

The Context and Authorship of *al-Radd al-jamīl*

The Context of *al-Radd al-jamīl*

al-Radd al-jamīl li-ilāhiyyat ʿĪsā bi-ṣarīḥ al-Injīl, (A fitting refutation of the divinity of Jesus from the evidence of the gospel) is a long polemical work refuting the Christian concept of the divinity of Jesus Christ and is attributed to the famous eleventh century scholar Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111). Three versions of this text exist: two are in the Aya Sophia Manuscript Library in Istanbul under the numbers 2246 and 2247, and the third copy is found in the University of Leiden under the classification OR828. The two Aya Sophia manuscripts attribute the text to al-Ghazālī, who wrote a significant number of works in philosophy, logic, Islamic jurisprudence, *kalām* and Sufism.¹ In many of his books, al-Ghazālī refers to his other writings and in his work *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl* he mentions many of his other important works. None of these known works by al-Ghazālī refer to *al-Radd al-jamīl*, which has led several modern scholars to doubt that al-Ghazālī is the author of the refutation.

The text of *al-Radd al-jamīl* is a refutation of the divinity of Jesus in three sections: the first is an exegetical study of six Biblical texts. The main argument of the author here is that the criterion for accepting a certain concept is its agreement with the clarity of the intellect, *bi-ṣarīḥ al-ʿaql*, a sentence repeated very frequently throughout the treatise. If a text in itself is clear to the intellect then it should not be interpreted, but if it contradicts other texts or it cannot be rationally accepted then these passages must be clarified and considered as metaphors with a symbolic meaning. Following this principle, the author interprets the six Biblical texts in order to refute the concept of the divinity of Jesus. The second section is a refutation of the divinity of Jesus as believed by three Christian sects: the Melkites, the Jacobites and the Nestorians. The third section discusses the titles that Christians attribute to Jesus to support his divine status. The author argues that such titles must be understood metaphorically, and shows that similar titles were also given to other Biblical prophets.

Concerning the context in which the refutation was written, it is generally agreed that *al-Radd al-jamīl* comes from an Egyptian Coptic milieu, based on

1 The manuscript is bound with other manuscripts of al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl*, *Fayṣal al-tafriqa* and *Shifāʾ al-ghalīl* by Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwaynī.

external and internal evidence. The external evidence is the fact that *al-Radd al-jamīl* was first mentioned by the thirteenth century Coptic priest Abū al-Khayr Ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. circa 1270).² He quoted parts of *al-Radd al-jamīl* in his work, *Maqāla fī-l-radd ‘alā al-Muslimīn alladhīna yuttahimūn al-Naṣārā bi-l-i’tiqād bi-thalāthat āliha* (Treatise containing a refutation of Muslims who accuse Christians of believing in three gods). But he did not provide any details about *al-Radd al-jamīl* that might have helped his reader understand the nature of *al-Radd al-jamīl* as a polemical work.

The internal evidence is, firstly, that the author quotes the Coptic translation of John 1:14 to defend his interpretation of the text, thus appearing to believe that the Gospel was originally written in this language rather than in Greek. Secondly, the author seeks to refute the divinity of Jesus through a discussion of the concept of the union of the divinity and humanity in Jesus, as interpreted by the three main Christian sects. As Gabriel Reynolds rightly maintains, his argument is based on a sound knowledge of the Jacobites and their refutations of the other two sects.³ Thirdly, his comparison of the relationship between the Father and the Son with the relationship of the soul to the body is taken from the Jacobite explanation of the incarnation and union.⁴ Since the Egyptian Copts were followers of Jacobite rather than Melkite or Nestorian Christology, this is further support for the view that the author was highly familiar with Jacobite/Coptic writing.

To estimate when *al-Radd al-jamīl* was written is a difficult task, since it depends on the identity of the author. Those who accept al-Ghazālī as the author agree that it must have been written during his supposed trip to Alexandria after his visit to Jerusalem, which is mentioned by some historians. Other scholars date *al-Radd al-jamīl* to a much later period, up to the lifetime of Ibn al-Ṭayyib. The latter rely on the following arguments: the style of writing is not that of al-Ghazālī, the work is not mentioned in any of his authentic works, which do not show the same depth of interest in the Biblical text as *al-Radd al-jamīl*, the discussion of Christians and Jews in the authentic Ghazalian works differs from that in *al-Radd al-jamīl*, and the Biblical quotations appear to be from a thirteenth century Arabic translation of the Bible. Those who accept al-Ghazālī as the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* argue that although the writing

2 Abū al-Khayr Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ‘Maqāla fī-l-radd ‘alā al-Muslimīn alladhīna yuttahimūn al-Naṣārā bi-l-i’tiqād bi-thalāthat āliha’, in P. Spath, *Vingt traités philosophiques et apologetiques d’auteurs arabes chrétiens du IX au XIV siècle*, Cairo, 1929, pp. 176–178.

3 G.S. Reynolds, ‘The ends of *Al-Radd al-Jamil* and its portrayal of Christian Sects’, *Islamochristiana* 25, 1999, pp. 45–65.

4 F.E. Wilms, *Al-Ghazalis Schrift wider die Gottheit Jesu*, Leiden, 1966, pp. 41–42.

style of the work differs from that of his known writing, the ideas, concepts and discussion are typical of al-Ghazālī.

The Authorship of *al-Radd al-jamīl*

In 1932, Louis Massignon discovered two copies of *al-Radd al-jamīl* in the Aya Sophia library and published an article entitled, 'Le Christ dans les Évangiles selon al-Ghazālī' in the *Revue des Études Islamiques*, in which he gave a good summary of this treatise and argued for its attribution to al-Ghazālī.⁵ In 1939, Robert Chidiac edited the text of *Aya Sophia* 2246 and translated it into French. He followed Massignon's argument concerning authorship, while noting that the text may have been written by a student who had taken notes at al-Ghazālī's lectures.⁶ J.W. Sweetman also gave a detailed summary of *al-Radd al-jamīl*, with a translation of many passages, in his two-volume work *Islam and Christian Theology* in 1945.⁷ He believed that the character and thought world of al-Ghazālī was present in the text: 'al-Ghazālī's debate is quite probably not written by his hands, but bearing clear marks of personality and method, and undoubtedly a faithful record of a discussion following his course, in Alexandria, during his visit to that city.'⁸ Arthur J. Arberry gave an English translation of a part of the text of *al-Radd al-jamīl* in his *Aspects of Islamic Civilization* in 1964, and appeared to accept that al-Ghazālī was the author.⁹ Franz-Elmar Wilms produced a German translation of Chidiac's Arabic text in 1966, and argued at length for the authorship of al-Ghazālī.¹⁰ In 1986, the Egyptian scholar Muḥammad al-Sharqāwī published an edition of the Arabic text, defending al-Ghazālī as the author.¹¹ All these scholars accept al-Ghazālī as the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl*, many of them with the reservation that the text could represent lecture notes taken by one or several of his students.

5 L. Massignon, 'Le Christ dans les Évangiles selon al-Ghazālī', *Revue des Études Islamiques* 6, 1932, pp. 523–536.

6 Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Al-Radd al-jamīl li-ilāhiyyat 'Īsā bi-ṣariḥ al-Injīl*, ed., and trans., R. Chidiac, Paris, 1939.

7 J.W. Sweetman, *Islam and Christian Theology* 1:2, London, 1945, pp. 262–309.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 307.

9 A.J. Arberry, *Aspects of Islamic Civilization*, London, 1964, pp. 300–307.

10 F.E. Wilms, *Al-Ghazalis Schrift wider die Gottheit Jesu*.

11 Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Al-Radd al-jamīl li-ilāhiyyat 'Īsā bi-ṣariḥ al-Injīl*, ed., M. al-Sharqāwī, Cairo, 1986.

The first challenge to the authorship of al-Ghazālī came in 1959 from the French scholar Maurice Bouyges, in his *Essai de chronologie des oeuvres d'al-Ghazālī*.¹² He placed *al-Radd al-jamīl* among the books only doubtfully attributable to al-Ghazālī. A. Badawī followed Bouyges, considering this work as one of the doubtful works of al-Ghazālī.¹³ W. Montgomery Watt and F. Jabr made absolutely no mention of this book when dealing with al-Ghazālī's works.¹⁴ However, in 1975, Hava Lazarus-Yafeh's *Studies in al-Ghazzālī* presented a serious challenge to the assumption that this book was an authentic product of al-Ghazālī.¹⁵ G.S. Reynolds supported Lazarus-Yafeh's criticism of the idea of al-Ghazālī as author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* and added some significant points to the debate in his 1999 article, 'The ends of *Al-radd al-jamīl* and its portrayal of Christian Sects'.¹⁶ Ines Peta translated the text into Italian in her 2010 doctoral thesis and argued against the authorship of al-Ghazālī. She explained that *al-Radd al-jamīl* quotes from an Arabic version of the Bible known as the Alexandrian Vulgate.¹⁷ Although this version was in circulation from as early as the ninth century, Peta could not find any example of an author quoting from it before the thirteenth century.¹⁸ Martin Whittingham, in a 2011 article, 'The value of *tahrīf ma'nawī* (corrupt interpretation) as a category for analysing Muslim views of the Bible: evidence from *Al-radd al-jamīl* and Ibn Khaldūn,' argues that the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* should be considered as 'Pseudo-Ghazālī'.¹⁹

I have played an active role in this debate, and in 2007 published the article, '*Al-Radd al-jamīl*: al-Ghazālī's or Pseudo-Ghazālī's?'²⁰ In this article, I defended the position of those who accepted al-Ghazālī as the deliverer of the main

12 M. Bouyges, *Essai de chronologie des oeuvres d'al-Ghazālī*. ed., M. Allard, Beirut, 1959; Appendix VI, pp. 125–126.

13 A. Badawī, *Mu'allafāt al-Ghazālī*, Kuwait, 1977, p. 262.

14 W.M. Watt, 'The Study of al-Ghazālī', *Oriens* 13–14, 1961, pp. 121–131. F. Jabre, 'La biographe et l'oeuvre de Ghazali reconsidères à la lumière des Tabaqat de Sobki', *Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'Etudes Orientales* 1, 1954, pp. 73–102.

