

# Ibrāhīm al-Naḥaī (Kufan, d. 96/714)

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## Abstract

Ibrāhīm al-Naḥaī (d. 96/714) was the most prominent Follower (*tābiʿī*) in the Kufan legal tradition, also prominent in the areas of hadith transmission, koranic commentary, and piety. Later adherents of both hadith and *raʿy* cited his opinions as authoritative precedents. Presumptively, most quotations of him give us the gist of what he said, not his very words; an undetermined proportion of quotations represents not recollection of his positions but positions someone thought he surely must have taken, if asked.

## Keywords

Ibrāhīm al-Naḥaī, Kufa, hadith, Koran, *raʿy*, piety, renunciation, *zuhd*

## Résumé

Ibrāhīm al-Naḥaī (m. 96/714) fut le plus important Épigone (*tābiʿī*) de la tradition légale de Kūfa, mais il fut tout aussi important dans les domaines de la transmission du *ḥadīth*, du commentaire coranique et de la piété. Aussi bien les traditionnistes que les tenants du *raʿy* mentionnèrent ses opinions comme des exemples faisant autorité. Nous pouvons présumer que la plupart des citations de lui nous donne les grandes lignes de ce qu'il aurait dit, mais non les mots eux-mêmes. Une quantité encore indéterminée de ces citations constitue non un témoignage de ses positions, mais les positions d'un individu qui pensait qu'Ibrāhīm al-Naḥaī les aurait sans doute approuvées.

## Mots clefs

Ibrāhīm al-Naḥaī, Koufa, hadith, Coran, *raʿy*, piété, renoncement, *zuhd*

Ibrāhīm b. Yazīd al-Naḥā'ī was the most prominent Follower (*tābi'ī*) in the Kufan legal tradition, also prominent in the areas of hadith transmission, kuranic commentary, and piety.<sup>1</sup> He is usually referred to in primary sources simply as "Ibrāhīm," often as "Ibrāhīm al-Naḥā'ī," occasionally as "al-Naḥā'ī." The last is nonetheless what Fuat Sezgin and the editors of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* have chosen as his *urf*. A short version of this article will appear in the third edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. It is my first purpose here simply to show more fully the evidentiary basis of what is said there.

## 1 Life

Ibn Sa'd and Ḥalīfa b. Ḥayyāt give his name as Abū 'Imrān Ibrāhīm b. Yazīd b. al-Aswad b. 'Amr b. Rabī'a.<sup>2</sup> However, his grandfather's name appears in some later sources as Qays.<sup>3</sup> Abū 'Ubayda (probably b. 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd, d. after 80/699-700) asserted that he was among the *mawālī*; i.e. clients of non-Arab ancestry.<sup>4</sup> Al-Naḥā'ī refers to the Naḥā' tribe of Yemen, which settled in Kufa. In *Sīyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, although not in *Ta'riḥ al-islām*, al-Ḍahabī (d. 748/1348 or 753/1352-1353) gives his *nisba* as *al-Yamānī tumma l-Kūfī*, raising the possibility (but no more) that he was born in Yemen, then transferred to Kufa.<sup>5</sup> There is also some disagreement over his mother. Early sources identify her as Mulayka bt Qays, sister to 'Alqama b. Qays (Kufan *muḥaḍram*, d. 62/681-682), whereas

- 1 For a good list of biographies, see al-Ḍahabī, *Ta'riḥ al-islām*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī, Beirut, Dār al-kitāb al-'arabī, 1407/1987-1421/2000, 52 vols, VI [81-100 H], p. 279 n. See also Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1996, I [*Qur'ānwissenschaften, ḥadīth, Geschichte, Fiqh, Dogmatik, Mystik. Bis ca. 430 H*], p. 403-404; Muḥammad Rawwās al-Qal'a'gī, *Mawsū'at fiqh Ibrāhīm al-Naḥā'ī*, Mecca, Markaz al-Baḥṭ al-'ilmī wa-ihyā' al-turāṭ al-islāmī ("Silsilat mawsū'āt fiqh al-salaf," 8), 1399/1979, 2 vols; repr. Beirut, Dār al-nafā'is, 1406/1986, p. 13-220; and Ḥalīd Ḥalīfa l-Sa'd, *Tafsīr al-Naḥā'ī*, Cairo, Maktabat Wahba, 1428/2007, p. 19-112.
- 2 Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, eds Eduard Sachau et al., Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1904-1940, 15 vols, VI, p. 188 = *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1957-1968, 9 vols, VI, p. 270; Ḥalīfa b. Ḥayyāt, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār, Damascus, Wizārat al-ṭaqāfa, 1967<sup>2</sup>; Beirut, Dār al-fikr, 1414/1993, p. 265.
- 3 Notably al-Mizzī, *Tahḍīb al-Kamāl fī asmā' al-riḡāl*, ed. Baššār 'Awwād Ma'rūf, Beirut, Mu'assasat al-risāla, 1402/1982-1413/1992, 35 vols, II, p. 233, and Ibn Ḥaḡar, *Kitāb Tahḍīb al-Tahḍīb*, Hyderabad, Maḡlis dā'irat al-ma'ārif al-nizāmiyya, 1325/1907-1327/1909, 12 vols, I, p. 177.
- 4 Ḥalīfa b. Ḥayyāt, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, p. 266. See also Josef van Ess, *Theology and Society in the Second and Third Centuries of the Hijra*, transl. John O'Kane, Leiden-Boston, Brill ("Handbuch der Orientalistik. Section one, The Near and Middle East," 116), 2017-, 4 vols to date, I, p. 184.
- 5 Al-Ḍahabī, *Sīyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, ed. Šu'ayb al-Arna'ūt, Beirut, Mu'assasat al-risāla, 1401/1981-1409/1988, 25 vols, IV, p. 520.

al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341) and others say Mulayka bt Yazīd, sister to al-Aswad b. Yazīd (Kufan, d. 75/694-695?) and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Yazīd (Kufan, d. 82/701?), all prominent traditionists.<sup>6</sup>

Early sources agree that Ibrāhīm died in Kufa in 96/714-715. Ibn Sa’d more-over quotes al-Faḍl b. Dukayn (Kufan, d. 219/834?), “I asked Ibrāhīm’s daughter about his death. She said it was after the death of al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ by four or five months. It was as if he died at the beginning of 96 (autumn 714).”<sup>7</sup> (Al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ died Ramaḍān 95/May-June 714.) On the other hand, there is considerable disagreement over his birth date. Reports of his age when he died range from 46 to 60, implying a birth date between the years 36/656 and 50/671 inclusive.<sup>8</sup> He is also said to have died in 95/713-714, seemingly to accommodate wide-spread reports that he died in hiding from al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ, which would require an earlier date.<sup>9</sup>

Abū Qays (‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ṭarwān, Kufan, d. 120/737-738) recalled seeing Ibrāhīm as a shaven, one-eyed (*a‘war*) youth.<sup>10</sup> Al-A‘maš (Kufan client, d. 148/765?) said, “I used to come at Ibrāhīm on the side of his good eye, trying to make it easy for him. When someone came to him on the side of his other eye, he would twist himself toward him, which was hard on him.”<sup>11</sup> He was evidently widowed at least once, for the minor Kufan traditionist Abū l-Hayṭam is quoted as saying,

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- 6 Al-Fasawī, *Kitāb al-Ma‘rifā wa-l-ta‘rīḥ*, ed. Akram Ḍiyā’ al-‘Umarī, Medina, Maktabat al-dār, 1410/1989-1990<sup>3</sup>, 4 vols, II, p. 644-645; III, p. 216-217; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-Tiqāt*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mu‘īd Ḥān, Hyderabad, Maṭba‘at dā‘irat al-ma‘ārif al-‘uṭmāniyya, 1393/1973-1403/1983, 7 vols, IV, p. 8-9; al-Mizzī, *Tahḏīb al-Kamāl fi asmā’ al-riḡāl*, II, p. 234.
- 7 Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 199; ed. Dār Ṣādir, VI, p. 284.
- 8 Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 199; ed. Dār Ṣādir, VI, p. 284; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Kitāb al-‘Ilal wa-ma‘rifat al-riḡāl*, ed. Waṣī Llāh b. Muḥammad ‘Abbās, Beirut, al-Maktab al-islāmī, 1988, 4 vols, III, p. 492 = ed. Muḥammad Ḥusām Bayḏūn, Beirut, Mu‘assasat al-kutub al-ṭaqāfiyya, 1410/1990, 2 vols, II/2, p. 281; Yaḥyā b. Ma‘īn, *Mawsū‘at aqwāl Yaḥyā b. Ma‘īn*, ed. Baššār ‘Awwād Ma‘rūf, Gihād Muḥammad Ḥalil and Maḥmūd Muḥammad Ḥalil, Tunis, Dār al-ḡarb al-islāmī, 1430/2009, 5 vols, I, p. 177; Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Tiqāt*, IV, p. 8, 9.
- 9 Ibn Ḥibbān says he died in 95/713-714 or 96/714-715, although also that this was four months after the death of al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ: Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Tiqāt*, IV, p. 8. Although 96/714-715 is the only year he gives, al-Buḥārī quotes Šu‘ayb (b. al-Ḥabḥāb, Basran client, d. 130/747-748?) as saying expressly, “Ibrāhīm died in hiding in the days of al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ, so we buried him by night”: al-Buḥārī, *Kitāb al-Ta‘rīḥ al-kabūr*, Hyderabad, Maṭba‘at dā‘irat al-ma‘ārif al-niẓāmiyya, 1941-1945, 8 vols; repr. Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmiyya, n.d., 9 vols, I, p. 334.
- 10 Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 61, 190; ed. Dār Ṣādir, VI, p. 91, 273; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-‘Ilal*, ed. ‘Abbās, I, p. 145; ed. Bayḏūn, I, p. 76.
- 11 Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-‘Ilal*, ed. ‘Abbās, III, p. 383; ed. Bayḏūn, II, p. 235.

