a constant political doctrine in al-Jāḥīz’s thought.

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1630 See al-Jawābāt, Rasā’il, 4: 300-301.
1631 Ibid, 4: 288.
1632 Ibid. 4: 300.
1633 al-ʻUthmāniyya, p. 265.
1634 See al-Hayawān, 2: 87-88.
al-Jähiz has been consistently in favour of an ābāsid Imām from the Häshimi stock of Quraysh, a position that allowed him - for diplomatic purposes that are presented in a narrative approach - to also speak in favour of the equally Häshimi figures from the line of Abü Ťālib. Such a political formula has been uniformly maintained by our author so that the ābāsid superiority has never been allowed - apart for narration purposes - to be really eclipsed by their Häshimi cousins, the Alids.

Another feature of al-Jähiz's political thought is his insistence that the Imām must be al-afdal in all spheres. al-Jähiz's insistence on the excellence of the Imām has a two-fold significance. First, it appeals to the religious ideal of the exemplary model of the Prophet, who is quoted in al-‘Uthmāniyya by al-Jähiz as saying: 'Let the best among you lead you.' Second, choosing 'the best' among the potential candidates in every generation frees society from serious socio-political unrest, right from the very beginning, and solves the political issue from its roots. Any deflection from this appeal to objectively pick the most meritorious and establish the most excellent, would obviously set all members of the society towards corruption, division, jealousy and indecisiveness, as choosing any but the best would subject the post of the Imām to the greediness of the less deserving candidates, and such a competition for ascendency threatens the very unity of the Umma. Thus in "al-Jawābat" the ideal Imām is next to the Prophet in excellence and most resembles him. A package of religious and worldly virtues is given in "Maqālat al-Zaydiyya" (seniority of conversion to Islam, detachment from the world, war services and religious knowledge) and in "Faḍl Häshim" too, with the difference that al-Jähiz in the former treatises does not mention the factor of qarāba and appears to be opting for the factor of merit irrespective of the Imām's descent, something which he fully elaborates in "al- ‘Uthmāniyya", and this of course raises the question whether al-Jähiz was ‘Uthmāni throughout or may have given up his ‘Uthmānī-Bašran origin under the political pressures of his ābāsid patrons. It is difficult to answer this question but it is evident from al-Jähiz's literature that he ventured to work out a prudent compromise, so that his patrons could be portrayed as enjoying acquired merit besides their inherited faḍl. al-Jähiz's ideal view of the required Imām is beautifully described in "al-Ḥayawān" when he says:

A man rightly worthy of chieftainship and sovereignty (riḍa wa siyāda) is one who is the most perfect among his contemporaries, most outspokenly meritorious, and enjoys excellences in

1636 See al-‘Uthmāniyya, and ‘al-Jawābat', Rasā’il, 4: 303.
their totality, as long as each excellent virtue is equal to the other, such that no one virtue dominates him.1637

In "Kitab al Mu'allimin", the Imam's distinguished 'aql confirms the same quality mentioned in "al-Jawabat."1638 However, al-Jahiz's pro-Abbasiid position is explicitly unfolded in "al-Awtan" which proves his keenness to maintain the political formula outlined above (the superior rights of his Abbasiid patrons vis-à-vis those of the Alids.)

Moreover, the Imam must never be questioned as he should always be revered (Ta'swib, al-Hayawkn). Watt's and Crone's descriptions of the Sunni (Abbasiid) attempts to assume the very titles claimed by the Shiites have a considerable echo here,1639 and as we have shown above, al-Jahiz's portrait of the Imam was not completely a classical Sunni one, but had many Shi' features. In "Ta'swib" the Imam has the right to do whatever he thinks is best, even if his course of action may not be understood by his subjects, and in "K. al-Hayawkn" a defence of the caliphal measures confirms the same authoritarian image, i.e., the Imam's political course of action must never be questioned and he should always be obeyed. Obeying the Imam in "Hujaj al-Nubuwwa" is, however, subject to the Imam's lawful conduct.