15 H. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies in al-Ghazzālī*, Jerusalem, 1975.

16 G.S. Reynolds 'The ends of *Al-Radd al-jamīl*', pp. 45–65.

17 See H. Kachouh, *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels, the Manuscripts and their Families*, PhD, University of Birmingham, 2008.

18 I. Peta, 'Il *Radd pseudo-ghazaliano*: Paternità, Contenuti, Traduzione', *Officina di Studi Medievali*, Collana Machina Philosophorum, Palermo, 2010.

19 M. Whittingham, 'The value of *tahrīf ma'nawī* (corrupt interpretation) as a category for analysing Muslim views of the Bible: evidence from *Al-radd al-jamīl* and Ibn Khaldūn', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 22, 2011, pp. 209–222.

20 M. El Kaisy Friemuth, '*Al Radd al-jamīl*: Al-Ghazālī's or Pseudo-Ghazālī's?', in D. Thomas, ed., *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, Leiden, 2007, pp. 275–294.

material edited and produced in an independent form as *al-Radd al-jamīl*. It is indeed possible that al-Ghazālī himself was never aware of the existence of this book. However, my involvement in the editing of the present work has given me further opportunities to reconsider carefully the question of authorship. I believe that those who reject al-Ghazālī as author have made important observations, which may lead to the book being described as Pseudo-Ghazālī. The most important observation is the deep knowledge of the author of the whole Bible, which cannot be observed in any work known to be written by al-Ghazālī. In addition, the considerable awareness of Coptic Christology and the arguments against other Christian sects from a Monophysite Coptic position are qualities not present in al-Ghazālī's authentic writing. On the other hand, those scholars who have attributed the work to al-Ghazālī rely on the fact that although *al-Radd al-jamīl* does not mirror his style of writing, it does represent his thinking and worldview. This can be seen in many parts of *al-Radd al-jamīl*, as demonstrated below. I will present both arguments and provide an analysis of their plausibility, before giving my own reflections on the question of authorship. To begin with, I examine, among al-Ghazālī's works, the sources that mention the book, and those that mention al-Ghazālī's short trip to Egypt. Then I discuss the attitude of the author towards the Bible.

The Sources that Attribute the Book to al-Ghazālī

al-Radd al-jamīl was totally unknown to many historians who have dealt with the biography of al-Ghazālī. M. Bouyges points out that the work appears for the first time in modern lists compiled at the beginning of the twentieth century by al-Qabbānī and al-Ḥilmī.²¹ In addition, while al-Ghazālī had the habit of referring to his previous works, he never refers to this book when talking about the Jews and the Christians in some of his other works.²²

The earliest reference to *al-Radd al-jamīl* is by the thirteenth century Egyptian Coptic scholar Abū al-Khayr Ibn al-Ṭayyib.²³ There is a long quotation in his treatise *Maqāla fi-l-radd 'alā al-Muslimīn* from *al-Radd al-jamīl*, which Ibn al-Ṭayyib has taken from a Muslim text, which claims to quote from the well-known and important polemical work *al-Radd al-jamīl* written by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī.²⁴ Interestingly, this quotation from *al-Radd al-jamīl* contains some differences from the three existing copies of *al-Radd al-jamīl*, which indicates

21 Bouyges, *Essai*, p. 126.

22 Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies*, pp. 459–460.

23 Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Maqāla fi-l-radd 'alā al-Muslimīn alladhīna yuttahimūn al-Naṣārā bi-l-i'tiqād bi-thalāthat āliha', pp. 176–178.

24 See the Appendix for the complete text.

that other copies of *al-Radd al-jamīl* existed and that the three extant copies of *al-Radd al-jamīl* may have been altered.²⁵

al-Radd al-jamīl is also mentioned by at least three historians. Ḥajjī Khalifa, the Ottoman historian (d. 1658) mentions the book among the works of al-Ghazālī in his Catalogue vol. IV, no. 9650, under the title *al-radd al-jamīl ‘alā man ghayyar al-Tawrāt wa-l-Injīl*.²⁶ Wilms points out that the second part of this title of the book is problematic, as it gives the impression that al-Ghazālī is accusing Christians and Jews of corrupting the text of scripture; however, this impression is false. It is possible that in a later period the title was intentionally changed to make the book more popular among Muslims.²⁷ al-Murtaḍā Ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Zabīdī (d. 1791)²⁸ also mentions, in his *Ithāf al-sāda al-muttaqīn*,²⁹ a book with the title *al-Qawl al-jamīl fī-l-radd ‘alā man ghayyar al-Injīl* among al-Ghazālī’s works. Since the title mentioned here differs from Ḥajjī Khalifa’s, it is possible that al-Zabīdī took this title from another source. This title was copied by ‘Abd al-Qādir Ibn ‘Abdallāh al-‘Aydarus Ba‘alawī in his book *Ta’rīf al-ahyā’ bi-faḍā’il al-ihyā’*, which is written in the margins of al-Zabīdī’s book.

25 Paragraph 111 is the beginning of the quotation from *al-Radd al-jamīl*. Comparing the quotation in Ibn al-Ṭayyib’s treatise with the Aya Sophia manuscript, we make the following observations. There is no doubt that the later of the Aya Sophia manuscripts was edited in at least four places: 1. Ibn al-Ṭayyib’s text has the words *al-dhāt al-ilāhiyya* on p. 177, line 5 from the bottom, which is *dhāt al-ilāh* in the Aya Sophia MS. 2. On p. 178, line 3, Ibn al-Ṭayyib’s *dhāt Allāh* is *dhāt al-ilāh* in the Aya Sophia MS. 3. Ibn al-Ṭayyib’s *al-Bārī’ ta’ālā* on p. 178, line 4 is *al-ilāh* in the Aya Sophia MS. 4. Ibn al-Ṭayyib’s *al-‘Aql* is *al-‘Aql al-mujarrad* in the Aya Sophia MS.

The Aya Sophia MS also adds a short passage as an explanation to paragraph 112, as follows: ‘So the Father connotes the idea of Existence, the Word (or the Son) connotes the idea of Knowledge and the Holy Spirit connotes the idea of Essence, of the Creator being intellected by Himself.’ This addition shows that the author of the Aya Sophia MS is interested in these details as if he wants to defend the Christian Trinity rather than refute it. This passage mainly presents the argument that the Father represents the (pure) intellect, *al-‘aql*, the Son is the intellector, *al-‘āqil*, and the Holy Spirit is intellection, *al-ma’qūl*. Thus it seems that the later Aya Sophia MS is an edited text while the earlier text quoted by Ibn al-Ṭayyib is probably lost. See Appendix below.

26 *Kashf al-zunūn ‘an asāmī al-kutub wa-l-funūn* is a very important work of Ḥajjī Khalifa, listing more than 14,500 books, along with detailed information about them. See F.E. Wilms, *Al-Ghazalis Schrift*, p. 34, n. 4.

27 Ibid.

28 Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies*, p. 461.

29 al-Murtaḍā Ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Zabīdī, *Ithāf al-sāda al-muttaqīn bi-sharḥ asrār Ihyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*, 10 vols, Princeton, 1963, vol. 1, p. 42.

Thus, *al-Radd al-jamīl* was actually associated with al-Ghazālī in the thirteenth century, but then disappeared from the list of his works until the reference by Ḥajjī Khalīfa in the seventeenth century. This leads to the question: what happened to the book and why did it disappear from the list of the works of al-Ghazālī for so many centuries? Chidiac's answer is that historians were silent about *al-Radd al-jamīl* because it accepts the sovereignty of the Biblical text and considers it a source of true knowledge.³⁰

Part of the answer to the question of whether the work can be attributed to al-Ghazālī depends on whether or not he visited Egypt. M. al-Sharkāwī argues that the visit to Egypt took place after al-Ghazālī left Jerusalem.³¹ Although Ibn 'Asākir, Ghazālī's contemporary, did not report this trip, Yāqūt al-Hamawī (d. 1229),³² Ibn Khallikān (d. 1282),³³ al-Subkī (d. 1355),³⁴ al-Ṣafadī (d. 1363), and al-'Aynī, (d. 1451), confirm this visit. al-Ṣafadī seems to be the first to report it in great detail.³⁵ He narrates that after al-Ghazālī left Jerusalem:

He set himself towards Egypt and stayed a while in Alexandria. It is said that he intended to sail towards Morocco to meet the prince Yūsuf Ibn Tashfīn because of what he had heard of his enthusiasm and support for people of knowledge. But after he [al-Ghazālī] was informed of his death he returned to his own land, Ṭūs.³⁶

Wilms attempts to give a more plausible interpretation of this visit, going beyond al-Ghazālī's plan of going to Morocco. He believes that al-Ghazālī was probably ordered by the Caliph to write a series of polemical works against those scholars and sects who might introduce instability into the empire. These are his polemical works against the philosophers, the Ismā'īlīs, and the Christians (of Egypt).³⁷ al-Ghazālī, therefore, was probably sent to Egypt to meet some Muslim scholars involved in polemics against the Coptic Christians.

30 Chidiac, *Al-Radd al-jamīl*, p. 20. See also Wilms, *Al-Ghazālīs Schrift*, p. 35.

31 M. al-Sharkāwī gives the date 489–490 AH in his edition of *al-Radd al-jamīl*, p. 15, but this date is not found in other sources.

32 Wilms, *Al-Ghazālīs Schrift*, p. 23.

33 Ibid.

34 Tāj al-Dīn Ibn Naṣr al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi'īyya*, Cairo, n.d., vol. 6, p. 199.

35 Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *al-wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, Istanbul, vol. 1, 1931, p. 275.