Ibrāhīm dictated to me his will (*awṣā ilayya*). He had with him something belonging to his first wife. He ordered me to give it to her heirs. I said to him, “Did you not tell me that she had given it to you?” He said, “She gave it to me when she was ill [*i.e.* on her deathbed].” He therefore ordered me to give it to her heirs and I gave it to them.<sup>12</sup>

Apropos of women’s going to mosques, al-A‘maš says of Ibrāhīm, “He had three wives (*niswa*), none of whom prayed in the neighbourhood mosque.”<sup>13</sup> One of them, probably the last, was named Hunayda.<sup>14</sup> A son named Abān is quoted by al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) in his Koran commentary apropos of Kor 2, 180, while another named Ġiyāt is excoriated in later hadith literature.<sup>15</sup> Two daughters figure in stories of his death illness and what he allowed as to personal ornaments.<sup>16</sup> Ḥālid b. Salama al-Maḥzūmī (Kufan, d. 132/750) said, “If you saw Ibrāhīm al-Naḥa’ī, you saw a man who could not pronounce Arabic (*lahḥān*),” or at least ignored case endings.<sup>17</sup> Al-A‘maš recalled that he campaigned in Rayy in the time of al-Ḥaġġāġ (suppressing Ḥārīgī rebels?).<sup>18</sup> This is confirmed by a quotation whereby Ibrāhīm said he had come across suspect infidel cheese in al-Ġibāl, the region of Rayy.<sup>19</sup> Whether or not he received a veteran’s stipend, he could be needy, for ‘Aṭā’ b. al-Sā’ib (Kufan, d. 136/753-754)

12 Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 198; ed. Dār Šādir, I, p. 283.

13 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A‘zamī, Johannesburg, Maġlis ‘ilmī (“Min manšūrāt al-maġlis al-‘ilmī,” 39), 1390/1970-1392/1972, 11 vols, III, p. 150-151. On the right of women to go to the mosque, most resisted in Kufa, see Christopher Melchert, “Whether to Keep Women Out of the Mosque,” in *Authority, Privacy and Public Order in Islam: Proceedings of the 22nd Congress of l’Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants*, eds Barbara Michalak-Pikulska and Andrzej Pikulski, Leuven-Paris-Dudley, Peeters (“Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta,” 148), 2006, p. 59-69, esp. p. 60-61.

14 Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 192; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 276; Ibn Abī Šayba, *Kitāb al-Muṣannaf*, ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥālīq Ḥān al-Afġānī, Hyderabad, al-Maṭba‘a l-‘Azīziyya, 1386/1966 (1) and Bombay, al-Dār al-salafiyya, n.d.-1403/1983 (II-XV), 15 vols, I, p. 45 = eds Ḥamad ‘Abd Allāh al-Ġum’a and Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Luḥaydān, Riyadh, Maktabat al-rušd, 1425/2004, 16 vols, I, p. 85.

15 Al-Qal’aġī, *Mawsū‘at fiqh Ibrāhīm al-Naḥa’ī*, I, p. 125-126, citing for Ġiyāt al-Ḍahabī, *Mizān al-‘tidāl*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Biġāwī, Cairo, ‘Īsā l-Bābī l-Ḥalabī, 1382-/1962-, 4 vols, III, p. 337-338.

16 Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 198; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 283; Ibn Abī Šayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. al-Afġānī, VIII, p. 421; eds al-Ġum’a and al-Luḥaydān, VIII, p. 308.

17 Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-‘Ilal*, ed. ‘Abbās, I, p. 347; ed. Baydūn, I, p. 137.

18 Yahyā b. Ma‘īn, *Mawsū‘at aqwāl Yahyā b. Ma‘īn*, I, p. 178.

19 Ibn Abī Šayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. al-Afġānī, VIII, p. 285, 287; eds al-Ġum’a and al-Luḥaydān, VIII, p. 207, 209. For the legal problem, see Michael Cook, “Magian Cheese: An Archaic Problem in Islamic Law,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 47 (1984), p. 449-467.

recalled, "We twice begged for Ibrāhīm."<sup>20</sup> But Fuḍayl b. 'Amr (Kufan, d. 110/728-729) describes the procedure he would follow before flogging his slave, indicating something else than abject poverty.<sup>21</sup> (To be sure, the contemporary definition of poverty did not preclude such ownership: Ibrāhīm himself is quoted for the opinion that a man may receive *zakāt* who owns a house and a slave.<sup>22</sup>) An evident freedman of his, Sulaymān b. Yusaʿr, became a minor traditionist.<sup>23</sup> Ibrāhīm reportedly rented some uncultivated land for a term, paying gold or silver, suggesting that he sometimes practised agriculture.<sup>24</sup>

## 2 Politics and Theology

Several stories testify that Ibrāhīm did not avoid military and political authorities. Al-A'maš said,

Ḥayṭama (b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Kufan, d. 80/699-700?) said to me, "Do you go to Ibrāhīm to sit in the great mosque along with officials and police (*al-'arīf wa-l-šuraṭī*)?" I mentioned that to Ibrāhīm, who said, "I prefer sitting in the mosque with officials and police to withdrawing and having the people accuse us of heresy (*ra'ḡyahwī*)."<sup>25</sup>

By another account, al-A'maš said, "Ibrāhīm would sit with the *'urafā'* and *manākib* or *aḥlāt* (clan leaders). Ḥayṭama said to him, 'You sit with those?' He said, 'Yes. They talk about what they please and we talk about what we please.'<sup>26</sup> He is even said to have sought them out. Ibn 'Awn ('Abd Allāh, Basran, d. 150/767-768?) said, "Ibrāhīm would go to the authorities (*sultān*) and ask them for prizes."<sup>27</sup> Al-Ḥasan b. 'Amr ('Umar) al-Fuqaymī (Kufan, d. 142/759-760) said that Ibrāhīm al-Naḥā'ī would buy a goose, fatten it, and give it to

20 Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-'Ital*, ed. 'Abbās, II, p. 191; ed. Bayḍūn, I, p. 264.

21 Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 194; ed. Dār Ṣādir, VI, p. 277. He defends himself for having sold a slave girl whose mother he owned in a story from 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, VIII, p. 308-309.

22 Al-Šaybānī, *Kitāb al-Aṣl*, ed. Mehmet Boynukalın, Beirut, Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1433/2012, 13 vols, II, p. 125; Ibn Abī Šayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. al-Afḡānī, III, p. 179; eds al-Ġum'a and al-Luḥayḍān, IV, p. 290.

23 Ibn Ḥaḡar, *Tahḏīb al-Tahḏīb*, IV, p. 230-231.

24 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, VIII, p. 94.

25 Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 191; ed. Dār Ṣādir, VI, p. 273, alluding to heretics who would not pray behind tyrants.

26 Yahyā b. Ma'īn, *Mawsū'at aqwāl Yahyā b. Ma'īn*, I, p. 176, 178.

27 Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 193; ed. Dār Ṣādir, VI, p. 277.

the princes.<sup>28</sup> (Such inadequate reciprocity would have shown precisely that Ibrāhīm understood his unpayable debt to the rulers.) Zuhayr b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Azdī (d. 63/683), then governor of Hulwan, had him borne on a horse, bedecked with robes, and given 1,000 dirhams.<sup>29</sup> Maṣṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir (Kufan, d. 132/749-750) or Ibrāhīm b. Muhāğir (Kufan) or both of them said that he requested and received a prize from Ibn al-Aṣṭar (d. 72/691), a general loyal to the Zubayrids and active around Kufa in the Second Civil War.<sup>30</sup>

Later in life, however, he seems to have kept away from political authorities. He delayed for twenty days when Ḥawṣab b. Yazīd al-Šaybānī summoned him, for which he was whipped twenty lashes.<sup>31</sup> Alternatively, he was whipped at the command of Ḥawṣab b. al-ʿAwwām (probably the same person, here said to be al-Ḥağğāğ's chief of police) 150 lashes.<sup>32</sup> He did not take part in the rebellion of Ibn al-Ašʿat, 802 or 803/699-702.<sup>33</sup> At some point, the governor of Iraq al-Ḥağğāğ ordered Ibrāhīm's arrest. Ibrāhīm al-Naḥāʿī hid, whereas Ibrāhīm b. Yazīd al-Taymī (d. 92/710-711) went to prison and died there.<sup>34</sup> By another account, Ibrāhīm al-Taymī accepted his arrest knowing that he had been mistaken for al-Naḥāʿī.<sup>35</sup> Ibrāhīm approved of cursing al-Ḥağğāğ and wept for joy or performed a prostration of thanks on being informed of his death.<sup>36</sup> Both he and al-Ḥasan (Baṣran client, d. 110/728) are said to have allowed the direct transfer of *zakāt*, hiding it from the ruler.<sup>37</sup>

At the intersection of politics with theology, an Abū l-Minğāb al-Baṣrī said, "A man used to come to Ibrāhīm al-Naḥāʿī to learn from him [...]. He asked

28 Al-Fasawī, *al-Maʿrifā wa-l-taʾrīḥ*, II, p. 609-610.

29 Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 193; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 277.

30 Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 193; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 277.

31 Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 196; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 280. Ḥawṣab b. Yazīd is probably to be identified with the Ḥawṣab b. Ruwaym al-Šaybānī appointed governor of Kufa by ʿAbd al-Malik, probably in the late 70s/690s, for which see Ḥalifa b. Ḥayyāt, *al-Taʾrīḥ*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār, Damascus, Wizārat al-Ṭaqāfa ("Iḥyāʾ al-turāt al-qadīm," 19), 1968, 2 vols, I, p. 385.

