Traditionalist forbidding of wrong in 'Abbasid Baghdad[1]

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Artikkelen omhandler den formative perioden av juridiske tradisjoner i 'Abbasidenes Bagdad, med særlig fokus på "tradisjonalisme", hvor Ibn Hanbal (d. 855) var en forløper. Fokus er på konfliktsituasjonen relatert til tolkningen av islam, spesielt på 900-tallet, da flere konflikter førte til vold og opptøyer i byen. Formålet er å vise hvordan noen av Tradisjonalistene søkte å diskreditere andre islamtolkninger og praksiser, og å belyse deres syn på hvordan ikke-tradisjonalister skulle behandles ifølge deres forståelse av plikten til å "forby det onde". Bagdad er konteksten, og den sosiale, økonomiske og politiske situasjonen i byen fungerer som en forklarende bakgrunn for de tolkninger og konflikter som blir nevnt i artikkelen. Etter at uroen og volden er adressert, gis noen korte kommentarer til årsakene til at en mer"passiv" hanbalisme siden har dominert. Dette i forhold til oppfatninger av hvordan man i praksis skulle behandle de som ikke var hanbalitter.

Nøkkelord: Tradisjonalisme, hanbalisme, forby det onde, Bagdad, Abbasider

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INLEDNING

This article addresses Traditionalism[2] in Baghdad with a focus on how certain early Hanbalis viewed the duty of commanding right and forbidding wrong (*al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*, see below). It outlines Ibn Hanbal's (750–855) rather passive views on how to correct wrongdoers and what kind of methods he promoted and practiced in this regard, and relates this to the historical situation in Baghdad at the time. Ibn Hanbal's views and method of correction will mainly be drawn from the biography by Ibn al-Jawzi (see below). Following the examples of the biography, the article will briefly address the development of Hanbalism in regards to forbidding wrong during the 10th century, putting later Hanbalis under scrutiny in order to address what kind of correction they promoted and practiced. This part will thus comment on the development of the Hanbali tradition regarding the forbidding of wrong during the century after Ibn Hanbal's death, when the context had changed. The focus is on how the selected Traditionalists advocated forbidding of wrong and a comparison will be made of their strategies. The main proponents of the forbidding of wrong that will be compared is al-Barbahari (867–941), who represented an activist stance, and al-Khallal (ca 848–923), who represented a passive stance. Where possible, a comment will be made on how they conducted the forbidding of wrong in practice, and an attempt at an explanation will be made related to the historical situation. The purpose is not to outline dogmatic reasons to motivate the rejection of specific groups or positions. Dissimilation efforts often appear in situations where religious authority is contested. The use of "tradition" is typically arising in situations where conflicts and contested claims to religious authority appear. The Traditionalist approach to sources serve a purpose of legitimization and one strategic function of the requirement of textual evidence is to formulate distinct identities and to draw clear

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[2]   In this article, "Traditionalism" designates interpretations of Scripture promoting a condemnation of methods and arguments based on reason as in speculative theology (*kalām*) or philosophy, and instead requiring direct textual proof from the Qur'an or Sunnah. Traditionalism here refers to early forms of Hanbalism, emphasizing strict adherence to and imitation of the Sunnah.

boundaries between in- and out-group (Rüpke 2011). This article will comment on possible reasons why a passive practice of forbidding wrong became dominant. We will begin with turning to the city of Baghdad herself, whose economic, social and political situation is the context of this formative period, in order to gain a context from which we can understand the sources.

‘ABBASID BAGHDAD

Baghdad was founded in 762 by the caliph Mansur (r. 754–775) and turned into a major center of learning. It was a flowering city, and parts of the local population were rather affluent. Worldly attractions led to what many considered un-Islamic behavior, with arenas for music, games and dancing girls. Urbanization and commerce led people of diverse backgrounds to intermingle, and quests for knowledge of various sorts were patronized by the authorities. Baghdad has since been remembered as the main site for the so-called golden age of Islam, where science, culture, philosophy and inventions flowered, until the Mongol invasion in 1258.