36 Ibid., p. 274.

37 Wilms, *Al-Ghazālīs Schrift*, pp. 27–31.

The Attitude of the Author to the Bible

Before discussing different opinions on the question of authenticity, the author's attitude towards the Bible needs to be examined. The fact that the author provides all his arguments against the divinity of Jesus on the basis of his interpretation of five texts from the Gospel of John, and argues for his humanity on the basis of other texts from the Bible, shows that he accepts the text of the Bible and is arguing for a better form of interpretation. On this basis, he presents a very careful interpretation of Biblical verses that attribute divinity to Jesus, by using other Biblical verses that demonstrate his humanity. Applying this method to argue against Jesus's divinity, he claims that the Bible is being used here as a source for disclosing the reality of Jesus. Moreover, the author shows full respect to the evangelists, as well as to Paul whom he calls a prophet 'بولص الرسول'. He claims that Paul also understood the divinity implied in the Gospels to be metaphorical. He says:

وهذا التصريح منه يدلّ على انه فهم عين ما فهمناه وفهم ان هذه النصوص ليست ظواهرها
مرادة

[...] He (Paul) understood the essence of what we have understood, and that he comprehended that these passages are not intended literally.³⁸

Nevertheless, when he refers to the crucifixion he uses the expression 'in their opinion', demonstrating that he does not accept the Biblical version. This is a clear Muslim position, showing that the author holds that the Bible may report what some thought happened but not the reality. In the case of the crucifixion, the Qur'an discloses in *sūra* 4:157 that although someone was on the cross, it was not Jesus but someone who looked like him, so that 'it was made to appear to them' that he was crucified. Thus the sentence 'in their opinion' here does not necessarily demonstrate the author's doubt about the Biblical text, but that the text describes what Christians think happened rather than the reality of what took place.

Reynolds does not consider the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* to be loyal in his acceptance of the integrity of the Bible and sees this as 'thoroughly pragmatic', a tactic employed to find common ground from which to launch his attack.³⁹ Whittingham agrees with this,⁴⁰ and also argues that the author does not

38 *al-Radd al-jamīl*, (our text).

39 Reynolds, 'The ends of *Al-Radd al-jamīl*', p. 62.

40 Whittingham, 'The value of *tahrīf ma'navī*', p. 213. Whittingham also adds to the above

represent the concept of *tahrif ma'nawī* which shows acceptance of the text and rejection of its interpretation. His main argument is that the author uses the phrase 'in their opinion', which is widely used by Muslim polemicists such as al-Juwāynī who rejects the integrity of the Bible.⁴¹

In contrast, the phrase 'in their opinion', could be referring to the Christians' conviction that Jesus was crucified and had pain as the text supports this understanding. Thus this phrase refers to the text of the crucifixion story as well as to the interpretation of it. It seems that the author adopts the opinion expressed by al-Ghazālī in his *Mustaşfā*⁴², namely that one should believe that the Christians witnessed the crucifixion. However, it was not real because they did not know that God had replaced Jesus with someone else. Thus, al-Ghazālī is defending the integrity of the Christians who reported this event, while not considering it a true report. Therefore, I consider that the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* does not doubt the text itself, but questions the way Christians read it.

There is no doubt that the author is selective, taking statements out of context and playing them against each other in order to prove his case. This is a widely-used legitimate exegetical method, taking verses out of context in order to support a theological position. Nevertheless, Whittingham uses these arguments in order to demonstrate that the author should not be considered to be using *tahrif ma'nawī* (hermeneutical corruption of the text) but is only using this concept as a tactic to prove his case.

Both Whittingham⁴³ and Reynolds⁴⁴ consider that the work is clearly not intended for Christians but for faithful Muslims, in order to support them in their discussions with or refutation of the Christians.⁴⁵ Yet why would the author adopt such an unfaithful and pragmatic attitude of accepting the authenticity of the Bible when he is speaking exclusively to Muslims? Why would he make all this effort in a brilliant exegetical work, when he knows that it

arguments the fact that al-Ghazālī frequently uses cross-references to his other works which are absent in *al-Radd al-jamīl*. al-Sharqāwī explains that, although this is the case, al-Ghazālī did not cross-reference all his known works. He also adds that Muslim polemicists usually avoided mentioning cross-references to other works. He believes this assisted in the silence about *al-Radd al-jamīl* in later writing. Moreover, al-Ghazālī did not refute the divinity of Jesus elsewhere in his writing, so he could not refer to this in *al-Radd al-jamīl*. See al-Sharqāwī, *Al-Radd al-jamīl*, pp. 30–31.

41 Whittingham, 'The value of *tahrif ma'nawī*', p. 214.

42 al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustaşfā min 'ilm al-uşūl*, Cairo, 1905–1908, vol. 2, p. 157.

43 Whittingham, 'The value of *tahrif ma'nawī*', p. 214.

44 Reynolds, 'The ends of *Al-Radd al-jamīl*', p. 62.

45 Whittingham, 'The value of *tahrif ma'nawī*', p. 214.

is of no benefit to his audience who do not accept the authenticity of the Bible? On the contrary, *al-Radd al-jamīl* must have been directed at Muslims who were highly educated in philosophical thinking and were willing to accept the authenticity of the Bible, but needed someone, other than a Christian, to explain the parts that attribute divinity to Jesus.

After dealing with the sources, the possible visit to Alexandria and the attitude of *al-Radd al-jamīl* towards the Bible, we now focus on the arguments presented by those who accept al-Ghazālī as the author.

Arguments Supporting the Authorship of al-Ghazālī

Massignon, who first brought attention to *al-Radd al-jamīl* in 1932, did not doubt the attribution of *al-Radd al-jamīl* to al-Ghazālī and encouraged Chidiac to translate the text into French.⁴⁶ Chidiac did not hesitate to connect the work to al-Ghazālī but questioned its linguistic style. Being convinced that the work represented al-Ghazālī's thought, he came to the conclusion that the work must have been turned into a book by an Egyptian student of al-Ghazālī who had listened to him delivering lectures.⁴⁷ This solution satisfied Chidiac, and seemed plausible to G. Hourani who trusted the opinions of Massignon and Chidiac.⁴⁸ Wilms also considered that the likelihood that al-Ghazālī did not write the work himself was a reason for the book being so unfamiliar among Muslims.⁴⁹

Wilms, who translated *al-Radd al-jamīl* into German, was very interested in the question of authorship and offered lengthy arguments defending its connection to al-Ghazālī, which are discussed here in detail. For Wilms, the fact that the Aya Sophia manuscripts mention al-Ghazālī as the author, and that this is confirmed by the quotation of the thirteenth century Coptic priest Ibn al-Ṭayyib, are important pieces of evidence in attributing it to al-Ghazālī. To any objections based on the fact that the work is not mentioned or quoted by Muslim writers, he responds with two reasons. Firstly, al-Ghazālī seems to accept the authority of the Gospels in order to be able to defend his theory that Christians misconceived Christ's teaching in them. Therefore, it was probably not well received by other Muslim teachers who did not find it useful in their

46 Massignon, 'Le Christ dans les Evangiles selon al-Ghazālī', pp. 523–536.

47 Chidiac, *Al-Radd al-jamīl*, p. 23.

48 Ibid. See Hourani, 'The Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 79, 1959, pp. 225–233.

49 Wilms, *Al-Ghazālīs Schrift*, p. 33.

refutation of Christians. This made the work unpopular among Christians, as Muslims did not use it in their polemical works. Secondly, since *al-Radd al-jamīl* was delivered orally, as evidenced by the style of writing, it is not easy to refer to these arguments in other works by al-Ghazālī.⁵⁰ Wilms believes that the work was not directed at Christians, but rather at Muslims in Alexandria to support them in their discussions with Coptic Christians in Egypt by providing an exegetical study of the verses used by Christians in their arguments for the divinity of Jesus. In addition, the sharp polemical tone of *al-Radd al-jamīl* made Christians reluctant to use the text and popularize it.⁵¹

Moreover, Wilms provides internal evidence connecting *al-Radd al-jamīl* to al-Ghazālī's thought world.⁵² *al-Radd al-jamīl* fits into al-Ghazālī's methodology of polemical writings. In *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl*, al-Ghazālī outlines his method of refutation. First, one should present accurately and thoroughly the theory and viewpoints of the opponents. Second, the method employed to refute the arguments of the opponents should be presented.⁵³ Wilms adds a third aspect to the method, which is to show that the opponents' arguments are ridiculous and insult their approach and capacity for clear perception. The reasoning and argumentation used in *al-Radd al-jamīl* are very close to those used by al-Ghazālī in two other polemical works, one against the philosophers, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*,⁵⁴ and the other against the Ismā'īlīs, *Faḍā'ih al-bāṭiniyya*.⁵⁵ *al-Radd al-jamīl* follows these rules, by which the author starts by presenting the problem, which he considers as the core of his research (the divinity of Jesus), then follows by presenting the texts that the Christians point to as evidence for the divinity of Jesus (the use of exegetical methodology). He discusses each text thoroughly and demonstrates the hermeneutical errors of the Christians. He does the same when discussing the three Christian sects. A comparison of *al-Radd al-jamīl* and *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* shows a similarity of argumentation.

50 Wilms, pp. 33–35.

51 Ibid., p. 34.

52 He argues that *al-Radd al-jamīl* belongs to a polemical series of works which al-Ghazālī set out to write beginning with *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, then *Faḍā'ih al-bāṭiniyya*, which was written immediately after *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*. Wilms thinks *al-Radd al-jamīl* is next in the list of polemical treatises by al-Ghazālī.

53 al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl*, Cairo, 1924, p. 15.

54 al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, ed., S. Dunya, Cairo, 1972. See also the English translation by M.E. Marmura, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers (Tahāfut al-falāsifa)*, Provo, 1997.