32 Abū l-ʿArab, *Kitāb al-Miḥan*, ed. Yahyā Wuhayb al-Ġabūrī, Beirut, Dār al-ğarb al-islāmī, 1403/1983, p. 399.

33 Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-ʿIlal*, ed. ʿAbbās, II, p. 301; ed. Bayḍūn, I, p. 301; al-Fasawī, *al-Maʿrifā wa-l-taʾrīḥ*, I, p. 237.

34 Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-ʿIlal*, ed. ʿAbbās, I, p. 137; ed. Bayḍūn, I, p. 74-75.

35 Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 199; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 285.

36 Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 195; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 279-280; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-ʿIlal*, ed. ʿAbbās, III, p. 490; ed. Bayḍūn, II, p. 280; al-Buḥārī, *al-Taʾrīḥ al-awsat*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Luḥayḍān, Riyadh, Dār al-Šumayʿī ("Silsilat kutub al-tawārīḥ wa-l-tarağğim," 2), 1418/1998, 2 vols, I, p. 366; al-Fasawī, *al-Maʿrifā wa-l-taʾrīḥ*, III, p. 111.

37 Ibn Abī Šayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. al-Afğānī, III, p. 158; eds al-Ġumʿa and al-Luḥayḍān, IV, p. 256.

Ibrāhīm al-Naḥāī about that [disagreements over the matter of ‘Alī and ‘Uṭmān]. He said, ‘I am neither a Sabalī nor a Murǧī.’”<sup>38</sup> “Sabalī” is presumably a corruption of “Saba’ī,” referring to an extreme Shi‘ī, while “Murǧī” probably refers to someone who will not choose between ‘Uṭmān and ‘Alī.<sup>39</sup> According to his disciple Muǧīra b. Miqsam (blind Kufan client, d. 136/753-754?), Ibrāhīm told someone, “I prefer ‘Alī to Abū Bakr and ‘Umar (*‘Alī aḥabbu ilayya*), but if ‘Alī heard your talk, he would hurt your back. If you will sit with us to bring up this, do not sit with us.”<sup>40</sup> According to Abū Ishāq al-Šaybānī (Sulaymān b. Abī Sulaymān, Kufan client, d. 138/755-756?), Ibrāhīm said, “I prefer ‘Alī to ‘Uṭmān (*‘Alī aḥabbu ilayya*) but I’d rather fall from the sky than disparage ‘Uṭmān.”<sup>41</sup> The position sketched is evidently that ‘Alī was the best of the Companions (although without using the later term *afḍal*) but that Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and even ‘Uṭmān were good enough to be legitimate caliphs. This is the position later characterized by Sunnis as *tašayyu‘*, considered forgivable, as opposed to *rafḍ*, meaning inexcusable rejection of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, Ibrāhīm is also counted with al-Ša‘bī (‘Āmir b. Šarāḥīl, sometime *qādī*, d. 103/721-722?) and Sa‘īd b. Ğubayr (Kufan client, d. 95/714?) among “those who said Abū Bakr and ‘Umar, then stopped” (*i.e.* refused to choose between ‘Uṭmān and ‘Alī).<sup>43</sup>

In numerous quotations, Ibrāhīm is portrayed as denouncing the Murǧī’a; for example, “By God, they are more despicable than the People of the Book.”<sup>44</sup> However, some quotations clearly indicate that his disagreement is not over their agnosticism concerning ‘Alī and ‘Uṭmān but their thinking one is either

38 Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 192; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 275.

39 Josef van Ess proposes the same correction, *Theology and Society*, I, p. 183. On the Murǧī’a, see Michael Cook, “Activism and Quietism in Islam: The Case of the Early Murǧī’a,” in *Islam and power*, eds Alexander S. Cudsi and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, London, Croom Helm (“Croom Helm series on the Arab world”), 1981, p. 15-23. On the Saba’iyya, see Abū l-Ḥasan al-Aš‘arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn*, ed. Hellmut Ritter, Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner (“Bibliotheca Islamica,” 1), 1963<sup>2</sup>, p. 13, and Sean W. Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic: Ibn Saba’ and the Origins of Shi‘ism*, Leiden-Boston, Brill (“Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts,” 91), 2012.

40 Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 192; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 275; Abū Nu‘aym al-Aṣḥānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā‘*, Cairo, Maṭba‘at al-sa‘āda, 1352/1932-1357/1938, 10 vols, IV, p. 224.

41 Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 192; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 275; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-‘Ilal*, ed. ‘Abbās, II, p. 246; ed. Bayḍūn, I, p. 281; Abū Nu‘aym al-Aṣḥānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā‘*, IV, p. 224.

42 Van Ess, *Theology and Society*, I, p. 271.

43 Aḥmad b. Sa‘īd al-Dārimī (Khurasani, d. 253/867-868), *apud* Ḥarb al-Kirmānī, *Masā’il al-imām Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal wa-Ishāq b. Rāhūya*, ed. Nāṣir b. Su‘ūd b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Salāma, Riyadh, Maktabat al-ruṣd, 1425/2004, p. 441.

44 Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 192; VI, p. 274; more generally, *ibid.*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 191-192; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 273-274.

a believer or not, ruling out that faith may increase or decrease, disapproving specifically of saying “I am a believer, God willing.” Muḥill b. Muḥriz (Kufan, d. 153/770) said, “I said to Ibrāhīm, ‘They ask us, ‘Are you believers?’” He said, ‘When they ask you, say “We believe in God and in what was revealed to us and in what was revealed to Abraham” to the end of the verse (Kor 2, 136).’”<sup>45</sup> Ḥammād b. Zayd (Basran, d. 179/795) said, “I asked Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān (Kufan client, d. 120/737-738?), ‘Did Ibrāhīm advocate your position concerning *irḡāʾ*?’ He said, ‘No, he was a doubter (*šakk*) like you.’”<sup>46</sup> Disagreement over how to regard ‘Alī and ‘Uṭmān doubtless raged throughout Ibrāhīm’s lifetime, and it seems hard to doubt that Ibrāhīm took some position, himself, although the exact positions described in ninth-century biographical literature probably include some supposition. By contrast, the controversy over degrees of faith probably developed after Ibrāhīm’s lifetime, so these strictures against the Murḡi’a seem more doubtful attributions.

### 3 Koranic Commentator

Ibrāhīm was counted among those who disliked to talk about the Koran.<sup>47</sup> “Our fellows (*aṣḥāb*) are wary of koranic commentary (*tafsīr*),” he said, “feeling awestruck before it (*yahābūnahū*).”<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, he is remembered in the tradition as a significant koranic commentator, although with a special stress on legal applications.<sup>49</sup> In the collection of sayings preserved as the com-

45 Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 191; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 274; Abū Nu’aym al-Aṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IV, p. 224; translation from *The Qurʾān*, transl. A. Jones, n.p., Gibb Memorial Trust, 2007.

46 Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-ʿIlal*, ed. ‘Abbās, III, p. 276; ed. Bayḍūn, II, p. 191.

47 Ibn Abī Šayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. al-Afḡānī, X, p. 512; eds al-Ġum’a and al-Luḥaydān, X, p. 244; similarly, Abū Nu’aym al-Aṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IV, p. 222. Compare for example the Medinese al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr (d. 106/724-725?) and Sālim b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar (d. 106/725?), also said to have rejected commentary on the Koran: Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, V, p. 139, 148; ed. Dār Šādir, V, p. 187, 201.

48 Abū ‘Ubayd, *Faḍā’il al-Qurʾān*, ed. Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Ḥayyātī, al-Muḥammadiyya, Wizārat al-awqāf wa-l-šūʿūn al-islāmiyya, 1415/1995, 2 vols, II, p. 214.

49 See al-Sa’d, *Tafsīr al-Naḥāʾī*. As a collection of his comments, this supersedes Nawāl Ḥāmid Salmān al-Lahībī, *Ibrāhīm al-Naḥāʾī wa-ātāruhu l-wārīda fī tafsīr sūrat al-Fātiḥa wa-l-Baqara wa-Āl ‘Imrān*, Mecca, Ġāmi’at Umm al-Qurā, 1408/1987-1409/1988, and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥarišī, *Ārā’ Ibrāhīm al-Naḥāʾī fī l-tafsīr, ḡam’an wa-dirāsatan wa-ta’līqan, min sūrat al-Nisā’ ilā āḥir al-Qurʾān*, Mecca, Ġāmi’at Umm al-Qurā, 1410/1989, except that both of these include evaluations of men in *isnāds* and some additional glosses by the authors.

mentary of Sufyān al-Ṭawrī (Kufan, d. 161/777?), here are the most frequently cited authorities in descending order of frequency:<sup>50</sup>

- Muğāhid b. Ğabr (Meccan client, d. 104/722-723?): 202  
 Sufyān al-Ṭawrī: 174  
 Ibn ‘Abbās (Companion, d. 70/689-690?): 94  
 Sa‘īd b. Ğubayr: 53  
 Ibrāhīm al-Naḥā‘ī: 44  
 ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd (Companion, d. 32/652-653?): 37  
 ‘Ikrima (Basran client, active Mecca and Medina, d. 107/725-726?): 23  
 al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim (Khurasani, active Kufa, d. 105/723-724?): 20  
*aṣḥāb ‘Abd Allāh*: 20  
 ‘Aṭā’ b. Abī Rabāḥ (Meccan client, d. 114/732-733?): 19  
 al-Ša‘bī: 9  
 ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (Companion, d. 40/661): 9  
 al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī: 9