As to the factor of qarába, al-Jahiz consistently stresses the privileged status of the Abbasiids (being the descendants of the Prophet's uncle) and this of course logically dilutes the idealism underlying al-Jahiz's several allusions to the superior excellences of the required Imam, of having to be al-afdal. In other words, a faḍl that for long may have been thought of being acquired, ends as being exclusively predestined by the hereditary factor of qarába (haqq al-Abbasiid) and hence the real faḍl cannot be voluntarily attained as it has to be divinely bestowed. This certainly defies the Mu'tazili notion of free choice (Istita'a) which al-Jahiz never dared to raise against the Abbasiid authorities. Perhaps al-Jahiz's concern was not to question Abbasiid legitimacy but simply aimed at offering guidance and hopefully contributing to the policy-making of his time.

Although al-Jahiz has been uncompromisingly opting for the best candidate for rulership (the most perfect man of all his community, intellectually and morally),

1637 al-Hayawkn, 2: 91.
1638 See al-Jawabat, Rasâ'il, 4: 305, and al-Mu'allimin, Ibid., 3: 45.
and can only accept *al-mafdul* for purposes of reiterating the Zaydi position, we find a peculiar passage in one treatise\textsuperscript{1640} that reflects a less ideal and more realistic attitude of accepting the existence of a less perfect Imam. For the first time we hear al-Jähiz speaking of the rule of an oppressive Imam (*al-Imám al-Jä’ir*) whose presence is justified by observing the welfare of his subjects - even if he is illegally claiming access to some financial gains and may be abolishing certain legal measures - his harm is always outweighed by his usefulness exactly like the rain that may damage some crops, but whose benefits are greater. Such a line of reasoning shows a change in al-Jähiz’s outlook, and strongly reminds us of how proto-Sunní Jurists\textsuperscript{1641} had been confronted with the obligation to defend Umayyad rule and its version of *mulk*, for the same social and legal reasons that have reappeared in the 6 Abbásid period. T. al-Khälidi has detected a line of Jähizian pessimism (in K. al-Burşân) but if we add to this source the small excerpt from *Dhamm al-Zamàn*\textsuperscript{1642} in which al-Jähiz is unusually critical of the conditions of his time, in addition to the critical attitude of al-Jähiz to the negative effects of the 6 Abbásid phenomenon of *al-Hijäb*,\textsuperscript{1643} we cannot definitely reject the possibility of a change in al-Jähiz’s pro-6 Abbásid enthusiasm, such that his assumed advisory role could have camouflaged a reformative al-Jähiz who was torn between the idealism of the golden era of Islam and the less ideal nature of the 6 Abbásid era which he has committed himself to defend.\textsuperscript{1644}

4. Modes of Accession

The 6 Abbásid concept of inherited *fadl* must have paved the way for supporting the Islamically highly non-recommendable and unjustified resort to rebellion against the Imam. But once the 6 Abbásids are settled, we find them employing *bay‘a* and the Sunní principle of *Ikhtiyär* to counteract their *Hāshimi* cousins in their equal claim to that inherited *fadl*.

\textsuperscript{1640} See Risāla fi al-Wukalā’, Rasā‘il, 4: 102.

\textsuperscript{1641} as reflected in the position of the Umayyad Murji‘a who are described by Watt as the forerunners of Sunnites. See Watt, *Formative*, p.128 and *Islamic Philosophy*, pp.23-24. They are said to have first propounded the theory of the accomplished fact in state affairs. See D. B. Macdonald in *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory* (London: George Routledge, 1915) pp.123-124.

\textsuperscript{1642} included in al-Sandübi’s *Rasā‘il al-Jähiz*, p. 310.

\textsuperscript{1643} See *Rasā‘il al-Jähiz*, (ed. of Härün, 2: 29-85, especially p. 69 where reference is made to viziers in al-Mutawakkil and al-Muntasir’s periods.)

If the outer shell of al-Jāḥīz’s justification of the ʿAbbāsids is the right of rebellion, (al-Nābita, al-ʿUthmāniyya) the backbone is the hereditary right (by the designation of the Prophet as in al-ʿAbbāsiyya) and the inner shell is the accession by election (Ikhtiyār as in al-ʿUthmāniyya). In al-ʿUthmāniyya, the designation of ʿUmar by Abū Bakr is not criticized as this would justify the hereditary succession of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs via the nominal electoral measure of bayʿa which is, however, carefully embellished by the recommendation that it must be solely exercised by the elite of the society (al-khāṣṣa), and never by the ignorant (ʿāmma).