55 Wilms, *Al-Ghazālīs Schrift*, pp. 27–30. al-Ghazālī, *Faḍā'ih al-bāṭiniyya*, ed., M.A. Qutb, Beirut, 2001.

Tahāfut al-falāsifa

فإني رأيت طائفة يعتقدون في أنفسهم التميز عن الأتراب والنظراء، بمزيد الفطنة والذكاء، قد رفضوا وظائف الإسلام من العبادات، واستحرقوا شعائر الدين من وظائف الصلوات، والتوقي عن المحظورات، واستهانوا بتعبادات الشرع وحدوده...، ولا مستند لكفرهم غير تقليد سماعي، ألقي كتقليد اليهود والنصارى. إذ جرى على غير دين الإسلام نشوئهم وأولادهم، وعليه درج آباؤهم وأجدادهم، لا عن بحث نظري، بل تقليد صادر عن التعثر بأذيال الشبه⁵⁶

I have seen a group who, believing themselves in possession of a distinctiveness from companion and peer by virtue of a superior quick wit and intelligence, have rejected the Islamic duties regarding acts of worship, disdained religious rites pertaining to the offices of prayer and the avoidance of prohibited things, belittled the devotions and ordinances prescribed by the divine law ... There is no basis for their unbelief other than traditional, conventional imitation, like the imitation of Jews and Christians, since their upbringing and that of their offspring has followed a course other than the religion of Islam, their fathers and forefathers having [also] followed [conventional imitation], and no [basis] other than speculative investigation, an outcome of their stumbling over the tails of sophisticated doubts.⁵⁷

al-Radd al-jamil

فإني رأيت مباحث النصارى المتعلقة بعقائدهم ضعيفة المباني واهية القوى وعرة المسالك يقضى المتأمل من عقولٍ جنحت إليها غاية عجبه، ولا يقف من تعقيدها على اليسير من اربه. لا يعولون فيها إلا على التقليد المحض، عاضين بالواجذ على ظواهر أطلقها الأولون ولم ينهض بإيضاح مشكلها لقصورهم الآخرون، ظانين بان ذلك هو الشرع الذي شرعه لهم عيسى عليه السلام معتدريين عن اعتقادها بما ورد من نصوص يعتقدون انها قاهرة للفكر غير قابلة للتأويل وان صرفها عن ظواهرها عسير.

56 al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, p. 37.

57 al-Ghazālī, *the Incoherence of the Philosophers*, trans., M. Marmura, pp. 2–3.

I have found the opinions of the Christians related to their doctrines to be weak in construction, lacking in power, and shameful in method. The one who researches them is filled with amazement at intelligent people so inclined to them, and he is unable to achieve his aims with ease as a result of the complexity of them. They only rely on following bare tradition in them, clinging stubbornly to the literal meaning which the earlier Christians gave to them, while Christians of the present day, due to their indolence, do not endeavour to explain their obscure aspects, thinking that this is the divine law which Jesus, on him be peace, gave them. They offer as an excuse for holding to them by what is mentioned in texts they take as controlling their thinking, which are not susceptible to metaphorical interpretation.

Thus, methodologically, *al-Radd al-jamīl* follows al-Ghazālī's concept of polemical writing. The author also uses the insulting ironical style of al-Ghazālī, for example when he writes, 'This point of view invites an excuse, but it is laughable, it is really laughable', and 'I know no other group who are so insolent towards God.' In fact, *al-Radd al-jamīl* is full of such insulting speech, which proves that it was not intended for Christian ears but rather for Muslims involved in polemical dialogue. This feature is also found in *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, as pointed out by Wilms, for example in the lines, 'I see the veins of stupidity running in their stupid heads',⁵⁸ and, 'Only those influenced by the mentality of a small group of people who have degenerate and disturbed opinions would oppose this.'⁵⁹ Wilms gives several examples of speech common to the three polemical works in order to demonstrate that *al-Radd al-jamīl* shares al-Ghazālī's way of thinking.⁶⁰ These examples raise the question of why the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* was careful to imitate the method, way of presenting the subject and usage of insulting speech, but failed to fully imitate the style of al-Ghazālī's writing? This can be a feature of how students reproduce lectures by teachers, providing the method, insulting terminology, familiar speech patterns and illustrations of the teacher, but without being able to completely imitate the teacher's style of writing.

58 Ibid., p. 38.

59 Ibid., p. 39.

60 Wilms shows that the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* uses in his argument for the miracles of Jesus, images which al-Ghazālī uses in his polemical works, such as the fertilization of the mother by the male sperm which is absent in the case of Jesus, found in *Faḍā'ih al-bāṭiniyya* and *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*. This is also true of the usage of the example of the miracle of Moses' rod turned to a snake. See Wilms, pp. 37–38.

al-Radd al-jamīl and Tahāfut al-falāsifa

Continuing with the comparison of *al-Radd al-jamīl* and *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, Wilms notes a similarity between al-Ghazālī's attitude to philosophy and philosophers in the two works, which can be seen in *al-Radd al-jamīl* where the text says, 'In addition, what weakens their belief in this issue is the theory of the philosopher concerning the soul and its connection (to the body) ... Even though they are not capable of presenting *proofs* for it.' This is exactly how al-Ghazālī describes, in *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, the theory of *al-naḥs* as explained by the philosophers and how they are not able to provide proofs for it.⁶¹

al-Radd al-jamīl presents the theme of *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* in which the author accuses the philosophers of unbelief:

However, those who accept this teaching must also follow the philosopher in: that prophecy can be acquired, that the world is eternal and does not experience becoming and decay, that the Creator does not know particulars, that the One only gives rise to one, and that the God of creation is pure existence who does not possess knowledge or life or power or similar things in his essence, by which they reject the injunctions of the legislators and who make liars out of the prophets that were sent.⁶²

This passage repeats a similar list found in *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, which accuses the philosophers of making the prophets out to be liars. This idea is also mentioned in *Fayṣal al-tafrīqa* where al-Ghazālī considers that the Jews, the Christians and the philosophers are making the prophet out to be a liar.⁶³

al-Radd al-jamīl and the Sufi Writing of al-Ghazālī

There are concepts in *al-Radd al-jamīl* which reflect al-Ghazālī's Sufi thought, as well as his criticism of those who believe in union with God in a literal sense. In refuting the concept of union, which Christians hold to support the divinity of Jesus, the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* compares this notion with the blasphemy

61 al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, p. 206.

62 *al-Radd al-jamīl*, (our text).

63 al-Ghazālī, *Fayṣal al-tafrīqa*, ed., M. Bijo, Cairo, 1993, p. 26.

قد وردت النصوص في اليهود والنصارى والتحقيق بهم بالطريق الاولى البراهمه و الثنويه و الزنادقه و الدهريه و كلهم مشتركون في انهم مكذبون للرسول فكل مكذب للرسول فهو كافر و كل كافر فهو مكذب للرسول

attributed to al-Ḥallāj or al-Biṣṭāmī because of their usage of a kind of mystic mysterious speech, in the moment of union, which confused their followers who took their words literally.

al-Radd al-jamīl

والذي أوقعهم في هذه المضائق تعلقهم بظواهر اوجبت صراخ العقول
القطع بعدم ارادتها فكم ورد في كل شريعة من ظاهري مصادم لصريح العقل وأوله علماء تلك
الشريعة وقد وقع في مثل ذلك جماعة من الاكابر فيعصمهم قال: "سبحاني" وقال الآخر: "ما
أعظم شأنني" وقال الحلاج: "انا الله وما في الجبة إلا الله". وحمل ذلك منهم على احوال الاولياء
الشاغلة عن التحفظ في المقال حتى قال بعضهم: "هؤلاء سكارى ومجالس السكر تطوى ولا
تحكى" كل ذلك لقضاء صريح العقل باستحالة كون هذه الظواهر مرادة⁶⁴.

What caused them to be entangled in these difficulties is their attachment to literal meanings which sound minds must affirm are not intended. How many literal meanings contrary to sound reason would appear in every revealed law, unless experts in these laws interpreted them metaphorically? Indeed a number of leading people have fallen into this kind of error; one of them said, 'glory be to me', another said, 'how great is my state'.⁶⁵ al-Ḥallāj said, 'I am God, and there is nothing in my robe except God'.⁶⁶ That is induced in the saints during their ecstatic experiences which distract them from being cautious in speech, so that one of them says, 'these people are drunk, and the speech of drunkards should be hidden and not made known'. All this has convinced people of sound mind that a literal meaning could not have been intended.⁶⁷

Mishkāt al-Anwār:

واستوفيت فيها عقولهم فصاروا كالمبهوتين فيه ولم يبق فيهم متسع لا لذكر غير الله ولا لذكر
أنفسهم أيضا. فلم يكن عندهم إلا الله، فسكروا سكرًا دفع دونه سلطان عقولهم، فقال أحدهم
(أنا الحق) وقال الآخر (سبحاني ما أعظم شأنني) وقال آخر (ما في الجبة إلا الله) وكلام العشاق

64 *al-Radd al-jamīl*, (our Arabic text).

65 These are sayings of Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī (d. 874).

66 al-Ḥusain ibn Mansūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 922).

67 *al-Radd al-jamīl* (our text).

في حال السكر يطوى ولا يحكى. فلها خف عنهم سكرهم وردوا إلى سلطان العقل الذي هو ميزان الله في أرضه، عرفوا أن ذلك لم يكن حقيقة الاتحاد بل شبه الاتحاد⁶⁸

No capacity remained within them save to recall ALLAH; yea, not so much as the capacity to recall their own selves. So there remained nothing with them save Allah. They became drunk with drunkenness wherein the sway of their own intelligence disappeared; so that one exclaimed, 'I am The One Real!' and another, 'Glory be to ME! How great is MY glory!' and another, 'Within this robe is nought but Allāh!' ... But the words of Lovers Passionate in their intoxication and ecstasy must be hidden away and not spoken of ... Then when that drunkenness abated and they came again under the sway of the intelligence, which is Allāh's balance-scale upon earth, they knew that that had not been actual Identity (union), but only something resembling Identity (union).⁶⁹

He uses the same examples in *al-Maqṣad al-'asnā* in his criticism of a union of the attributes of God with the attributes of humans.⁷⁰

In another passage in *al-Maqṣad al-'asnā* he explains his difficulty in accepting the full union with God claimed by some Sufis:

لان قلنا اذا عقل زيد وحده وعمرو وحده ثم قيل ان زيدا صار عمرو واتحد به فلا يخلو أي الحال عند الاتحاد اما ان يكون كلاهما موجودين او كلاهما معدومين او زيد موجودا وعمرو معدوما او بالعكس ... وان كانا معدومين فما اتحدا بل عدما ولعل الحادث شيء ثالث ... فالاتحاد بين الشيئين مطلقا محال⁷¹

If we say: if Zaid and Amr are known as individuals and then it is said that Zaid became Amr and united with him there could be no other result than a union. Either they both exist or both vanished, or Zaid exists and Amr has vanished or the opposite. If they have vanished then there was no union but nullification. Perhaps the result is something third ... Thus a union between two things is absolutely impossible.