(“The disciples of ‘Abd Allāh,” meaning Ibn Mas‘ūd, collectively cited by al-Ṭawrī for textual variants, were ‘Alqama, al-Aswad, Masrūq, ‘Amr b. Šuraḥbīl, ‘Abīda l-Salmānī, and al-Ḥarīṭ b. Qays al-Ġu‘fī, mostly Kufan *muḥaḍram*s notable as worshippers.<sup>51</sup>) In the much later commentary of al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273?), Ibrāhīm is cited more often than any other Kufan of his generation (190 instances), ahead of Sa‘īd b. Ğubayr (172) and al-Ša‘bī (143).<sup>52</sup>

As for Ibrāhīm’s devotional use of the Koran, al-A‘maš said, “I was with Ibrāhīm when he was reading in a copy of the Koran. When a man asked him permission (to enter), he covered it up, saying, ‘He shouldn’t see that I read in it constantly.”<sup>53</sup> He was said to recite a seventh part of it every day, in

50 Sufyān al-Ṭawrī, *al-Taḥfīr*, ed. Imtiyāz ‘Alī ‘Aršī, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmiyya, 1403/1983. The numbers do not confirm a list of al-Ṭawrī’s favourites as directly quoted of him: “Take *taḥfīr* from four: Sa‘īd b. Ğubayr, Muğāhid, ‘Aṭā’, and ‘Ikrima” (alternatively with al-Ḍaḥḥāk in place of ‘Aṭā’; Abū Nu‘aym al-Aṣḥānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā’*, 111, p. 328-329).

51 Wakī’ b. al-Ġarrāḥ, *al-Zuhd*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abd al-Ġabbār al-Farīwā‘ī, Medina, Maktabat al-dār, 1404/1984, 3 vols, p. 521; Ibn Sa‘īd, *al-Tabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 5; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 10; al-Fasawī, *al-Ma‘rifat wa-l-ta‘rīḥ*, 11, p. 553; Abū Zur‘a l-Dimašqī, *al-Ta‘rīḥ*, ed. Šukr Allāh Ni‘mat Allāh al-Qawḡānī, Damascus, Mağma‘ al-luġa l-‘arabiyya, 1980, 2 vols, I, p. 651.

52 Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Ġāmi‘ li-aḥkām al-Qur‘ān*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Ḥifnāwī and Maḥmūd Ḥamīd ‘Uṭmān, Cairo, Dār al-ḥadīṭ, 1414/1994, 22 vols.

53 Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *al-Zuhd*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Qāsim, Mecca, Maṭba‘at Umm al-Qurā, 1357, p. 364-365 = repr. Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmiyya, 1403/1983, p. 437; Wakī’, *al-Zuhd*, p. 592; Ibn Abī Šayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. al-Afġānī, 11, p. 499; X, p. 532; eds al-Ġum‘a

Ramaḍān all of it every two or three days.<sup>54</sup> He allegedly said of variant readings, “I dislike, when I recite the Koran after one variant (*ḥarf*), to switch from it to another.”<sup>55</sup> Abū Ḥanifa (d. 150/767) commented that he meant the variants of Ibn Mas‘ūd, Zayd, and others.<sup>56</sup> (A reason to be sceptical is that integral recitation of Companion readings was not normal practice in Ibrāhīm’s lifetime or for at least a century afterwards, for the seven variant readings that became universally accepted were all syntheses of earlier variants from experts, including three Kufans, who post-deceased him. However, the complaint may indicate that such experts’ practice was controversial in their lifetimes.) Ibn al-Ġazarī states that Ibrāhīm learnt to recite the Koran from al-Aswad b. Yazīd and ‘Alqama b. Qays.<sup>57</sup> Among other variants, he reported of them that they (and ‘Umar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb) recited Kor 1, 7, as *ġayr al-maġdūb ‘alayhim wa-ġayr al-ḍāllīn*.<sup>58</sup> Two who learnt from him were al-A‘maš and Ṭalḥa b. Mušarrif (Kufan, d. 112/730-731?).<sup>59</sup>

Ibrāhīm disapproved of copying the Koran for a set wage or selling copies, saying, “I would rather lick someone’s rear end than sell copies of the Koran.”<sup>60</sup> (The form of charitable giving would be maintained by, for example, payment in advance as alms. The idea is plainly that the Koran belongs in the realm of gift exchange, not market exchange.) He disapproved of marking every tenth verse or the beginnings of chapters in copies of the Koran, even writing in diacritical marks, saying, “Do not mix with it what is not part of it.”<sup>61</sup> He was also

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- and al-Luḥaydān, III, p. 573; x, p. 258; Ibn al-Mubārak, *al-Zuhd wa-l-raqā’iq*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A‘zamī, Malegaon, Maġlis iḥyā’ al-ma‘ārif, 1386/1966-1967; repr. Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmiyya, 1419/1998, n<sup>os</sup> 1100-1101; Abū ‘Ubayd, *Faḍā’il al-Qur‘ān*, II, p. 217.
- 54 Abū Yūsuf, *al-Āṭār*, ed. Abū l-Wafā, Hyderabad, Laġnat iḥyā’ al-ma‘ārif al-nu‘māniyya, 1355/1936-1937; repr. Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmiyya, n.d., p. 46; ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Mušannaḥ*, III, p. 355.
- 55 Abū Yūsuf, *al-Āṭār*, p. 46.
- 56 Al-Šaybānī, *al-Āṭār*, ed. Ḥalīd al-‘Awwād, Kuwayt, Dār al-nawādir (“Waqfiyyat al-Muzaynī”), 1429/2008, 2 vols, p. 280.
- 57 Ibn al-Ġazarī, *Ġāyat al-nihāya*, ed. Gotthelf Bergsträsser, Cairo, Maktabat al-Ḥānġī, 1351/1932-1352/1933, 3 vols, I, p. 29.
- 58 Abū ‘Ubayd, *Faḍā’il al-Qur‘ān*, II, p. 105; Ibn Abī Šayba, *al-Mušannaḥ*, ed. al-Afġānī, II, p. 497-498; eds al-Ġum‘a and al-Luḥaydān, III, p. 568-569; Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Mašāḥif*, in *Materials for the history of the text of the Qur‘an: the old codices*, ed. Arthur Jeffery, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1937, p. 51, 90 (Arabic). For more on Ibrāhīm’s use of variant readings, along with a list of them, see al-Sa‘d, *Tafsīr al-Naḥā’ī*, p. 178-208.
- 59 Ibn al-Ġazarī, *Ġāyat al-nihāya*, I, p. 29.
- 60 Ibn Abī Šayba, *al-Mušannaḥ*, ed. al-Afġānī, VI, p. 61; eds al-Ġum‘a and al-Luḥaydān, VII, p. 181.
- 61 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Mušannaḥ*, IV, p. 322; Abū ‘Ubayd, *Faḍā’il al-Qur‘ān*, II, p. 230; Ibn Abī Šayba, *al-Mušannaḥ*, ed. al-Afġānī, X, p. 546, 548, 549, 506; eds al-Ġum‘a and al-Luḥaydān, X, p. 268, 270, 283; Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *al-Mašāḥif*, p. 136, 140, 142 (Arabic).

opposed to decorating copies of the Koran with gold.<sup>62</sup> As for his reciting style, al-A'maš said, "I don't think Ibrāhīm made his voice comely or practised repetition (*yuraġġi*)."<sup>63</sup> 'Ašim (al-Aḥwal, Basran, d. after 140/757-758) said, "Ibrāhīm was a truthful man (*raġul šidq*), whereas if you had heard him recite, you would have said he was good at nothing."<sup>64</sup>

#### 4 Hadith

Ibrāhīm's importance to later hadith collectors was considerable. The Kufans of his generation who appear most often in the *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), for example, are Abū Wā'il Šaqīq b. Salama (308 times), Ibrāhīm al-Naḥa'ī (336), al-Ša'bī (370), and Sa'īd b. Ğubayr (382); in *al-Sunan al-kubrā* of al-Nasā'ī, al-Ša'bī (122), Šaqīq b. Salama (126), Ibrāhīm al-Naḥa'ī (294), and Sa'īd b. Ğubayr (383).<sup>65</sup> He related hadith of several Companions but is said not to have heard any of them directly.<sup>66</sup>

Ibrāhīm was notorious for relating hadith by paraphrase (*al-riwāya bi-l-ma'nā*) rather than verbatim (*bi-l-laḫḫ*). Ibn 'Awn said,

Ibrāhīm, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ša'bī did not follow (meaning the exact wording) [...]. Al-Qāsim (b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr), Muḥammad (b. Sīrīn,

62 Abū 'Ubayd, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, 11, p. 235; Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *al-Mašāḥif*, p. 150, 173 (Arabic).

63 Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 194; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 277. "Repetition" probably indicates a quavering tone.

64 Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-'Ilal*, ed. 'Abbās, I, p. 348; ed. Bayḍūn, I, p. 138.

65 Based on the indexes to *Musnad al-imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, ed. Šu'ayb al-Arna'ūt and 'Ādil Muršid, Beirut, Mu'assasat al-risāla, 1413/1993-1421/2001, 50 vols, and al-Nasā'ī, *Kitāb al-Sunan al-kubrā*, ed. Ḥasan 'Abd al-Mun'im Šalabī and Šu'ayb al-Arna'ūt, Beirut, Mu'assasat al-risāla, 1421/2001, 12 vols. Sa'īd b. Ğubayr died in Wasit (put to death by al-Ḥaġġāġ for supporting Ibn al-Aš'at), but he is ambiguously Kufan. Ibn Sa'd, for example, treats him in the volume on Kufans, but Ḥalifa b. Ḥayyāt locates him among the Meccans. Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 169-187; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 256-267; Ḥalifa b. Ḥayyāt, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, p. 491. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal counts him one of half a dozen *aṣḥāb Ibn 'Abbās*: Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-'Ilal*, ed. 'Abbās, I, p. 226, 294; II, p. 500; ed. Bayḍūn, I, p. 100, 122; II, p. 35. Gautier H.A. Juynboll has no entry for him in his *Encyclopedia*, indicating his judgement that no hadith in the Six Books can be confidently ascribed to him as opposed to later traditionists using his name. Gautier H.A. Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2007. By contrast, Harald Motzki trusts his opinions and transmission at least as reported by Sufyān al-Ṭawrī, Ma'mar b. Rāšid, and Ibn Ğurayġ (only one of these three identified with Kufa, by the way; Harald Motzki, "Sa'īd b. Dġubayr," *ET*<sup>2</sup>).