Three features characterized the cultural climate of Baghdad, at least regarding the cultural elite, namely individualism, cosmopolitanism, and secularism. The atmosphere has been described as competitive and individuals strove for fame and recognition. The cosmopolitan nature was expressed in pluralism of religious, ethnic, and cultural back-grounds of its people, including visiting merchants and scholars. The allegiance with traditional groups and loyalties were weakened as a result, but most people seem to have attempted to, at least formally, maintain allegiance with their religious communities. This is likely the result of the prevalent strong social and religious norms that conflicted with the ideals of many scholars, who therefore needed to pretend and accommodate to the norms (Kraemer 1986:11–20, 24–25, 30).

Life for the common people was hard. It was difficult to supply sufficient facilities for the large population, estimated to around 300.000–500.000 individuals. Services and the municipal administ-

ration were not effective. Famine, malnutrition, epidemics, wars, and a general feeling of insecurity due to urban rioting and foreign invasions were widespread, causing a "hypersensitivity of temperament" among both leaders and the populace. In addition to such emotions, social, religious and ideological antagonism and aggressiveness characterized the city. This divided the Muslims in various fractions, unable to unite in the face of outside aggressors (Kraemer 1986:21–27, 46–47).

The 'Abbasid caliphs influenced the development of Islamic theology and jurisprudence in various ways. A well-known incident is when the caliph al-Ma'mun (r. 813–833) initiated the inquisition (*mihnah*) in 833. Al-Ma'mun sent a letter to his deputy telling him to control the judges concerning their views on the Qur'an. The letter shows al-Ma'mun's critical attitude towards the Traditionalists. The common people with a lack of knowledge, he held, were mistaken in their view of the eternal Qur'an, in reference to Q12:2, "We have made it (*ja'alnahu*) an Arabic Koran", arguing that what God has made (*ja'ala*), he has created (*khalaka*). Moreover, the caliph turns against Traditionalists due to their focus on Sunnah and rejection of others.

The inquisition constituted of a struggle between those who held a rationalistic approach to theology and jurisprudence, and Traditionalists, who stressed textual evidence (*dalīl*) and condemned speculative theology (*kalām*) (on *mihnah*, see Hinds 2012). These differences also had political consequences during *mihnah*, when the caliph enforced certain theological dogma as official, and scholars were expected to accept them. The dogma related to rationalist creed, such as stressing free will and individual responsibility, as well as divine justice and the createdness of the Qur'an. These dogmas outraged Traditionalists who stressed predestination (*qadar*) and argued that the Qur'an is the eternal word of the almighty God. In the midst of the conflict, we find Ahmad ibn Hanbal, who followed the Traditionalist line of requiring textual evidence. The inquisition lasted during the reign of al-Ma'mun and his successors, al-Mu'tasim (r. 833–842) and al-Wathiq (r. 842–847), to be ended early in the reign of al-Mutawakkil (r. 847–861). The end of *mihnah* also had the consequence that the caliphal authorities no longer

were in charge of defining Islam. Thus, the scholars upheld "spiritual authority" as inheritors of the prophets (*warathat al-anbiyā'*), and the caliphs upheld temporal authority (Hinds 2012). However, relationships between the "spiritual" and temporal have always been negotiated throughout history, not least due to legitimacy reasons.

The reign of al-Muqtadir (r. 908–932) brought the 'Abbasid caliphate to a low with widespread turbulence and losses of areas, and the 'Abbasid power began to be reduced to nominal authority with other officers de facto in charge. In Baghdad, people were demoralized and certain Hanbalis took to violence in the streets (Muir 1915:567–568). One aspect to keep in mind is the fact that the caliphate gradually lost hold on power, while Shiites increased their influence, which is more apparent during the 10th century. Then, the caliph al-Radi (r. 934–940) attempted to weaken Traditionalists, who caused a turbulent period during his reign, when the 'Abbasid power declined and fears of Shiite influence grew when the Buyids (945–1055) rose to power in the East and successively gained control over 'Abbasid authorities. 'Abbasid power fragmented due to external dynasties challenging its power. "During the long period from the Būyid occupation of Bāghdād to the conquest of the city by the Mongols, the Caliphate became a purely titular institution, representing the headship of Sunnī Islam, and acting as legitimating authority for the numerous secular rulers who exercised effective sovereignty, both in the provinces and in the capital" (Lewis 2012).