68 al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, p. 11.

69 al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights*, trans., W.H.T. Gairdner, London 1924, pp. 106–107.

70 See al-Ghazālī, *al-Maqṣad al-'asnā* ed., M. al-Khisht, Cairo, pp. 135–137.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 136.

The author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* explains the union in a similar way:

هم يعتقدون ان الاله خلق ناسوت عيسى عليه السلام ثم ظهر فيه مُتَّحِداً به ويعنون بالاتحاد انه صار له به تعلق على حد تعلق النفس بالبدن ثم مع هذا التعلق حدثت حقيقةً ثالثة مغايرة لكل واحدة من الحقيقتين مركبة من لاهوتٍ وناسوتٍ موصوفةٌ بجمع ما يجب لكل واحد منهما من حيث هو اله و انسان وقد ارتكبوا في اثبات هذه الحقيقة فضائح كان الاخلاق بهم سترها، والاخراق اذا لم يستح قال ما شاء⁷²

They believe that God created the humanity of Jesus, on him be peace, then he appeared in it, and united with it. They mean by the Union that a connection occurred between him and it like the connective relationship between the soul and the body. Then with this connective relationship, a third reality occurred, different from each of the two realities, composed of divinity and humanity, and having the attributes of all that is required from each of them, with respect to him being God and man.⁷³

He also makes the following observation in *al-Maqṣad al-ʿasnā* connecting the way that Sufis are misled to the way that Christians are also misled in their belief in the Trinity:

اما ان يكون قد غلط في ذلك كما غلط النصارى في ظنهم في اتحاد اللاه بالناسوت⁷⁴

They are mistaken in this just as the Christians are mistaken in their supposition concerning the Union of the divinity and humanity.

al-Ghazālī uses the Christian expressions *nāsūt* and *lāhūt* in referring to the union between God and humanity, and these are also to be found in *al-Radd al-jamīl*.

All these examples show that the style of argumentation in *al-Radd al-jamīl* is similar to the thinking of al-Ghazālī.⁷⁵ We now turn to an examination of the arguments of those who reject the attribution of *al-Radd al-jamīl* to al-Ghazālī.

72 *al-Radd al-jamīl*, (our text).

73 *al-Radd al-jamīl*, (our text).

74 al-Ghazālī, *al-Maqṣad al-ʿasnā*, p. 137.

75 Sweetman, *Islam and Christian Theology*, p. 307.

Arguments against the Authorship of al-Ghazālī

Lazarus-Yafeh was the first scholar to argue systematically that the literary style of *al-Radd al-jamīl* is different from that found in al-Ghazālī's works, though she admits that the text does also contain some expressions typical of them.⁷⁶

In her *Studies on al-Ghazzālī*, Lazarus-Yafeh presents the theory that al-Ghazālī used a substantial amount of philosophical terminology after his conversion to Sufism.⁷⁷ If *al-Radd al-jamīl* is genuinely the work of al-Ghazālī it must be connected with his visit to Egypt, which, if true, must have taken place during his Sufi period. She evaluates the style using this criterion and decides that *al-Radd al-jamīl* is pseudo-Ghazālī. However, this argument is not quite proven because al-Ghazālī used different styles, depending on his target readership. To give an example of this, his works *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* and *al-Iqtisād fī-l-I'tiqād* were written during the same period but in totally different styles. The philosophical language of *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* is very different from the style that *al-Iqtisād fī-l-I'tiqād* is written in, as the latter is directed at theologians.⁷⁸

However, Lazarus-Yafeh's main argument against the authorship of al-Ghazālī is that the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* appears relatively familiar with the Bible and different writings of Christian sects, a feature not found in any of al-Ghazālī's other works, which allows for the possibility that the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* could well have been a Coptic convert to Islam.⁷⁹

76 Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies*, p. 467.

77 *Ibid.*, pp. 468–469.

78 al-Ghazālī, *Al-Iqtisād fī-l-i'tiqād*, ed., H. Atay and I. Cubkcu, Ankara, 1962. See also the English translation by D.M. Davis, *On Divine Essence: a translation from the al-Iqtisād fī-l-i'tiqād*, Provo, 2005.

79 Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies*, pp. 472–473. See also Reynolds, 'The ends', p. 55. It is quite clear from *al-Radd al-jamīl* that the author is fairly well acquainted with the New and Old Testaments, which demonstrates that he made a thorough study of the Bible before producing his criticism, a feature which well evokes al-Ghazālī when his efforts to master philosophy and his completing the important work *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa* before writing his polemical work *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* are taken into consideration. Of course, this feature is not limited to the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl*, as Martin Accad demonstrates in his 2001 Oxford University PhD thesis, 'The Gospels in the Muslim and Christian exegetical discourse', but is common to all Muslim polemicists who demonstrated great knowledge of both the Bible and the early Christian writings of different sects, polemicists such as al-Qāsim Ibn Ibrāhīm, al-Jāhīz, al-Bāqillānī, 'Abd al-Jabbār, Ibn Ḥazm, and finally al-Ghazālī's teacher al-Juwaynī. Besides, most of them benefited greatly from the detailed works of Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq in refuting Christian concepts. See *Early Muslim Polemic against*

However, in which of his writings would al-Ghazālī have been expected to demonstrate Biblical knowledge? Although al-Ghazālī mentions Jesus in some parts of his *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, he mainly refers to him as a prophet presenting Sufi wisdom. Peta observes that in the authentic works of al-Ghazālī, there are only six quotations from the Bible, five quotations in *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* and one in *Ayyuhā-l-walad*.⁸⁰ However, these quotations also show that the Bible was certainly not unknown to al-Ghazālī.

In addition, al-Ghazālī hints of knowledge of the Bible in the following passage in *al-Mustasfā min 'ilm al-uṣūl*:

فان قيل فلنعلم صدق النصارى في نقل التثليث عن عيسى و صدقهم في صلبيه, قلنا لم ينقلوا التثليث توقيفا و سماعا عن عيسى بنص صريح لا يحتمل التأويل ولكن توهموا ذلك بألفاظ موهمة لم يقفوا علي مغزاها, كما فهم المشبه التشبيه من آيات و اخبار لم يفهموا معناها... اما قتل عيسى عليه السلام فقد صدقوا في انهم شاهدوا شخصا يشبه عيسى مقتولا ولكنه شبه لهم⁸¹

If it is said we know of the truthfulness of the Christians in transmitting the Trinity from Jesus and their truthfulness about his crucifixion, we say they did not transmit the Trinity from Jesus on the basis of direct hearing of a text which cannot be interpreted metaphorically. But they imagined this through metaphorical phrases whose reference they did not understand just like the anthropomorphists understand verses and reports without understanding their meaning, such as 'Jesus (on him be peace) was killed.' They were truthful in that they witnessed someone who looked like Jesus being killed, but 'it was doubtful to them'.

This remarkable passage mentions the main theme of *al-Radd al-jamīl*, where al-Ghazālī clearly argues that the problem is not with the text itself but in

Christianity, Abū 'Isā al-Warrāq's 'Against the incarnation', ed., D. Thomas, Cambridge, 2002.

80 I. Peta, 'Al-Radd Al-Jamīl: L'épineuse question de la paternité Ghazālienne: une nouvelle hypothèse', *MIDEO* 30, 2014, pp. 129–138, p. 130. Peta says that this last argument is the most significant. Having searched all of al-Ghazālī's accepted works, she found six biblical quotations introduced by the words, *ra'aytu fī-l-Ḥjīl*, 'I have seen in the Gospels', or similar words. Three of these come from Matthew's gospel. The first comes from Matthew 11:17, the second from Matthew 5:38–41, the third is from Matthew 6:3–4 and 17–18. See al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, ed., T. Badawī, 4 volumes, Cairo, 1957, vol. II, p. 279, vol. IV, p. 70, vol. IV, p. 328.

81 al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā min 'ilm al-uṣūl*, Cairo, 1905–1908, vol. 2, p. 157.

how it is interpreted. If Christians interpret their Bible properly they would understand that the divinity of Jesus could only be meant metaphorically. He goes on to explain that the same problem arises for Muslims who understand the anthropomorphic verses in the Qurʾān literally. Similarly, the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* accepts their testimony that they saw Jesus on the cross, but believes they were mistaken, interpreting Q4:157, *shubbiha lahum* as, 'It was doubtful to them'. This short passage does show clearly that al-Ghazālī dealt with the problem of the Trinity in the same way as the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl*.