66 Al-'Iġlī, *Ta'rīḫ al-tiqāt*, ed. 'Abd al-Mu'ṭī Qal'aġī, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-'ilmīyya, 1405/1984, p. 57.

Basran, d. 110/729), and Rağā' b. Ḥaywa (Palestinian, d. 112/730-731) did follow what they heard.<sup>67</sup>

Ibn 'Awn is also quoted as saying, "Al-Ḥasan, Ibrāhīm, and al-Ša'bī would relate hadith once this way, another time this way. I mentioned that to Ibn Sīrīn. He said, 'It would be better for them if they related hadith as they heard it.'"<sup>68</sup> It is entirely credible that Ibrāhīm did paraphrase, as charged. On the other hand, it is probably impossible to demonstrate, since paraphrase was also practised by transmitters after him, so that variant wordings are likely to have crept in at many points between the early second/eighth century and the time of extant collections of hadith that quote him. Quotations of Ibrāhīm in the *Ātār* of Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798) and al-Šaybānī, for example, are much more often discrepant than identical, even though preceded by the same *isnād*, < Abū Ḥanīfa < Ḥammād < Ibrāhīm (more on this below).

In common with other traditionists of the earlier second/eighth century, Ibrāhīm did not use written notes.<sup>69</sup> Abū Ma'šar (Ziyād b. Kulayb, Kufan, d. 119/737?) said that Ibrāhīm disliked notebooks (*karārīs*), then by one account added that he explained, "It resembles copies of the Koran."<sup>70</sup> But he himself is quoted as telling someone, "I was writing before 'Abīda (b. 'Amr al-Salmānī, Kufan, d. before 70/689-690?), at which he said, 'Do not create an immortal book on my authority.'"<sup>71</sup> There is an account of his expressing regret: "Ibrāhīm was asked, 'Why has Sālim b. Abī l-Ġa'd (Kufan client, d. 98/716-717?) better hadith than you?' He said, 'He used to write.'"<sup>72</sup> According to the later jurist

67 Al-Buḥārī, *al-Ta'riḥ al-kabīr*, I, p. 334. Similarly, Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-'Ilal*, ed. 'Abbās, III, p. 198; ed. Bayḍūn, II, p. 156; Abū Ḥaytama, *Kitāb al-'Ilm*, in *Min kunūz al-sunna*, ed. Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, Damascus, al-Maṭba'a l-'umūmiyya, 1966, p. 109-149; repr. Beirut, al-Maktab al-islāmī, 1403/1983, n° 134; al-Fasawī, *al-Ma'rifa wa-l-ta'riḥ*, II, p. 368.

68 Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-'Ilal*, ed. 'Abbās, II, p. 391; ed. Bayḍūn, I, p. 341; similarly, al-Buḥārī, *al-Ta'riḥ al-kabīr*, I, p. 334.

69 Yahyā b. Ma'īn, *Mawsū'at aqwāl Yahyā b. Ma'īn*, I, p. 175-176; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 189; ed. Dār Šādīr, VI, p. 270; al-Dārimī, *al-Musnad al-ġāmī'*, ed. Nābil b. Hāšim 'Abd Allāh al-Ġamrī, Beirut, Dār al-bašā'ir al-islāmiyya, 1434/2013, p. 184. On opposition to writing, see Michael Cook, "The Opponents of the Writing of Tradition in Early Islam," *Arabica*, 44/4 (1997), p. 437-530. As Cook observes, written notes were universally accepted by the early ninth century, so reports favouring them are more likely to be back projections than reports opposed.

70 Al-Dārimī, *al-Musnad al-ġāmī'*, p. 185; cf. Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-'Ilal*, ed. 'Abbās, I, p. 218; ed. Bayḍūn, I, p. 97; and Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *al-Mašāḥif*, p. 135 (Arabic).

71 Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-'Ilal*, ed. 'Abbās, I, p. 214; ed. Bayḍūn, I, p. 96; Abū Zur'a l-Dimašqī, *al-Ta'riḥ*, I, p. 655.

72 Yahyā b. Ma'īn, *Mawsū'at aqwāl Yahyā b. Ma'īn*, I, p. 176, 178-179.

al-Šaybānī, “He used to dislike writing, then he approved of it.”<sup>73</sup> To the contrary, he dismissed objections in a quoted conversation with Zubayd al-Yāmī (Kufan Shi‘ī, d. 123/740-741): Zubayd said, “I come to you with questions and it is as if God has snatched them from me, yet I see that you dislike writing,” to which Ibrāhīm replied, “Seldom does a man write without relying on it; seldom does a man seek knowledge but that God gives him of it what suffices him.”<sup>74</sup>

## 5 Jurisprudence

Ibrāhīm al-Naḥaṣī is primarily important as an early authority of the Kufan school of law.<sup>75</sup> Al-Šāfi‘ī (d. 204/820) writes that the principal authority for the people of Mecca is ‘Aṭā’, for the people of Basra al-Ḥasan and Ibn Sīrīn, for the people of Kufa al-Ša‘bī and Ibrāhīm.<sup>76</sup> Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal grudgingly makes him the foremost Kufan of his generation: “Most of the giving of opinions (*futyā*) was by al-Ḥasan and ‘Aṭā’. Ibrāhīm also gave many opinions but he was

73 Al-Šaybānī, *al-Āṭār*, p. 778.

74 Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 189; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 271; last part also Abū Ḥayṭama, *al-‘Ilm*, n° 111.

75 The concept of regional schools goes back esp. to Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1950, and Robert Brunschvig, “Polémiques médiévales autour du rite de Mālik,” *al-Andalus*, 15 (1950), p. 377-435. It has been challenged, most prominently by Wael B. Hallaq, “From Regional to Personal Schools of Law? A Reevaluation,” *Islamic Law and Society*, 8/1 (2001), p. 1-26. Suffice it to say here that I find Hallaq’s critique unconvincing, refuting as it does not what Schacht and Brunschvig said about regional schools but a definition of his own devising; that is, knocking down a straw man. See further Christopher Melchert, “Basra and Kufa as the Earliest Centers of Islamic Legal Controversy,” in *Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts: Essays in Honor of Professor Patricia Crone*, ed. Behnam Sadeghi, Asad Q. Ahmed, Adam Silverstein and Robert Hoyland, Leiden-Boston, Brill (“Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts,” 114), 2015, p. 173-194, with references to other major studies of regional disagreements.

76 Al-Šāfi‘ī, *al-Umm*, ed. Rif‘at Fawzī ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, al-Manšūra, Dār al-wafā’, 1422/2001, 11 vols, VIII, p. 763; cited by Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, p. 7. Al-Šāfi‘ī goes on to name Makhūl the principal authority of the Syrians. Had he mentioned the people of Medina, he presumably would have named Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyib and Sulaymān b. Yasār, for which see Ibn al-Qāsim, *apud* Ibn Rušd al-Ġadd, *al-Bayān wa-l-taḥṣīl*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥaḡḡī *et al.*, Beirut, Dār al-ġarb al-islāmī, 1404/1984-1407/1987, 20 vols, XVIII, p. 455; also Mālik, *apud* al-Bāġī, *Sunan al-šāliḥīn wa-sanān al-‘ābidīn*, ed. Ibrāhīm Bāġīs ‘Abd al-Maġīd, Beirut, Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1424/2003, 2 vols, I, p. 185.

not like these two, who were trustworthy.”<sup>77</sup> In al-Buḥārī's (d. 256/870) *Ṣaḥīḥ*, his legal opinions are cited more often than those of any other authority except al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. One early, extant work of the Kufan tradition is *Kitāb al-Farā'id* of Sufyān al-Tawrī.<sup>78</sup> It includes 84 citations of Followers, of which 22 are of Ibrāhīm al-Naḥā'ī (seven his own opinion, otherwise transmitting from earlier authorities), 21 of al-Ša'bī (ten his own opinion), no one else named so often as five times. The *Muṣannaf* of Abū Bakr b. Abī Šayba (d. 235/849) represents Kufan traditionalism, hostile to Abū Ḥanīfa. It cites Ibrāhīm far more than any other Kufan Follower: 2523 times, as opposed to 1734 for al-Ša'bī, 511 for Sa'īd b. Ğubayr.<sup>79</sup> The *Muṣannaf* of 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Šan'ānī (d. 211/827) cites these three in similar proportions.<sup>80</sup>

Ibrāhīm al-Naḥā'ī's importance to the later Ḥanafī school may be gauged by his share in the hadith collections of Abū Yūsuf and al-Šaybānī called *al-Āṭār*. Like the *Muwaṭṭa'* of Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795), they are topically arranged and include reports from the Prophet, Companions, and Followers, often with gapped *isnāds*. Also like the *Muwaṭṭa'*, the *Āṭār* of al-Šaybānī, although not that of Abū Yūsuf, includes copious legal opinions, usually “We go by this, it being the position of Abū Ḥanīfa.” In the *Āṭār* of al-Šaybānī, almost half of all items are reports of Ibrāhīm's opinions, another sixth Ibrāhīm's transmissions from earlier authorities. (By contrast, Sa'īd b. Ğubayr and al-Ša'bī each account for about 2 percent of all items.) Ibrāhīm's opinions make up only about 30 percent of the *Āṭār* of Abū Yūsuf, but transmissions through him of Companion or Prophet sayings are almost as numerous.<sup>81</sup> The relations among the various works of the earliest Ḥanafī tradition still require investigation.<sup>82</sup> As remarked

77 Abū Dāwūd, *Su'ālāt [...] li-l-imām Aḥmad*, ed. Ziyād Muḥammad Maṣṣūr, Medina, Maktabat al-'ulūm wa-l-ḥikam (“Min āṭār al-imām Aḥmad fi l-ġarḥ wa-l-ta'dīl”), 1414/1994, p. 330.