TRADITIONALIST SENTIMENTS

Traditionalist sentiments developed and grew strong early in the 'Abbasid era. Hanbalis were strongly motivated and opposed everyone considered wrongdoers. They did not only attempt to combat immoral behavior, but also rejected rational methodology, categorizing it as heresy. Early Hanbalis have been described as constituting a juridical-theological and social movement, unlike the other more established

Sunni *madhāhib* and Hanbalism functioned very much as an opposition party (Kraemer 1986:60).

Hanbalism had support among the urban masses. This was probably caused by Hanbali resistance to Shiism in the face of the declining caliphate. During the 10th century, some Hanbalis became aggressive and their methods of forbidding wrong gained popular support (Muir 1915:570). Their view of being morally superior formed group identity and supported a division of people into "us" and "them". The advocated mode of conduct can be referred to as "Traditionalist resistance", which includes advocating moral chastisement through the duty of "commanding good and forbidding wrong". Ibn Hanbal's views were passive and non-violent. However, at times Hanbalis included violence as a method of correction. Traditionalists represented a moral vision connected to social activism regarding correction of ordinary people, but simultaneously most promoted political quietism, since the majority of the Hanbali community accepted the creed of being loyal to political authorities (Bosworth 2012).

As Michael Cook notes, the Qur'anic text seems to imply a verbal duty when referring to both "commanding" and "forbidding" (Cook 2001:34. See also Cook 2012 and Pines 2012).[3] This is not the case when the Prophetic tradition is considered. An often referred tradition presents the duty in a three-fold manner, which Cook calls the "three modes tradition" of deed, word and thought (Cook 2001:33). The Hanbalis understood the duty as moral activism in public space, which in their view the caliphs no longer did, and they took up responsibility to perform this duty (Hurvitz 2011:49).

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[3] The conjunction of "commanding right" and "forbidding wrong" is found in the Qur'an, for example: "Let there be one nation of you, calling to good, and bidding to honour, and forbidding dishonour; those are the prosperers". Q3:104 (Arberry). See also Q3:110, 114; Q7:157; Q9:71, 112; Q22:41; Q31:17. See Cook 2001:13. Cook 2001, chapter 3 ("Tradition"), gives several examples from the Sunnah where the phrase appears. Cook 2001 presents how the phrase has been central in Islamic thinking throughout history until the modern era, in both rationalist and Traditionalist thinking.

AHMAD IBN HANBAL

Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780–855) condemned speculative theology and acknowledged the Qur'an and Sunnah as the only authentic sources of true knowledge. He has been described as "a man whose peculiar temperament disposed him not only of the kind of life which he lived – intense, ascetic, and fierce in its protest against liberalism, - but also to those views and beliefs which were, to a certain extent, the springs of such a life" (Patton 2010:183). He led an ascetic life, and strived to avoid any connections to the caliphal court, and refused royal gifts offered him at various instances. He also refused to accept official positions as teacher and jurist. In the biography by Abu al-Faraj ibn al-Jawzi (1116–1201), Ibn Hanbal's ascetic persona is vividly described. The biography is thematically organized and functions very much as a hagiographic text where the piety of Ibn Hanbal is stressed. It is important to keep in mind while reading his works that Ibn al-Jawzi was state-friendly and recommended that one should avoid admonishing the leaders. Cook holds that he represents the culmination of Hanbali "fence-mending" with the political authorities (Cook 2001:141).

In the biography, Ibn al-Jawzi characterizes Ibn Hanbal as a humble and pious man, who completely trusted in God. He hesitated to keep even some small coins, fearing that it would be an expression of hesitance as to whether God actually would provide for the true believers. His son Salih reportedly said: "One day my father said to me, 'When there's not a single coin in the house, I'm happy'" (Ibn al-Jawzi 41:17. See also Ibn al-Jawzi 44:15). Ibn Hanbal is portrayed as loving poverty. He is reported to having said: "Nothing does as much good as poverty – nothing! When there's no money here I rejoice" (Ibn al-Jawzi 51:3).