Another mode of accession in al-ʿUthmāniyya is the way ʿUthmān was chosen by the shūrā council and also the way Abū Bakr was chosen. As regards shūrā, al-Jāḥīz’s view in the same work of the position of al-Zubayr which is represented as requesting another shūrā, evidently contradicts our authors’ view in “Taswīb” where the same demand for shūrā addressed to ʿAlī is categorically rejected on the ground that ʿAlī as a legal Imām enjoyed the same flexibility exhibited in Abū Bakr’s and ʿUmar’s ways of choosing an Imām and consequently ʿAlī was justified in his opposition to holding another shūrā (or even giving the impression that he was making one by apparently accepting arbitration). This is justified by al-Jāḥīz on the grounds that ʿUmar’s measure should not be taken as an obligatory precedent, since it was not applied by Abū Bakr nor required for all time by ʿUmar. Such a variation in al-Jāḥīz’s attitude to shūrā (was it obligatory on ʿAlī as the ʿUthmānids and Zubayrids maintain or was he exempted from it as in “Taswīb” against the wish of the Nābiti theologians who deemed it necessary) should not imply more than a provisional contradiction in al-Jāḥīz’s historiographic exposition; for the Nābita in "Taswīb" are the ʿUthmānids in "al-ʿUthmāniyya", except that al-Jāḥīz had praised them in the latter source to silence the Rāfīḍa and criticised them in "Taswīb" in order that their Umayyad head (Mufāwiya) should be eclipsed by ʿAlī.

1645 Once again Sunni politics is dressed in Shiʿi terminology i.e., the assertion that the issue of choosing the Imām has been Divinely solved via the Prophetic designation, without carrying this however to the extent of expecting raj’a of the designated Imām.

1646 This is another doctrinal constant in al-Jāḥīz’s political dictionary and one which merits further research i.e., how the Muʿtazila had constantly taken a negative attitude to the masses as being the group that was blatantly ignorant of the significance of Imāma (see al-Jawābät and Maqālāt al-Zaydiyya). Only in K. al-ʿUthmāniyya and K. al-Ḥayawān is their role rehabilitated since although in the former work they are held responsible for the Umayyad tyrannical rule they are then credited with helping the ʿAbbāsid elite. In K. al-Ḥayawān and al-Bayān there is genuine Jāḥīzian concern to lead them away from superstition and Shuʿubi propaganda, and this of course reveals a development in al-Jāḥīz’s thought.
Another constant in al-Jāḥiz’s political thought is the flexibility in the ways of choosing a caliph, which he elaborates in "al-Ṣūḥābiyya" and bases on the anti-Raﬁḍi argument that the very silence of revelation on the specific modes of setting or specifying a candidate is reflective of the Divine wisdom that has kept this matter open and flexible. al-Jāḥiz will use this argument again in "Taşwib" to silence the pro-Umayyad Nābita (and ʿUthmānid) in accusing ʿAlī of deflecting from ʿUmar’s course of shūrā as this measure, al-Jāḥiz says, needs not to be universally applied by all caliphs.

5. Destitution of Imāms

Although al-Jāḥiz was consistently pro-ʿAbbāsid this did not prevent him from expounding the right to revolt against the tyrant Imām. This right is acknowledged in many Jāḥizian works such as "al-Ṣūḥābiyya," "al-Nābita", and "Faḍl Ḥāšim", but the significant thing here is that it is acknowledged once and for good i.e., as a privilege that had been used by the ʿAbbāsids in the past and never after them as if it had expired in time, (against the position of the militant Zaydiyya and Khawārij). The basic drawback in such a justification lies in licensing it for one group, that is expected to rule until the end of time and hence in denying it to all other groups. Here al-Jāḥiz may be politically justified but such double standards do confirm that at least during al-Jāḥiz’s time, political thinkers put great emphasis on the point of legitimacy (criteria of assuming Imāmate, qualifications, conditions and manner of accession) such that they were much more concerned in the manner in which rulership must be acquired than with the manner in which it ought to be exercised. Closing the door to revolution after the ʿAbbāsids seized power is the same as affixing legitimacy to a specific family that overestimates its genealogical kinship to the Prophet and regards it as an exclusive privilege that permanently restricts the politico-religious office to their side. This line of dynastic reasoning must have pre-supposed the infallible nature of the ʿAbbāsid line and this of course - with time - must have initiated a shift in concentration among political thinkers in Islam from the criteria and manner in which rulership was to be acquired to the way it had to be exercised. In al-Jāḥiz’s time that was still early, and as B. Lewis says, "during the religious and political struggles of the early centuries of Islamic history, legitimacy became a burning issue," whose flames must have screened any