78 Hans-Peter Raddatz, “Frühislamisches Erbrecht nach dem Kitāb al-Farā'id des Sufyān aṭ-Ṭaurī, Edition und Kommentar,” *Die Welt des Islams*, 13/1 (1971), p. 26-78.

79 Muḥammad Salīm Ibrāhīm Samāra and Samīr Ṭāhā al-Maġdūb, *Fihris aḥādīṭ wa-āṭār al-Kitāb al-Muṣannaf*, Beirut, 'Ālam al-kutub, 1409/1989, 4 vols.

80 One reprint of the A'zamī edition of the *Muṣannaf* (Beirut, al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1407/1987) includes some new indexes as a twelfth volume. The index of persons is incomplete but may be cited for orders of magnitude: 907 appearances of Ibrāhīm al-Naḥā'ī, 529 of al-Ša'bī, and 140 of Sa'īd b. Ğubayr.

81 For more figures, see Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, p. 33.

82 Norman Calder, *Studies in Early Muslim Jurisprudence*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993, chap. 3, argues that the works of Abū Yūsuf and al-Šaybānī include much pseudonymous attribution, having reached their final forms only around 250/864-865. Behnam Sadeghi, *The Logic of Law Making in Islam: Women and prayer in the legal tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (“Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization”), 2013, Appendix, argues that the *Muwaṭṭa'* and *Āṭār* of al-Šaybānī are mostly the transcription of one

above, quotations of Ibrāhīm in the *Ātār* of Abū Yūsuf and al-Šaybānī are much more often discrepant than identical. For example, Ibrāhīm says in the *Ātār* of Abū Yūsuf, “There is no harm in water from which a cat has drunk, for it is just one of the people of the house”; in the *Ātār* of al-Šaybānī, this appears as, “It is among the people of the house—there is no harm in drinking what it leaves.”<sup>83</sup> Of the works attributed to al-Šaybānī, *al-Ātār*, *al-Muwattaʿ*, and *al-Ḥuǧǧa ʿalā ahl al-Madīna* quote him fairly consistently, whereas *al-Aṣl* offers many quotations not found in these works. And *al-Ātār* cites Ibrāhīm almost exclusively by the *isnād* < Abū Ḥanīfa < Ḥammād < Ibrāhīm, whereas *al-Aṣl*, *al-Ḥuǧǧa*, and *al-Muwattaʿ* often cite Ibrāhīm by different *isnāds*.

Ibrāhīm is often compared in the biographical literature with al-Šaʿbī. Al-ʿIǧlī (d. 261/874-875) says, “Ibrāhīm al-Naḥāʿī was the mufti of Kufa along with al-Šaʿbī in their time.”<sup>84</sup> Sometimes Ibrāhīm is honoured. Ismāʿīl b. Abī Ḥālid (Kufan client, d. 146/763-764) said, “Al-Šaʿbī, Ibrāhīm, Abū l-Ḍuḥā (Muslim b. Šubayḥ, d. 100/718-719), and our fellows would meet in the mosque to recollect hadith. When something came up for which they had no narration, they would cast their glances on Ibrāhīm.”<sup>85</sup> Al-Šaʿbī was famous for rejecting jurisprudence by *raʿy*, although the legal literature associates him with many pronouncements unsupported by hadith. It is sometimes maintained that Ibrāhīm likewise rejected *raʿy*. Al-Aʿmaš said, “I never heard Ibrāhīm speak by *raʿy* concerning anything”;<sup>86</sup> also, “I never asked Ibrāhīm about anything without finding that he had an *aṣl* (foundational precedent).”<sup>87</sup> Like later traditionalists, he is said to have disliked hypothetical questions, saying, “They did not use to ask except at need.”<sup>88</sup> Some later Kufans apparently expressed their own allegiances by declaring loyalty to one or the other. Notably, Ibn Šubruma (Kufan

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person from al-Šaybānī’s dictation. Ahmed El Shamsy’s review, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 75/1 (2016), p. 194-196, concedes that the *Aṣl* was assembled posthumously but minimizes pseudonymous attribution.

83 Abū Yūsuf, *Ātār*, p. 7; al-Šaybānī, *Ātār*, I, p. 47.

84 Al-ʿIǧlī, *al-Tiqāt*, p. 56.

85 Yahyā b. Maʿīn, *Mawsūʿat aqwal Yahyā b. Maʿīn*, I, p. 176; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-Ġarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, Hyderabad, Ġamʿiyyat dāʿirat al-maʿārif al-ʿuṣmāniyya, 1360/1941-1371/1952, 9 vols; repr. Beirut, Dār iḥyāʾ al-turāṯ al-ʿarabī, n.d., II, p. 144; similarly, Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-ʿIlal*, ed. ʿAbbās, II, p. 445; ed. Bayḍūn, II, p. 16.

86 Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-ʿIlal*, ed. ʿAbbās, III, p. 491; ed. Bayḍūn, II, p. 280; Abū Ḥaytama, *al-ʿIḥm*, n° 38; al-Dārimī, *al-Musnad al-ġāmiʿ*, p. 125 (*kitāb al-ʿilm*: 2, *al-tawarruʿ ʿan al-futyā fīmā laysa fīhi kitāb wa-lā sunna*).

87 Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *al-Ġarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, II, p. 145.

88 ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, IV, p. 109; Abū Zurʿa l-Dimašqī, *al-Taʿrīḥ*, I, p. 629. Compare al-Dārimī, *al-Musnad al-ġāmiʿ*, p. 127-128 (*kitāb al-ʿilm*: 3, *karāḥiyat al-futyā*); e.g. Ibn ʿUmar’s warning, “Do not ask about what has not been, for I have heard ʿUmar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb say, ‘Cursed be he who asks about what has not been.’”

*qādī*, d. 144/761-762) said, “I used to stick to al-Šaʿbī and avoid Ibrāhīm.”<sup>89</sup> He allegedly told his fellows (*aṣḥāb*), “I forbid you (to associate with) the *ġilmān* of Ibrāhīm,” meaning (the disciples of) Ibrāhīm al-Naḥāʿī.<sup>90</sup> He reported the complaint from al-Šaʿbī, “Aren’t you amazed by this one-eyed man who comes to me by night to ask me (questions), then gives opinions by day?”<sup>91</sup> The conflict between *raʿy* and *ḥadīṭ* probably took longer to develop than such quotations suggest. Otherwise, among other things, Sufyān al-Ṭawrī would not have depended so heavily on both Ibrāhīm and al-Šaʿbī and they would not usually be quoted as advocating the same rules, not opposing rules. Therefore, the sharp contrast between them is to be interpreted as back projection.<sup>92</sup>

Back projection of current opinion was a recognized problem in the Islamic tradition itself, the discipline of hadith criticism being developed precisely to sort out the more and less likely quotations of the Prophet.<sup>93</sup> Contradictory quotations are the first reason to suspect invention and back projection, obvious to jurists and hadith critics of the third/ninth century. A cursory look at Ibn Rušd (d. 595/1198), *Bidāyat al-muġtahid*, for example, will show how the different Sunni schools of law continually supported opposing rules by citing contradictory hadith.<sup>94</sup> A collection of early legal opinions such as Ibn Abī Šayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, will show that the record is replete also with contradictory quotations of Companions. It is sometimes difficult to pin down Ibrāhīm al-Naḥāʿī’s opinion. For example, ‘Abd al-Razzāq comments that contradictory opinions are related of Ibrāhīm regarding when and how a wife may respond to her husband’s granting her the option of divorce (*ḥiyār*), although he knows of more reports by which he stipulated that she take it up before the end of the session in which it is granted.<sup>95</sup> A more extended example is

89 Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-ʿIlal*, ed. ‘Abbās, III, p. 205; ed. Bayḍūn, II, p. 159.

90 *Ibid.*, ed. ‘Abbās, II, p. 555-556; ed. Bayḍūn, II, p. 6.

91 Al-Fasawī, *al-Maʿrifa wa-l-taʾrīḥ*, II, p. 603. Cf. Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-ʿIlal*, ed. ‘Abbās, III, p. 205; ed. Bayḍūn, II, p. 159; Wakī, *Aḥbār*, III, p. 63.

92 Similarly, Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, p. 230-231.

93 An excellent description of the discipline is Erik Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism*, Leiden-Boston-Köln, Brill (“Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts,” 38), 2001, chap. 6.

94 Ibn Rušd, *Bidāyat al-muġtahid wa-nihāyat al-muqtaṣid*, ed. ‘Abd al-Maġīd Ṭuʿma Ḥalabī, Beirut, Dār al-maʿrifa, 1418/1997, 4 vols in 2; also *id.*, *The Distinguished Jurist’s Primer*, transl. Imran Ahsan Khan Nyazee, Reading, Garnet (“Great Books of Islamic Civilization”), 1994-1996, 2 vols.