Lazarus-Yafeh observes that the Hebrew and Coptic phrases in *al-Radd al-jamīl* are not found in any of al-Ghazālī's recognised works.⁸² Wilms notes several characteristics linking the work to a Coptic milieu. The author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* uses the words *اختلاط وامتزاج*, mixture and blending, *تركيب*, composition, *حقيقه*, reality, to explain the Trinity, and these are also found in the writings of the Coptic theologians Severus ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. 987) and Abū-l-Barakāt ibn Kabar (d. 1324) in their explanation of the relationship between the Father and the Son. Their appeal to the relationship between the soul and the body to illustrate this relationship is present in *al-Radd al-jamīl* in the discussion of the union between the Father and the Son.⁸³ However, if the author was a Copt who converted to Islam, then how could he have held the view that the Gospel of John was written in Coptic? No knowledgeable Copt would have entertained such a belief. Besides, the author's knowledge of Coptic and Hebrew is quite limited, as Arberry points out.⁸⁴ Nevertheless,

82 Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies*, p. 469. Lazarus-Yafeh maintains that al-Ghazālī never quotes verses in a foreign language in his recognised writing. The author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* includes two sentences in Hebrew and one in Coptic. She argues that it is very unlikely that al-Ghazālī knew Hebrew or Coptic, since no other source suggests that he did. The first sentence is the saying of Jesus on the cross in Matthew 27:46, 'My God, my God why have you forsaken me?' The author believes that Jesus spoke in Hebrew. The second sentence is the statement in John 1:14, 'The Word became flesh', which the author quotes in Coptic to argue that it should be interpreted as 'the Word was made flesh'. The third sentence is in connection with a miracle of Moses in Exodus 4:6, 'Behold his hand was leprous as snow', which the author quotes in Hebrew. While there seems to be no obvious reason for quoting the latter sentence in Hebrew, the former two sentences are quite famous and are used in many Muslim refutations of the concept of the divinity of Jesus. Thus it is possible that the author copied these sentences from other writers. Chidiac, nevertheless, considers the author to have had no thorough knowledge either of Hebrew or Coptic, for all three quotations are inaccurate.

83 Wilms, *Al-Ghazālī's Schrift*, pp. 41–42.

84 Arberry, *Aspects*, p. 300.

it is almost certain that *al-Radd al-jamīl* was written within a Coptic milieu. Wilms concludes that al-Ghazālī must have been collecting, from Coptic Christian writing, any material which he would use in his polemical presentation, arranging these texts systematically and using them to construct his argument.

Thus, while Lazarus-Yafeh, Reynolds, Peta and Whittingham argue that the Coptic character of *al-Radd al-jamīl* is evidence for considering the author to be a Coptic convert to Islam, Wilms considers that the Coptic character of the work proves that al-Ghazālī must have written *al-Radd al-jamīl* in Egypt, and that this also is evidence that he travelled to Alexandria. Peta observes that the entire discussion in *al-Radd al-jamīl* is based on Jacobite thought. The author is familiar with Jacobite arguments against the Melkites and Nestorians and uses them to refute the latter two sects. The author also uses Jacobite Christological terminology, *ʿaql*, *ʿāqil* and *maʿqūl* to explain the Trinity, and *ḥaqīqa* to refer to the nature of Christ instead of *ṭabīʿa*.⁸⁵ Peta reaches the same conclusion as Reynolds in that such borrowing from Jacobite sources excludes al-Ghazālī as the author. Wilms, on the other hand, argues that this borrowing does not rule out al-Ghazālī as author, since he had the habit of refuting opponents by using their writings and arguments.⁸⁶

In addition, Peta claims that the first writer to use the term *ḥaqīqa* for the nature of Christ is the thirteenth century Coptic scholar Abū-l-Barakāt ibn Kabar (d. 1324). Wilms, in contrast, shows that the tenth century Coptic theologian Severus ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. 987) used this term in his work *History of the Councils*.⁸⁷

Reynolds⁸⁸ and Peta⁸⁹ consider the author's attitude to Christians in *al-Radd al-jamīl* as quite negative while al-Ghazālī is moderate in his judgment of Christians. Peta mentions his tolerance in *Fayṣal al-tafriqa bayn al-Islam wal-zandaqa*,⁹⁰ yet it is in this very book that he accuses Christians and Jews of *kufṛ* (unbelief). He states that *kufṛ* should be applied to those, including Jews and Christians, who consider the prophet Muḥammad to be a liar, in the following passage:

85 Peta, *Al-Radd al-jamīl*, p. 136.

86 Wilms, *Al-Ghazālī's Schrift*, p. 23.

87 Wilms, p. 42, referring to Severus ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *History of the Councils*, *Patrologia Orientalis* III p. 147, p. 186, and p. 213.

88 Reynolds, p. 52.

89 Peta, *Al-Radd al-jamīl*, p. 132.

90 Ibid.

قد وردت النصوص في اليهود والنصارى والتحق بهم بالطريق الاولى البراهمه و الثنويه و الزنادقه و الدهريه و كلهم مشتركون في انهم مكذبون للرسول فكل مكذب للرسول فهو كافر و كل كافر فهو مكذب للرسول⁹¹

‘The accounts that Jews and Christians are typically attached to first of all, including Hindus, and secondly the atheists and freethinkers, show that all of them are guilty of *shirk* in their lies about the Prophet, and every liar about the Prophet is an unbeliever and every unbeliever is a liar about the Prophet.’

Although al-Ghazālī tries to encourage tolerance, he condemns Jews and Christians for their mistrust of the Prophet’s mission. Nevertheless, he does not directly accuse them of corrupting their scriptures in this work.

Reynolds further argues that in accepting the integrity of the Bible, the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* contradicts al-Ghazālī’s teacher, al-Juwaynī, who accused the Jews and Christians of corrupting the Bible. Reynolds thinks that al-Ghazālī would not have dared to adopt a concept which contradicted his teacher. However, this is to ignore the evidence presented by Margaret Smith, which clearly shows that al-Ghazālī did not follow al-Juwaynī in several issues.⁹²

In addition, Reynolds observes that the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* hardly ever uses Ḥadīth in his refutation and when he does, he mentions no *isnād*.⁹³ This is, however, also observable in al-Ghazālī’s recognized polemical works. In *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* he uses very few Ḥadīth, and for one of these he did not give the *isnād*, but simply says, ‘The Prophet of God said this, the blessing and peace of God be on him.’ قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم.⁹⁴ In *Faḍā’ih al-bāṭiniyya* he gives a Ḥadīth saying, ‘He said this, the blessing and peace of God be on him.’ قال صلى الله عليه وسلم without mentioning whether the Ḥadīth comes from Muḥammad or from one of his companions.⁹⁵

91 al-Ghazālī, *Fayṣal al-tafriqa bayn al-Islam wa-l-zandaqa*, p. 26.

92 M. Smith, *al-Ghazālī the Mystic*, London, 1944, pp. 15–20.

93 Reynolds, p. 53.

94 See *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* p. 42, and p. 237. On page 237, al-Ghazālī quotes the following Ḥadīth, أعددت لعبادي الصالحين ما لا عين رأت ولا أذن سمعت and later mentions the same saying as a Qur’ānic verse on p. 241!

95 See *Faḍā’ih al-bāṭiniyya*, p. 30, p. 43, and p. 45. On page 45, al-Ghazālī quotes a Ḥadīth from ‘Alī but in *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl* he says that the same Ḥadīth comes from the Prophet.

When was *al-Radd al-jamīl* Written?

Another argument for denying that al-Ghazālī could be the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* is the rejection of the possibility that *al-Radd al-jamīl* was written in the lifetime of al-Ghazālī. Peta makes this argument by noting that the biblical quotations in *al-Radd al-jamīl* conform to the Arabic version of the Gospels known as the Alexandrian Vulgate.⁹⁶ According to Hikmat Kachouh, the Alexandrian Vulgate is an Arabic version, which possibly entered circulation from the tenth century onwards.⁹⁷ However, the earliest manuscript of this version dates to 1174. Vööbus mentions a tenth century copy, which had been kept in the Oriental Library in Beirut but today is lost.⁹⁸ Texts of this version are only available from the early twelfth century.⁹⁹ Peta believes that author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* must have used this version.¹⁰⁰ However, she notes that she could not find any author who quoted from this version before the thirteenth century. As a result, she argues that *al-Radd al-jamīl* must have been composed not earlier than this period, which would exclude al-Ghazālī as its author.¹⁰¹

Although this theory seems to present evidence against the authorship of al-Ghazālī, the case cannot be so easily resolved. There are several important questions that remain unanswered: Do the Biblical quotations in *al-Radd al-jamīl* come only from the Alexandrian Vulgate? Assuming this is the case, then when did the Alexandrian Vulgate start being circulated? Is it an independent version or is it mixed with other families? Is there a possibility that *al-Radd al-jamīl* provides evidence of its being in circulation in the tenth century, since Kachouh and Vööbus believe that it existed in the ninth century?¹⁰²

Dealing with the first question, Constance Padwick says in her article 'Al-Ghazali and the Arabic Versions of the Gospels: an Unsolved Problem' that she

96 Peta, *Al-Radd al-jamīl*, pp. 130–132.

97 See H. Kachouh, *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels: the Manuscripts and their Families*, p. 9. Kachouh studied about 200 Arabic manuscripts of the Canonical Gospels from the eighth to the nineteenth century. He used two methods to date them: examining the relationship between different families in the same period, and noting quotations in writings which enable an estimation of the circulation of a certain version in a certain period.

98 G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, Vol. 1, Rome, 1944, p. 156. See A. Vööbus, *Early Versions of the New Testament: Manuscripts Studies*, Papers of the Estonian Theological Society in Exile, No. 6, Stockholm, 1954, p. 289, and p. 294. See also Kachouh, *The Arabic Versions*, p. 124 and p. 214.

99 Kachouh, *The Arabic Versions*, pp. 214–215. See also footnote 3, p. 215.

100 Peta, *Al-Radd al-jamīl*, p. 132.

101 Ibid.

102 Kachouh, *The Arabic Versions*, footnote 3, p. 215.

compared the Biblical quotations of *al-Radd al-jamīl* with several early Arabic versions of the Bible. She discovered that the Gospel quotations are identical to a manuscript of the Arabic Bible in the Coptic collection of the Vatican mark 'G' which has the Coptic version on one side with the Arabic translation on the other. She suggests that al-Ghazālī might have had this version as he looked at John 1:14 and compared the Arabic word *ṣāra* 'became' with the Coptic equivalent *afer*.¹⁰³ This version is dated 1204–1205, but there is the possibility that there were earlier versions. Kachouh investigated the bilingual version of the Vatican codex vat. Copt. 9 mark G but concluded that it is not the Alexandrian Vulgate.