1647 The Khārijī influence on al-Jāḥiz’s thought has been studied by Pellat in Le Milieu Basrien and in Études sur l’Histoire under "Djāḥiz et les Khāridjites," pp. 195-209.
fruitful attempt to devise and determine a long term checking mechanism over caliphal misconduct, which thus postponed the treatment of another issue i.e., when the ruler forfeits his right to legitimate governship and claim to unconditional obedience,\textsuperscript{1649} thus opening the door for an indefinite number of rebellions.\textsuperscript{1649} al-Jāḥīz’s acknowledgement of the duty to withdraw such obedience (as in al-Nābīta, and al-ḤUthmāniyya) remains a two-edged sword in the arbitrary way it had exclusively licensed it to the ṢAbbāsids and forbidden it to the other parties.

6. Number of Imāms (Unity of Caliphal post)

We have seen al-Jāḥīz adamantly opposing those parties that accepted the existence of more than one caliph at one time, in his treatise "al-Jawābāt", and in "K. al-ḤUthmāniyya" and later in "K. al-Nisā’." al-Jāḥīz’s fondness for the most meritorious is closely tied to his belief in the unity of the caliphal post. A multitude of Imāms is categorically rejected, as it dilutes the charismatic criterion of the most fit within the context of a chaotic situation involving poorly qualified candidates who achieve the post of Imām despite their low qualities. Such a competition is usually accompanied by jealousy and discord and threatens the very unity of the Umma:

To confine the Imāma to one Imām is just like confining sovereignty to the sovereign. If freedom from competition for power is observed, unity of opinion and mutual harmony follows, and the community’s welfare is established; for it is now based on Jama’a (union), and it is only with union that enemies vanish, and passions or evil temptations are alienated.\textsuperscript{1650}

This consistency in al-Jāḥīz’s positions which has a religious basis should not hide his pro-ṢAbbāsid worries on the danger of those separatist movements that were occurring in the ṢAbbāsid lands, especially after the Marwānī Umayyads had succeeded in establishing an independent Emirate in Spain, which gave a precedent for all revolutionaries and political activists in previously ṢAbbāsid-controlled lands to act likewise, such as areas in North Africa and Yemen. However feasible those unnamed parties\textsuperscript{1651} try to make the multiplicity of Imāms, al-Jāḥīz consistently rejected their harmful thesis.

\textsuperscript{1649} See B. Lewis’s reference to the absence of a legal procedure or apparatus set up for enforcing the law against the ruler, in Revolution In The Middle East, p. 33, and The Political Language of Islam, p. 94.

\textsuperscript{1650} Risāla fi al-Nisā', Rasā’il, 3: 151.

\textsuperscript{1651} Pellat and H. Yehyā Mohamed suggest that they could be Zaydis or Khārijis, see Pellat, "L’Imāmat", p. 39, and H. Yehyā, “La theorie de l’Imāmat”, p. 47.
5 - Concluding Remarks

The above research has aimed to establish a more objective understanding of al-Jāḥīz’s controversial political thoughts. I say controversial because of the difficulties incurred by readers of al-Jāḥīz’s literature in their attempt to draw the lines between al-Jāḥīz’s own view and al-Jāḥīz’s quoted views. al-Jāḥīz was even misunderstood in his own age to the extent that we have heard him reproving his addressee in his preface to "K. al-Ḥayawān" for mistakenly accusing him of leaving his Muʿtazili circles and joining the Zaydi camp, and exchanging a moderate attitude to the Shiʿi cause for an extremist one, and for assuming him to be a Zaydi, a ʿUthmāni, a Rāfīḍī and a Ghāli pretender simply because he has committed himself to narrating the Zaydi, ʿUthmāni, Rāfīḍī or Ghāli theses1652 respectively.