Furthermore, Ibn Hanbal was uncompromising in his view that Sunnah should guide Muslims in each historical setting (Ibn al-Jawzi 44:15). His stubbornness led the caliph to order him to be whipped, after striving hard to make him admit even the slightest notion of the createdness of the Qur'an. As Michael Cooperson holds, Ibn Hanbal must have been aware that his reliance on the Qur'an and Sunnah

equaled denying the caliph's authority (Cooperson 2013:xv). When he was brought in for interrogation, he refused to admit the dogma of the created Qur'an, but that is not all; "he refused absolutely to recognize the validity of their proofs, and maintained a stubborn silence" (Patton 2010:105-106). Ibn Hanbal was flogged but later on released, and he was not brought in for trial again, most likely due to the fear of the caliph of a popular uprising (Patton 2010:112). That the caliph let him go is explained by Ibn al-Jawzi as a gesture of fearing an outburst of violence (Ibn al-Jawzi 69:56). His popularity is also shown in that the caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 847–861) attempted to employ him and offered him several grants. Ibn Hanbal attended the caliphal court repeatedly, but the biographies tell that he did not appreciate it. He never directly refused the invitations but persistently excused himself. He accepted grants, but gave them away as *sadaqah* (voluntary charity). The caliph eventually sent him a message which released him from the obligation to appear before him (Ibn al-Jawzi 73. See also Patton 2010:145–146).

From this background, it may be easier to understand the strategies of forbidding wrong. Later Hanbalis became infamous due to their attempts at "correcting" others. Ibn Hanbal wished to "correct" the immoral behavior of others too, but he promoted a "passive resistance". One example is that he refused to eat food cooked in his son's oven, since he had accepted a caliphal grant (Ibn al-Jawzi 49.13, 49.20). Cooperson refers to this as being due to "horror of ritual pollution", equaling it to *warā*', in the sense of scrupulousness or scrupulosity. Cooperson holds that *wara*' meant renouncing luxury (Cooperson 2013:xii-xiii; see also Urvoy 2012).

The biography presents Ibn Hanbal's strategy as forbidding wrongs "in the heart". As previously indicated, this passive method changed with later Hanbalis. In the following, I will give a brief presentation of the conflicts of interpretations of the Hanbali creed, mainly through the figures of al-Barbahari and al-Khallal, who seem to have dominated two "parties" of Hanbalis during the 10th century.

FORBIDDING OF WRONG IN THE 10TH CENTURY

Apart from Ibn Hanbal, textual sources referring to later periods do not give much evidence of how forbidding wrong was practiced. After a time of relative quietude, Hanbalis reached the surface in the 10th century through what Cook calls "notorious troublemakers", where al-Barbahari (867–941) is described as a preacher and demagogue (Cook 2001:116). In Cook's words, a "muscular" Hanbali "violence was rampant on the streets of Baghdad" during the 10th century (Cook 2001:116). The activity is documented throughout the Buyids (945–1055) and far into the Seljuk period (1055–1194). Cook notes that our available sources from the 10th century appear as records of "high principles" and "high drama", but not "much of the daily round of for-bidding wrong" (Cook 2001:114). Hanbali agitation decreases later on, which coincides with a closer tie being established with the ʿAbbasid state, which lasts until 1258.

Joel L. Kraemer describes al-Barbahari as being highly influential, causing urban unrest, and supporting the persecution of al-Tabari (838–923) (Kraemer 1986:61). Al-Barbahari agitated against all whom he considered committing innovation (bidʿah), and his method of correction was hands on. Among his "others" he included Shiites, Sufis and dogmatic theologians, also targeting "ordinary Muslims" not abid-ing to a Hanbali lifestyle. He was a charismatic leader who conducted a pietistic struggle to transfer his view of a moral vision on society, which erupted in violence and drew immediate attention from the authorities. His struggle must be understood related to the context of Baghdad during his time, after the *mihnah* and the many interpretations of Islam that flourished. Christopher Melchert holds that Hanbalis at the time of al-Barbahari exaggerated Ibn Hanbal's accomplishments due to their wish to compete with the other juridical traditions that were being established, notably the Shafiʿi *madhhab*, and particularly the Hanafi *madhhab* who grew stronger and were favored early during the ʿAbbasids (Melchert 1997:152–153). Hence, the behavior on behalf of the Traditionalists can be understood as part of an internal power struggle.