This family, known as the 'Alexandrian Vulgate' or the 'Egyptian Vulgate', has been believed by scholars to be an eclectic recension of an Arabic version originally translated from the Coptic Bohairic similar to the text preserved in the Codex Vat. Copt. 9: a Coptic-Arabic bilingual manuscript copied in 1204/5.¹⁰⁴

Thus the argument that the quotations of *al-Radd al-jamīl* come only from the Alexandrian Vulgate is not reliable, as a result of comparing the text with early versions of the Arabic Bible. According to Kachouh, copies of different families have similarities to one another, which probably reveals that translators were not producing new versions but rather working on and refining old extant copies, as in the case of Ibn al-ʿAssāl.¹⁰⁵ In answering the second and third questions, namely when the Alexandrian Vulgate emerged and began being circulated and whether it is an independent version or mixed with other vulgates, Kachouh concludes that it is not possible to identify a fixed date for the emergence of the different versions of the Arabic translation families. One can only observe when a certain family was quoted or was being circulated, what he calls 'the witness of the family'. He points out that different family versions are often mingled with one another. For example, the Alexandrian Vulgate often agrees with Ibn al-ʿAssāl's version, known as family L, but sometimes has similarities with other families.¹⁰⁶

Thus it is not easy to confirm that a quoted text can only belong to one specific family version without taking into consideration the possibility that

103 C. Padwick, 'Al-Ghazali and the Arabic Versions of the Gospels: an Unsolved Problem' *The Moslem World* 29, 1939, pp. 130–140.

104 Kachouh, *The Arabic Versions*, p. 214.

105 Kachouh, pp. 290–292.

106 *Ibid.*, p. 226.

it can also belong to another attached family unless there is other evidence beyond the text being studied.

However, the fact that Peta did not find any writer who quoted from the Alexandrian Vulgate before the thirteenth century does not necessarily confirm its non-existence in the eleventh century, it only proves that it was not quoted during this period.¹⁰⁷ Indeed it is quite strange that although the Alexandrian Vulgate appears to have existed from the ninth century, no one quoted from it until the thirteenth century. In short, assuming that the Biblical quotations come from the Alexandrian Vulgate and that no one quoted from it before the thirteenth century does not exclude the possibility that *al-Radd al-jamīl* was written by al-Ghazālī.

Peta also observes that in the recognised works of al-Ghazālī, he quoted six times directly from the Bible. Five quotations in *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, and one in *Ayyuhā-l-walad* all come from another version of the Bible not used in *al-Radd al-jamīl*.¹⁰⁸ She asks why, if the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* was al-Ghazālī, did he use another Arabic version? The answer relates to the place where he composed or delivered *al-Radd al-jamīl*. If *al-Radd al-jamīl* was composed in a Coptic environment then it is obvious that the author would use the copy of the Arabic Bible in circulation among the audience of his lectures. It is very unlikely that al-Ghazālī, assuming he is the author, would have owned an Arabic version of the Bible which he carried from place to place. Therefore, it is highly probable that he would have used the Arabic version available in the place where he composed his work.

Who Wrote *al-Radd al-jamīl*?

There is agreement among the above authors that *al-Radd al-jamīl* did not originate from al-Ghazālī's pen. This is an assumption which both Chidiac and Lazarus-Yafeh share on the grounds of the literary style of *al-Radd al-jamīl*. The Coptic character of *al-Radd al-jamīl* has made several more recent scholars reject its connection to al-Ghazālī. The consensus among the majority of those who have examined *al-Radd al-jamīl* is that it was written by an Egyp-

107 Assuming with Peta that the author used the Alexandrian Vulgate in his quotations, and if there is evidence to prove that *al-Radd al-jamīl* was written by al-Ghazālī then this would provide evidence for the circulation of the Alexandrian Vulgate in the eleventh century.

108 Peta found six Biblical quotations in the recognised works of al-Ghazālī, one in *Ayyuhā-l-walad*, and five in *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*. None of them follow the Alexandrian Vulgate. See Peta, *'Al-Radd al-jamīl'*, pp. 130–131.

tian author who was well acquainted with Coptic Christology. While Lazarus-Yafeh, Reynolds, Whittingham and Peta consider this Egyptian to be a Coptic Christian convert to Islam, Chidiac, Sweetman, Wilms, and El-Kaisy Friemuth consider him to be a Muslim student of al-Ghazālī.

I defended the direct connection of *al-Radd al-jamīl* to al-Ghazālī in 2007 and 2011.¹⁰⁹ However, I am now inclined to believe, after all the evidence is taken into consideration, that the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* was writing the work independently of al-Ghazālī. The Coptic character of the work, which all the above authors agree upon, ultimately makes it difficult to maintain the claim that the work is directly related to al-Ghazālī. I have come to the conclusion that the most problematic question in linking it directly to al-Ghazālī is that of why he would make such an effort to adopt a Coptic position in arguing against the divinity of Jesus when his audience were exclusively Muslims? This is indeed a very difficult question to answer. The best response is that the author was a Muslim polemicist who was intent on refuting Coptic Christians with their own arguments. This is the most plausible answer for the question of authorship.

In outlining the possible characteristics of the author the following elements can be considered. First, the insulting language used by the author shows that he wrote from a clear distance to Coptic Christians. While his knowledge of the Bible could indicate that he was a Coptic convert to Islam, other Muslim polemicists have shown similar Biblical knowledge without them falling under the suspicion that they were once Christians. The fact that the author was very probably Egyptian made it easy for him to have access to Coptic writing, and it is highly probable that his focus was on learning all the arguments used by Coptic theologians to defend their Christological position against other Christian sects.

Second, the references to *al-Radd al-jamīl* by the Coptic theologian Ibn al-Ṭayyib are from a Muslim work which quotes from *al-Radd al-jamīl* and attributes it to al-Ghazālī.¹¹⁰ This observation confirms that the text was known in a Muslim milieu before it was known among Coptic authors, which adds

109 See M. El-Kaisy Friemuth, 'Al-Radd al-jamīl: al-Ghazālī's or Pseudo-Ghazālī's' in D. Thomas ed., *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, Leiden, 2007, pp. 275–294; and M. El-Kaisy Friemuth, 'al-Ghazālī', in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. 2, eds., D. Thomas and A. Mallett, Leiden, 2011, pp. 363–369,

110 He says in the first quote: *ولو خشية الاطالة لذكرت عقائدهم مفصلة لكن اقتصر ههنا من مختصر* and in the second quote: *وقد حكى هذا الرأي* the quotation in the quotation starts with *وقد حكى هذا الرأي* and ends with *فقال*. *عنه* the Imam al-ʿAllāma Abū Ḥamad Muḥammad al-Ghazālī in his *Kitāb al-Maʿrūf bi-l-Radd al-Jamīl*, *al-Jamīl*, *al-Jamīl*. Thus there is no doubt that Ibn al-Ṭayyib is quoting someone who is quoting al-Ghazālī. See the text below.

confirmation of the likelihood that the author was a Muslim and not a Coptic Christian convert to Islam. Thus the argument that the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* was a Coptic convert to Islam on the basis of his knowledge of the Bible, Coptic Christology and Coptic arguments against other Christian sects is not proven.

If the author was a Muslim polemicist who had deep knowledge of Coptic theology, why did he write in al-Ghazālī's name and how faithful was he in his presentation of al-Ghazālī's thinking and worldview? The answers to these questions may be speculative, but attempting to answer them might enable readers of *al-Radd al-jamīl* to better understand the context of the work.

Firstly, why would such a good author prefer to write in someone else's name? The answer must take into account that *al-Radd al-jamīl* was written before the death of Ibn al-Ṭayyib in around 1270. al-Ghazālī died in 1111, so the desire of the author of *al-Radd al-jamīl* to represent al-Ghazālī means that the work must have been written after al-Ghazālī had become a famous Islamic scholar, whose name would attract readers for *al-Radd al-jamīl*. During this period in Egypt, the Fāṭimid caliphate gave way to Ayyūbid rule between 1171 and 1199. Christians had been privileged under the Fāṭimid rulers, with the exception of the rule of al-Ḥākim (r. 996–1021). Therefore, it is possible that *al-Radd al-jamīl* was written in the Fāṭimid period, with the purpose of producing a plausible work that could help Muslims in their arguments against Coptic Christians. Such a refutation had to be carefully written in order to survive the Christian intellectuals who in that period probably enjoyed a good degree of authority. It is possible that an author as knowledgeable as this would have had access to the writings of al-Ghazālī, especially his polemical works. The author could have seen *al-Radd al-jamīl* as an additional polemical work to *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* and *Faḍā'ih al-bāṭiniyya*, which would further increase the fame of al-Ghazālī and, at the same time, enable the work to reach a vast number of his followers.

In this light, it is possible to understand the author's noble aims. But was he successful in being faithful to al-Ghazālī? No doubt the author adopted al-Ghazālī's thought world fully and wrote in the way he believed that al-Ghazālī would have written. He used every chance to imitate the ideas al-Ghazālī's polemical works. The above section containing the analysis of those who argued for the authorship of al-Ghazālī, describes how Wilms identified the author's way of mirroring the various themes of *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* and *Faḍā'ih al-bāṭiniyya*, trying to imitate the polemical character of al-Ghazālī's writing. Wilms also demonstrated how the author exemplified the Sufi character of al-Ghazālī's writing in his refutation of the union of the divinity and humanity in Jesus Christ.

However, the author was not completely successful in imitating al-Ghazālī's style of writing, since his language was more complicated and sometimes unclear. He also failed to present a well-structured book, unlike as was typical of al-Ghazālī, most of whose books contained a table of contents dividing his work into chapters, sections and subsections. This structure is completely missing in *al-Radd al-jamīl*. The author's knowledge of al-Ghazālī was relatively limited, appearing unaware of the fact that al-Ghazālī most probably did not master Hebrew and Coptic, because none of his works demonstrate his acquaintance with these languages.