Chronologically, al-Jāḥīz has already reminded his readers in al-ʿUthmāniyya that he is neither a ʿUthmāni nor a Rāfīḍī, but is simply writing their diverse views as an objective narrator. The same observation is made in the treatise "Taṣwīb ʿAlī", where the addressee is reminded that al-Jāḥīz is again acting in the balanced way passed to him via his Muʿtazili teachers, and that he should not be mistaken for being a ʿUmari without being a ʿAlawi or a ʿUthmāni as there is nothing that prevents him from being a ʿUthmāni (ʿUmari) who equally holds respect for the house of the Prophet (al-ʿIlta).1653

Despite these announcements, al-Jāḥīz’s style seems to have continued to confuse his contemporaries. Ibn Qutayba, who comes from the circles of Ḥadīth and lacked al-Jāḥīz’s pluralistic vision of adab is one such example. His verdict on al-Jāḥīz’s aims, which is not free from the hatred between the Muʿtazila and ahl al-Ḥadīth, is an example of the tendency to misunderstand and caricature him in the eyes of posterity.1654

Other contemporary examples were al-Iskāfi and Ibn al-Riwandi whose Zaydi/Rāfīḍī obsession led to a misunderstanding of al-Jāḥīz’s "al-ʿUthmāniyya" and other seemingly anti-Alid works.

1653 See Taṣwīb, parag. 73.
Our task of understanding al-Jāḥīz basically rests on setting aside any preconceived classification of al-Jāḥīz (be it Shi`i or Sunni) and is solely dependent on an objective textual examination of al-Jāḥīz’s literature and a study of the overall politico-religious context in which he operated. This task has sometimes necessitated seeing al-Jāḥīz through the eyes of his adversaries (like Ibn al-Riwandi) in order to fulfil the no less difficult task of chronologically reconstructing al-Jāḥīz’s political literature, which I hope has been successful and helpful in reaching a more accurate exposition and understanding of al-Jāḥīz’s controversial political output and thought, by unveiling the pluralistic vision of *adab* introduced by al-Jāḥīz into the realm of classical Arabic literature, which in effect mirrors the pluralistic and cosmopolitan nature of ʿAbbāsid society itself and provides us with a firsthand knowledge of the political realities of the time, thanks to al-Jāḥīz’s undeniable tolerance of “the other view,” however antagonistic it may be.\(^{1655}\)

It would be really useful to suggest in this concluding section that future studies on al-Jāḥīz should continue our attempt to analyse the influence of the Islamic background on political discussions, an influence that must have moulded al-Jāḥīz’s political thought (i.e., since the question of *Imāma* was raised, after taking into consideration the various contributing elements: Prophetic, Rāshidi, Umawi, Shāfiʿi, Ḥanbali, ʿUthmānī, Muʿtazili, Zaydi, Rāfiʿi, Khāriji, ʿAbbāsi, etc.), and complementing it with a more thorough investigation of al-Jāḥīz’s immediate and long-term impact on medieval political thinking and early Muslim historiography.

We could establish a current of mutual influence running between al-Jāḥīz, ʿAbbāsid society and his contemporaries; this is evident whether we see al-Jāḥīz’s "Uthmāniyya" as being mostly addressed to the Rāfida, or see the work "al-Nābita" addressed to the cult of Muʿawiya; or whether we judge "Taṣwīb ʿAlī" as being targeted against the Khawārij, whose revolts were threatening the unity of the caliphate, and whose military danger is carefully highlighted in ‘*Manāqib al Turk*’ where the generals of al-Maʾmūn are quoted as assessing their military might as being second only to the Turks, bearing in mind the numerous doctrinal similarities

\(^{1655}\) See my M.A. Thesis (*al-Jāḥīz’s View of Nations: An Exposé and a Critique*) which reflects al-Jāḥīz’s exceptional capacity to acknowledge the virtues (and even criticize the vices) of other nations besides his.
between the Khawārij and the Muʿtazili al-Jāhiz.\textsuperscript{1656} The same current is detected if al-Jāhiz’s treatise "Fakhr al-Sūdān ʿalā al-Bīṭān"\textsuperscript{1657} is believed to have aimed at calming down the growing anger of the Sūdānī underprivileged communities which, however, was not successful as the Zanj revolution erupted in Bāṣra, in the very birthplace and final home of our author in 255/869, a few months after his death there, as if their revolution had started from where al-Jāhiz had left them in the extant works "Fakhr al-Sūdān" and "K. al-Bukhalā" that may be viewed as echoing the shouts for equality by the socio-culturally marginalized communities.