95 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, VI, p. 526. Requiring her to say positively in that session that she accepts appears to be the Meccan/Kufan position, that she may also make a positive choice later the Medinese/Basran. The problem is treated by al-Qalʿaʿġī, *Mawsūʿat fiḥ Ibrāhīm al-Naḥāʿī*, p. 701, but without notice of the uncertainty—an example of how this

al-Šāfiʿī's observation that the Basrans relate a version of the *tašahhud* prayer from the Prophet through Abū Mūsā l-Ašʿarī (d. ca 42/662), the Kufans another through Ibn Masʿūd, while he prefers one related by Meccans through Ibn ʿAbbās.<sup>96</sup> Ninth-century hadith collections usually relate Ibn Masʿūd's version through the Follower Šaqīq b. Salama. Abū Yūsuf, *al-Ātār*, does quote it through Ibrāhīm, beginning with the usual words, "Say, *al-taḥiyyātu li-llāhi wa-l-šalawāt wa-l-ṭayyibāt*."<sup>97</sup> But Ibn Abī Šayba relates a version from Ibrāhīm that begins, "Say, *al-taḥiyyātu li-llāhi wa-l-ṭayyibāt wa-l-šalawāt*," changing the word order. Shortly afterwards, then, he quotes al-Aʿmaš as saying of Ibrāhīm, "He was opposed to (*kāna yaʿḥudu ʿalaynā*) our reciting the *tašahhud* with *wāw* at *al-šalawāt wa-l-ṭayyibāt*," contradicting the previous report as to both *wāw* and word order.<sup>98</sup> The principle of dissimilarity means that aberrant reports, such as his preferring a version without *wāw*, are a little more likely to reflect historical memory, reports that agree with later orthodoxy more likely back projection (probably by unconscious correction of the record). However, certainty is impossible.<sup>99</sup>

Following a review of contradictory and apparently anachronistic quotations, Joseph Schacht says,

It is safe to conclude that the historical Ibrāhīm gave opinions on questions of ritual (and perhaps on kindred problems of directly religious interest) but not law proper. This is all that we can expect of a specialist in religious law towards the end of the first century A. H.<sup>100</sup>

Behnam Sadeghi takes him to mean "legal thought in areas other than ritual was non-existent at the time of Ibrāhīm," an example of how he tends to interpret everything Schacht says as rigidly and sweepingly as possible.<sup>101</sup> More likely, this has to do mainly with Schacht's thesis that local custom and Umayyad administrative practice were chief among the earliest sources of Islamic law,

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collection is not useful as a guide to the early history of Islamic law, although one might appreciate its glosses of various legal problems.

96 Al-Šāfiʿī, *al-Risāla*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Šākir, Cairo, Maṭbaʿat Mušafa l-Bābī l-Ḥalabī wa-awlādihī, 1358/1940, n° 743; *id.*, *al-Umm*, II, p. 269; X, p. 44-45.

97 Abū Yūsuf, *al-Ātār*, p. 53.

98 Ibn Abī Šayba, *al-Mušannaḥ*, ed. al-Afġānī, I, p. 293, 295; eds al-Ġumʿa and al-Luḥaydān, II, p. 165, 168. There is no *wāw* in the versions of Ibn ʿAbbās and Abū Mūsā l-Ašʿarī.

99 Cf. the desultory and inconclusive entry for Ibrāhīm in Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth*, p. 237-241, reluctant to attribute any particular form of words to him but repeatedly acknowledging that the problems treated doubtless do go back to his time and before.

100 Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, p. 237.

101 Sadeghi, *The Logic of Law Making in Islam*, p. 194.

so that, early on, private experts in mosques such as Ibrāhīm al-Naḥā'ī would have discussed little beyond ritual (*'ibādāt*), taboos, and so on; also that he would not have pronounced on legal theory. The Islamization of property law and other fields would come later. (Ibrāhīm's association with rulers does suggest to the contrary some involvement with administrative practice, although we have no express reports of rulers' asking him for advice. In the case of Magian cheese, mentioned above, he reportedly wrote to the caliph asking for advice.<sup>102</sup>) Sadeghi's argument for a presumption of authenticity is more interesting: to compare the 47 instances where al-Šaybānī quotes Abū Ḥanīfa as disagreeing with Ibrāhīm's position (about a tenth of the time when it comes up) with the 27 where he himself disagrees with Abū Ḥanīfa's. This suggests that Abū Ḥanīfa was not misquoting Ḥammād. It does not prove that Ḥammād was quoting accurately or that conventional wisdom was not being attached to spuriously specific *isnāds*; however, all Sadeghi claims is to "help restore the plausibility of authenticity pending further investigation."<sup>103</sup>

Perhaps one of Schacht's observations provides a test of authenticity. "A favourite device in the creation of counter-traditions," he says, "consists of borrowing the name of the main authority for, or transmitter of, the opposite doctrine."<sup>104</sup> Such a technique would explain the phenomenon of *isnāds* that veer from one centre to another; say, a Kufan Follower quoted by a Basran in agreement with Basran Followers against other Kufan Followers.<sup>105</sup> A previous survey of 22 questions of ritual purity and prayer over which Ibn Abī Šayba presents first those who took one position, then those who took the opposite, turned up 28 citations of Ibrāhīm's opinion, seven of his transmission from an earlier authority.<sup>106</sup> There were numerous examples in the surveyed material of *isnāds* veering from Basra to Kufa or the other way around but none involving

102 As pertains to the law enforced by *qādīs*, see on the caliphs' activity Mathieu Tillier, "Califes, émirs et cadis : le droit califal et l'articulation de l'autorité judiciaire à l'époque umayyade," *Bulletin d'études orientales*, 63 (2014), p. 147-190. Numerous examples of caliphal involvement in the law of ritual, usually by naming authoritative elders to identify correct rules, come up in Marion Holmes Katz, *Body of Text: The Emergence of the Sunnī Law of Ritual Purity*, Albany, State University of New York Press ("SUNY Series in Medieval Middle East History"), 2002. The classic strong case for the caliphs as ultimate authorities in matters of the law is laid out by Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press ("University of Cambridge Oriental Publications," 37), 1986.

103 Sadeghi, *The Logic of Law Making in Islam*, p. 192.

104 Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, p. 155.

105 See also Behnam Sadeghi, "The Traveling Tradition Test: A Method for Dating Traditions," *Der Islam*, 85/1 (2009), p. 203-242.

106 Melchert, "Basra and Kufa as the Earliest Centers of Islamic Legal Controversy," p. 183-191.

Ibrāhīm. The suggestion is that Ibrāhīm was established too early as the premier Kufan authority for later Basran polemicists to use his name in support of their positions. This admittedly gives us a firmer relative chronology than absolute. A further survey of the books of marriage and divorce found fewer quotations of Ibrāhīm. As with the ritual law, however, there were no examples of his being quoted by Basrans in favour of an otherwise identifiably Basran rule. (The only example I have come across is his being quoted by Ma‘mar b. Rāšid the Basran client [d. 154/770-771] as quoting ‘Alī in turn in favour of performing the major ritual ablution after coming from a public bath, in line with heightened Basran concern for ritual purity and suspicion of baths, opposed to relative Kufan unconcern; also in line with Ma‘mar’s own particular position, opposed to Ibrāhīm’s own position, according to Ibn Abī Šayba, and to what Ibrāhīm related of ‘Alqama and al-Aswad.<sup>107</sup>) I have remarked two examples of his being quoted on both sides of a question. According to Abū l-Hayṭam, he would run his fingers through his beard in performing the minor ritual ablution, whereas according to Sulaymān al-Zubaydī he would not;<sup>108</sup> according to Manšūr, he said there was no harm in a slave’s having a concubine, whereas according to Ḥammād, he disliked it.<sup>109</sup> This conceivably comes of Ibrāhīm’s changing his mind, more likely of disagreement within the Kufan school, each side citing the premier Kufan authority in favour of its position. Much more often, though, Ibrāhīm is quoted on just one side and in agreement with most of the other Kufan authorities.

The Sunni tradition itself charges some back projection. Ibn Šubruma said, “When Ibrāhīm died, Ḥammād (b. Abī Sulaymān) sat, spreading his knowledge. He said, ‘Ibrāhīm said,’ ‘Ibrāhīm said.’ ‘Āmir (al-Ša‘bī) said, ‘By God, Ibrāhīm dead is more discerning (of the law; *afqah*) than he was alive.’”<sup>110</sup> Al-‘Amaš was professedly unsure whether he had ever seen Ḥammād with Ibrāhīm.<sup>111</sup> Ḥammād b. Zayd related of Muḥammad b. Dākwan (Basran client), “I wrote to Ḥammād, ‘Tell me about what you have related to us from Ibrāhīm: did you

107 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, I, p. 296-297; cf. Christopher Melchert, “Public Baths in Islamic Law,” in *25 siècles de bain collectif en Orient*, eds Marie-Françoise Boussac, Sylvie Denoix, Thibaud Fournet and Bérange Redon, Cairo, Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale-Institut Français du Proche-Orient (“Études urbaines,” 9; “Publications de l’Institut français de Damas,” 282), 2014, p. 1001-1010, at 1003-1004.

108 Ibn Abī Šayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. al-Afġānī, I, p. 13-14; eds al-Ġum’a and al-Luḥayḍān, I, p. 27.

109 Ibn Abī Šayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. al-Afġānī, IV/2, p. 174-175; eds al-Ġum’a and al-Luḥayḍān, VI, p. 71-72.

110 Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-‘Ilal*, ed. ‘Abbās, III, p. 206; ed. Bayḍūn, II, p. 159; al-Fasawī, *al-Ma‘rifā wa-l-ta’rīḥ*, II, p. 608.