Finally, on the grounds of the discussion above we can safely say that *al-Radd al-jamīl* was written by a Muslim polemicist before the thirteenth century. The author wrote in such a way that it fits into al-Ghazālī's thought patterns. However, *al-Radd al-jamīl* also strongly reflects a Jacobite Christology, which shows that the author used Coptic material in his refutation. Therefore, unless further evidence is discovered which could prove that *al-Radd al-jamīl* belongs to al-Ghazālī's works, we will describe *al-Radd al-jamīl* as attributed to al-Ghazālī.

Appendix

Below is the complete article of Ibn al-Ṭayyib:

قال¹¹¹ "بعض المسلمين: ان المسيح قال للرسول: "امضوا وتلهذوا كل الأمم وعمدوهم باسم الآب والابن والروح القدس" فهذا قد صرح بأنكم تعتقدون بثلاثة آلهة"، أجبناهم: لا خلاف في أن علوم الشريعة المسيحية هي ثمرات لثلاثة أشياء أي الانجيل المجيد ورسائل بولس الرسول وقصص الرسل الحواريين الاطهار، وهذه الكتب الثلاثة شاهدة في أقطار الوجود بأن الله إله واحد وأن الآب والابن والروح القدس اوصاف لذاته الواحدة، وجميع موضوعات علمائهم في اربع زوايا المعمور شاهدة بذلك، ولو خشية الاطالة لذكرت عقائدهم مفصلة لكن اقتصر ههنا من مختصر اقاويلهم على ما سيأتي بيانه فاقول: (beginning of the quotation from

Al-Radd al-jamīl)

111 Abū al-Khayr Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 'Maqāla fī-l-radd 'alā al-Muslimīn alladhīna yuttahimūn al-Naṣārā bi-l-i'tiqād bi-thalāthat āliha', in P. Sbath, *Vingt Traités*, Cairo, 1929, pp. 176–178.

(III) ان النصارى يقولون: ان البارئ تعالى جوهر واحد موصوف بصفات الكمال وانه يوصف بثلاثة اوصاف ثبوتية ذاتية أمر بها الشارع وهي: الآب والابن والروح القدس، ويشيرون الى الآب باسم الجوهر الذي يسمونه البارئ ذا العقل المجرد، وبالابن الى الجوهر المذكور الذي يسمونه ذا العقل العاقل لذاته، وبالروح القدس الى الجوهر المذكور الذي يسمونه ذا العقل المعقول لذاته، ويشيرون هنا الى الجوهر القائم بذاته الغني عن الحلق. وانما سمحت الشريعة المسيحية بوصفه تعالى بذلك مخاطبةً للأمم من حيث يفهمون. (end of quotation) وقد حكى هذا الرأي عنهم الامام العالم أبو حامد محمد الغزالي في كتابه المعروف بالرد الجليل¹¹²، "فقال (new quotation): "يعتقد النصارى أن ذات البارئ تعالى واحدة في الموضوع ولها اعتبارات: فان اعتبرت مقيدة بصفة لا يتوقف وجودها على وجود صفة قبلها كالوجود، فذلك يُسمى عندهم أقنوم الآب. وإن اعتبرت بصفة يتوقف وجودها على وجود صفة قبلها كالعلم، فان اتصاف الذات يتوقف على اتصافها بالوجود، فذلك هو المسمى عندهم أقنوم الابن او الكلمة. وإن اعتبرت (112) بقيد كون ذاتها معقولة لها، فذلك يسمى عندهم أقنوم الروح القدس، لكون ذات البارئ معقولة له. وحاصل هذا الاصطلاح أن الذات الالهية واحدة في الموضوع موصوفة بكل أقنوم من هذه الأقسام¹¹³.

ومنهم¹¹⁴ من يقول: ان الذات من حيث هي الذات لا باعتبار صفة، هي عبارة عن معنى العقل، وهو المسمى عندهم بأقنوم الآب. وإن اعتبرت من حيث هي عاقلة لذاتها، فهذا الاعتبار عندهم عبارة عن معنى العاقل، وهو المسمى عندهم بأقنوم الابن أو الكلمة. وإن اعتبرت بقيد كون ذاتها معقولة لها، فهذا الاعتبار عندهم عبارة عن معنى المعقول، المسمى عندهم بالروح القدس. فعلى هذا الاصطلاح يكون العقل عبارة عن ذات الله¹¹⁵ فقط، والآب مرادف له. والعاقل عبارته عن ذاته بقيد كونها عاقلة لذاتها والابن والكلمه مرادف

112 The words of the Muslim scholar who is quoting al-Ghazālī and who is quoted by Ibn al-Ṭayyib.

113 This part is not in Aya Sophia.

114 Aya Sophia adds a section which explains the above paragraph:

فيقوم إذاً من الاب معنى الوجود ومن الكلمة والابن معنى العالم ومن روح القدس كون ذات البارئ معقولة له. هذا حاصل هذا الاصطلاح فيكون ذات الاله واحدة في الموضوع موصوفة بكل أقنوم من هذه الأقسام. ومنهم من يقول

115 The same as in footnote 93 above.

لها. والمعقول عبارة عن الاله الذي ذاته معقولة له، والروح القدس مرادف له¹¹⁶ ثم قال مشيراً الى ما تقدم¹¹⁷ (113) «فاذا صحت المعاني فلا مشاحة في الألفاظ ولا في ما يصطلح عليه المصطلحون».

(end of the quotation from *al-Radd al-jamīl*)

وقد حكى الشيخ أبو حامد الغزالي رضي الله عنه اعتقاد النصارى في المسيح من حيث هو الانسان المأخوذ من مريم في كتابه المقدم ذكره¹¹⁸، فقال: «هم يعتقدون أن البارئ تعالى¹¹⁹ خلق ناسوت عيسى عليه السلام، ثم ظهر فيه متحداً، فهم يعنون بهذا الاتحاد أنه صار له به تعلق النفس بالجسد¹²⁰ فأبان رحمه الله بتصريحه بهذين القولين حقيقة اعتقادهم لمن يحاول معرفة العلوم الحكيمية.¹²¹

Refutation of Muslims who accuse Christians of believing in three gods Composed by the excellent father and scholar, the priest Abū al-Khayr ibn al-Ṭayyib¹²²

Some of the Muslims say, 'Christ said to the apostles, "Go forth and make apostles of all the nations and baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit", so here it is said openly that you believe in three gods!'

We respond to them: There is no doubt that the sciences of the Christian Law are the fruits of three things—the glorious Gospel, the letters of the Apostle Paul, and the stories of the pure apostles and disciples. These three books testify in all the corners of existence that God is one god, and that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are attributes of His one essence. All the writings of their scholars in the four corners of the inhab-

116 The complete quotation is in Chidiac, pp. 44–45.

117 ثم قال مشيراً الى ما تقدم this phrase is added from the Muslim source which is quoting the text above and shows clearly that the text of *al-Radd al-jamīl* is in front of the writer and he is only quoting from the points which he needs in his discussion.

118 This statement is from the one who is quoting *al-Radd al-jamīl* and not from Ibn al-Ṭayyib.

119 In Aya Sophia, الاله

120 In *al-Radd al-jamīl*, بالبدن p. 20.

121 This whole paragraph is clearly not from Ibn al-Ṭayyib but is quoted from the Muslim source which is quoting al-Ghazālī.

122 Translated by S. Noble. See http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/sbath_18_Abu_al-Khayr_ibn_al-Tayyib.htm

ited world testify to this. If not for fear of it taking too long, I would recount their beliefs in detail, but I will be brief here and summarize their statements as will become clear, and I will say:

The Christians say that the Creator, may he be exalted, is one substance endowed with the attributes of perfection and that He is endowed with three eternal essential attributes which the Lawgiver has commanded, and they are the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. They indicate by 'the Father' the name of the substance which they call the Creator, who possesses pure intellect. By 'the Son' they indicate the aforementioned substance which possesses an intellect that intelligizes itself. By 'the Holy Spirit' they indicate the aforementioned substance which possesses an intellect that is intelligible in itself. Here they indicate the substance that is subsistent in itself and is free of location. The Christian Law only permitted Him (Jesus), may He be exalted, to be described in this way in order to speak to the nations in the way in which they understand.

The scholar and imam Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī gave this opinion about them in his book known as *al-Radd al-Jamīl*: "The Christians believe that the essence of the Creator, may He be exalted, is objectively one and that it has aspects. If it is regarded with relation to an attribute whose existence does not depend on an attribute prior to it, such as existence, then they call this the hypostasis of the Father. If it is regarded in relation to an attribute whose existence depends on the existence of a prior attribute, such as knowledge, since the essence's having attributes depends on its having the attribute of existence, then they call it the hypostasis of the Son and the Word. If it is regarded with relation to its essence being intelligible to itself, then they call this the hypostasis of the Holy Spirit, because the essence of the Creator is intelligible to Himself. This usage of terminology means that the divine essence is objectively one and is characterized by each of these hypostases.

Some of them say that the essence qua essence without regard to attribute is an expression for the intellect and they call this the hypostasis of the Father. If it is regarded from the perspective of it intelligizing itself, then this perspective expresses for them the intelligizer, which they call the hypostasis of the Son or the Word. If it is regarded with relation to it being itself, then this perspective is for them an expression of the intelligible, which they call the Holy Spirit. According to this usage of terminology, "the intellect" only expresses the essence of God and the Father is synonymous with it. "The intelligizer" expresses of His essence with regard to its intelligizing itself, and the Son or the Word is synonymous with it. "The intelligible" expresses the God whose essence is intelligible to Himself,

and the Holy Spirit is synonymous with it.' Then he says, with reference to the above, 'If these meanings are true, then the terms are indisputable, as are the technical terms that those who set them down agree upon.'

The shaykh Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, may God be pleased with him, recounted the belief of the Christians about Christ with regard to His being the human taken from Mary in his previously mentioned book. He said, 'They believe that the Creator, may He be exalted, created the human nature of Jesus, peace be upon him, then He appeared united in him. They mean by this the union that He became in him by this in the way the soul is attached to the body.' By making these two statements openly, he, may God have mercy on him, made clear the truth of their belief to those who attempt to gain knowledge of the sciences of wisdom.