Thanks to al-Jāhiz’s pluralistic vision of the function of adab, which has enabled us to use his politico-social allusions as a very valuable informative source\textsuperscript{1658} that mirrors the social, ideological and political realities of his time at a critical stage of its development, we may be allowed to add al-Jāhiz’s special brand of political literature to the well established Islamic sources on Medieval political thought, history and historiography.

Perhaps the value of al-Jāhiz’s political thought lies in its capacity to offer us a first-hand knowledge of an early proto-Sunnī-proto-Shīʿī polemic on the question of succession that may have been basically triggered by the introduction of Sabaʿiyya, ghuluww notions and autocratic Persian polity into Dār al-Islām; an introduction that made the predecessors of Sunnites and Shīʿites intra and interactive in the sense of having to define their (incompatible) criteria of succession and

\textsuperscript{1656} In short, the common delight in the element of merit has already been highlighted in many of al-Jāhiz’s works. al-Jāhiz’s critical view of the last six years of ʿUthmān could be taken to reflect a Khārījī impact on him (as in Taṣwīb). Basing a revolution on Imkān is another similarity (as in al-ʿUthmānīyya). His admiration of their rhetorical capacities, however, does not make him to forget to alert his patrons to their military threat (as in K. al-Bayān, Manāqib al-Turk and K. al-Awtān).

\textsuperscript{1657} See my forthcoming article entitled “al-Jāhiz’s Anthropological Endeavour: An analytical study of his views on Coloured people” (al-Sūdān); proceedings of the Fifth Biennial Conference of the School of ʿAbbāsid Studies, BRISMES, St. Andrews, 26-31 July, 1993. I have demonstrated here that this work can safely be assumed to have been written after the third volume of the recent edition of K. al-Ḥayawān i.e., after the year 233, which implies that it is one of al-Jāhiz’s later works.

\textsuperscript{1658} As we have outlined above, al-Jāhiz’s pro-ʿAbbāsidism could be used to shed light on the current political attitudes and ideologies of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate and society and the latest version of the criteria for political power that legitimized their rule (al-Jāhiz survived eleven ʿAbbāsid caliphs). The growing influence of the pro-Umayyad Nābīta was reflected in al-Jāhiz’s works, noting the stricter official attitude towards them in the two eras studied. Similarly, al-Jāhiz’s allusions to the Shiʿa of his time (Zaydis, Rāfiḍis, Ghulāt) and the absence of any Jāhizīan reference to a fully developed Imāmīte teaching, could be used to shed light on the highly controversial issue of their development and transformation from the Proto-Shiʿīte to the Pre-Imāmīte state, given that al-Jāhiz survived the eleventh Shiʿī ʿImām, al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskari (both are said to have died in the period between 250-260/864-874).
respective positions to *ahl al-bayt al-nabawi*, on the basis of the very different lines of *ghuluww* or *ftidāl*¹⁶⁵⁹ that had already been adopted by them.

such as - for example - has been examined above in our study of *Maqālat al-Zaydiyya*, *K. al-Uthmāniyya*, *al-ʿAbbāsiyya*, *Taṣwīb All*, *Kitāb al-Tarbiʿ*, *Fadilat al-Muʿtazila*. This does not deny that there were notable instances that had accidentally brought both camps together such as when the Umayyad Walid II and equally the ʿAbbāsids assumed Shiʿite prerogatives, and when the ʿAbbāsids claimed legitimacy from Ibn al-Ḥanafīyya's followers, or when al-Maʿmūn was attracted by the Zaydiyya (of al-Jāḥīz) or when he was about to fall prey to the pro-Alid ṭāffiḍī thesis that his Alid cousins had been enjoying an exclusively unique access to gnostic knowledge that the ʿAbbāsids lacked. Jāḥīzian treatises as *Maqālat al-Zaydiyya*, *Taṣwīb All* and even *K. al-Uthmāniyya* furnish the researcher with ample evidence on genuine points of meeting and attempts of reconciliation between the two sides.
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