111 Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-‘Ilal*, ed. ‘Abbās, III, p. 501; ed. Bayḍūn, II, p. 85.

hear it from Ibrāhīm?' He said, 'Some of it I heard from him, some of it was related to me by someone else from him, and some of it I inferred by analogy from what Ibrāhīm said.'<sup>112</sup> Something similar was said of 'Ubayda b. Mu'attib al-Ḍabbī (Kufan): "A man asked 'Ubayda, 'Is this Ibrāhīm's opinion?' He said, 'No, I just got it by analogy with his opinion.'<sup>113</sup> Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal considered some reports of his opinions more reliable than others. Asked, "Do you prefer Muğira when it comes to Ibrāhīm or Ḥammād?" he said, "As for what Sufyān and Šu'ba (b. al-Ḥağğāğ, Basran client, d. 160/777?) related from Ḥammād, I prefer Ḥammād, for the hadith of others from him is confused."<sup>114</sup> (Observe that Aḥmad points to inaccurate transmission in both the generation of Ibrāhīm's disciples and the generation after them.)

## 6 Piety

Ibrāhīm al-Naḥā'ī is often quoted in the early literature of renunciation (*zuhd*). Sometimes, he is quoting a forebear; for example, Ibrāhīm < 'Abd Allāh (b. Mas'ūd): "Whoever desires the world will be hurt by the afterlife. Whoever desires the afterlife will be hurt by the world."<sup>115</sup> Sometimes, he cites forebears anonymously; for example, of supererogatory devotions, "They used to like increase and dislike decrease, otherwise something constant (*dīma*)."<sup>116</sup> Sometimes (as in the area of law), his own expressions are difficult to disentangle from his quotations. For example, al-Tirmiḍī (d. 279/892) quotes him as saying, "Every building is a curse (*wabāl*) against you." Abū Ḥamza (Maymūn, Kufan) asked him, "What do you think of what is necessary?" He replied, "There is neither reward for that nor burden."<sup>117</sup> Hannād b. al-Sarī reports otherwise, that Ibrāhīm was beginning with a quotation: "'Abd Allāh said, 'A servant's every expenditure will be rewarded except for spending on building unless it

112 *Ibid.*, ed. 'Abbās, III, p. 276; ed. Bayḍūn, II, p. 191.

113 *Ibid.*, ed. 'Abbās, II, p. 549; ed. Bayḍūn, II, p. 53.

114 Abū Dāwūd, *Su'ālāt [...]* li-l-imām Aḥmad, p. 290.

115 Wakī', *al-Zuhd*, p. 301.

116 Ibn al-Mubārak, *al-Zuhd wa-l-raqā'iq*, n° 1328; Ibn Abī Šayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, ed. al-Afğānī, XIII, p. 550; eds al-Ġum'a and al-Luḥaydān, XII, p. 396; Abū Nu'aym al-Aṣṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, IV, p. 228; similarly, 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, III, p. 51.

117 Al-Tirmiḍī, *al-Ġāmi'*, *ṣifat al-qiyāma* 39, *bāb al-binā' kulluh wabāl*, n° 2480. "Every building is a curse against you" concludes a Prophet hadith report in Abū Dāwūd, *al-Sunan, al-adab* 157, *bāb fi ittihād al-ğuraf*, n° 5237 (Kufan *isnād* at Follower level).

is to build a mosque, seeking thereby the face of God.” The rest, Abū Ḥamza’s question and Ibrāhīm’s answer, is the same.<sup>118</sup>

Occasionally, austerities are reported; for example, that Ibrāhīm fasted on alternate days.<sup>119</sup> Ibn ‘Awn was asked, “Did Ibrāhīm use to joke (*yamzaḥu*)?” He said, “No, not a bit.”<sup>120</sup> But the most common theme of sayings by and about him is humility. Al-A‘maš said only about four would ever sit with Ibrāhīm.<sup>121</sup> “We tried to get Ibrāhīm to sit by a pillar,” he said, “but he refused.”<sup>122</sup> When the circle grew to the point that he was forced up against a pillar, Ibrāhīm would get up and move to another part of the circle from dislike of repute (as a group leader).<sup>123</sup> He would not speak until he was asked something.<sup>124</sup> He was reluctant to give opinions: Zubayd said, “I never asked Ibrāhīm about anything but that I sensed dislike on his part.”<sup>125</sup> On his deathbed, he was found weeping. Asked why, he said, “I await a messenger from God, heralding me to Paradise or Hell.”<sup>126</sup>

As Ibrāhīm is contrasted with al-Ša‘bī in the area of law, so is he contrasted (like al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, to similar effect) with Farqad al-Sabaḥī (Basran client, d. 131/748-749?) in the area of piety. Ibrāhīm advocates inward renunciation. Farqad told Ibrāhīm to rebuke some men for inappropriate dress but Ibrāhīm

118 Hannād, *Kitāb al-Zuhd*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Abd al-Ġabbār al-Fariwā‘ī, Kuwayt, Dār al-ḥulafā’ li-l-kitāb al-islāmī, 1406/1985, 2 vols, p. 374.

119 Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 192; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 276; Abū Nu‘aym al-Aṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā’*, IV, p. 224.

120 Abū Zur‘a l-Dimašqī, *al-Ta’rīḥ*, I, p. 666.

121 Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-‘Ilal*, ed. ‘Abbās, III, p. 39; ed. Bayḍūn, II, p. 92. The same was said of his Basran contemporary Abū l-‘Āliya: Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Zuhd*, ed. Maṭba‘at Umm al-Qurā, p. 215; ed. Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmiyya, p. 265. But his contemporary Ḥayṭama b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (Kufan, d. after 80/699-700?) knew of someone more impressive, telling Ibrāhīm’s major disciple al-A‘maš, “You and Ibrāhīm sit in the mosque and people gather around you, whereas I have seen al-Ḥarīṭ b. Qays, when two had joined him, get up and leave them,” referring to the disciple of ‘Abd Allāh (Kufan, d. before 60/680): Ibn Abī Šayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, ed. al-Afġānī, XIII, p. 420; eds al-Ġum‘a and al-Luḥayḍān, XII, p. 301.

122 Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-‘Ilal*, ed. ‘Abbās, I, p. 178, 506; ed. Bayḍūn, I, p. 86, 187; Ibn al-Mubārak, *al-Zuhd*, n° 1098; al-Dārimī, *al-Musnad al-ġāmi‘*, p. 193; similarly, Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 190; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 273.

123 Hannād, *al-Zuhd*, p. 442.

124 Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-‘Ilal*, ed. ‘Abbās, III, p. 490; ed. Bayḍūn, II, p. 280; Abū Nu‘aym al-Aṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā’*, IV, p. 226 (quoting lost § of Aḥmad, *al-Zuhd*); al-Dārimī, *al-Musnad al-ġāmi‘*, p. 194.

125 Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 189; ed. Dār Šādir, VI, p. 271; Abū Ḥayṭama, *al-‘Ilm*, n° 78.

126 Ibn al-Mubārak, *al-Zuhd*, n° 437; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Zuhd*, ed. Maṭba‘at Umm al-Qurā, p. 364; ed. Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmiyya, p. 437; Abū Nu‘aym al-Aṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā’*, IV, p. 224.

refused.<sup>127</sup> Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān rebuked Farqad for wearing wool after the Christian fashion, contrasting Ibrāhīm's less austere dress.<sup>128</sup> Farqad told Ibrāhīm that he had prayed for six dirhams to pay a tax, then found six on the road. Ibrāhīm told him, "Give them away as alms, for they are not yours," rejecting the suggestion that Farqad had the power of answered prayer.<sup>129</sup> He would not claim it for himself: according to Ibn 'Awn, "A man said, 'O Abū 'Imrān, pray to God to cure us.' I saw that he strongly disliked that."<sup>130</sup>

## 7 Conclusion

As the pre-eminent Follower of Kufa, Ibrāhīm al-Naḥā'ī tended to attract back projection, difficult to distinguish from accurate transmission between him and our sources of the late eighth century and ninth. The deadlock of opposing assumptions identified by Herbert Berg seems unbroken.<sup>131</sup> Certainly, both parties of the later divide between *ra'y* and *ḥadīth* continually quoted Ibrāhīm, sometimes the same way, sometimes regarding different problems. The record of discrepant quotation makes it a strong presumption that no quotation of Ibrāhīm can be relied on to give his exact words. It is only a weak presumption, *ceteris paribus*, that any quotation approximates what he said, not just what someone thought he would have said, if asked. Still, because he was the pre-eminent Follower of Kufa, a quotation of Ibrāhīm al-Naḥā'ī can usually be taken to enounce the majority position of the second/eighth-century Kufan school of law.

127 Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 194; ed. Dār Ṣādir, VI, p. 277-278.

128 Abū Nu'aym al-Aṣḥāhānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, IV, p. 221-222.

129 Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 194; ed. Dār Ṣādir, VI, p. 278.

130 *Ibid.*, ed. Brill, VI, p. 193; ed. Dār Ṣādir, VI, p. 276.

131 Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam*, Richmond, Curzon Press ("Curzon Studies in the Qur'ān"), 2000, chap. 2. Harald Motzki's complaint may be conceded, that there is not a simple dichotomy between sanguine and sceptical but a spectrum of opinion: "The Question of the Authenticity of Muslim Traditions Reconsidered," in *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*, ed. Herbert Berg, Leiden-Boston, Brill ("Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts," 49), 2003, p. 211-257. It does seem to me that arguments for authenticity tend to show more willingness to set up and knock down straw men (*e.g.* Sadeghi although not Motzki) and to rely on non-falsifiable assertion (even Motzki, *e.g.* as to what a collection of false attributions would look like).