The caliphate was invested with executive power but they were in need of religious legitimacy. Therefore, the jurists managed to keep their relevance, but as seen, most early Hanbalis attempted to stay clear of the caliphal court, but still impacted on society due to popular support. In her forthcoming article "*al-madhhab al-jarīrī*: Natural Law Theory, Human Rights, and the Rule of Law in an Islamic School of Law", Ulrika Mårtensson discusses that the positions held on the Qur'an during *mihnah* have been interpreted as having political implications. The dogma of the created Qur'an, established as a state doctrine, transferred the interpretive and legislative authority to the caliph, removing it from the jurists. After *mihnah*, the caliph continued to be the symbol of Muslim unity and the official head, but not the source of religious belief. The religious scholars developed independently of the state and held "a more complete authority over the communal personal, religious and doctrinal aspects of Islam" (Lapidus 1996:12). Their sources of authority were the Qur'an and Sunnah, not caliphal pronouncements. "The traditionists expected the caliph to uphold the truth and law, but not to define its content, because as the ultimate object of Muslim devotion, the law stood beyond the Caliph" (Lapidus 1975:382–383).

Hanbalis mounted popular demonstrations during the 10th century. Their actions were often directed against another Islamic position which they rejected, such as Shiites or followers of specific individuals, such as al-Tabari (Mottahedeh 2001:24–25). The Hanbalis are said to have been angry at al-Tabari because he did not include Ibn Hanbal as one of the great jurists, and al-Tabari was according to some sources buried secretly in his house at night, in order to avoid tumult (Muir 1915:568, note 1). Melchert writes: "It would seem to have been al-Barbahārī's faction that persecuted the polymath al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) during al-Khallāl's lifetime" (Melchert 1997:152). Franz Rosenthal questions whether that was actually the case and he holds that "The role of Ḥanbalite hostility, though real, seems to have been exaggerated in connection with his death as it was in his life" (Rosenthal 1989:78). Still, several sources address it in this manner, which of course may be

a Hanbali reconstruction, as part of a strategy to seek authority and reducing the influence of opponents.

Even though al-Tabari shared many views with the Traditionalists, such as the need of text-based laws and the doctrine of the uncreated Qur'an (Mårtensson 2016), the relationship between them seem to have been everything but good. Mårtensson mentions that Hanbalis attempted to prevent students attending his lectures on the Qur'an (2016:10). One reason may be that al-Tabari reserved the title *amīr al-mu'minīn* (commander of the faithful) for 'Ali, above 'Umar. This would not have been strategic if he intended to silence Hanbali critique (Mårtensson 2016:10). The relationship between al-Tabari and the Hanbalis is also commented upon by Rosenthal in the general introduction to al-Tabari's *Ta'rīkh*. It will be mentioned here since it addresses the situation and the status of the Hanbalis at this time. Rosenthal argues that the struggle may be a consequence of al-Tabari's independent judgement in matters of law. He states that anyone insisting on giving independent judgements "could expect to encounter determined hostility" (Rosenthal 1989:71). The relationship with the Hanbalis is described as having had an important and disturbing impact on al-Tabari's life.

As mentioned, the enmity is presented as likely due to al-Tabari omitting Ibn Hanbal from a publication on jurists (*ikthilāf*). Allegedly, al-Tabari's opinion was that Ibn Hanbal was not a jurist but (merely) a scholar of *hadīth*. He had also expressed elsewhere that he did not see anyone transmit legal opinions from Ibn Hanbal. Rosenthal notes that al-Tabari may not have addressed these issues in public, but that the Hanbalis probably held suspicions about his views about their *madhhab*. However, Rosenthal also notes that the context is an important factor in order to understand the hostilities. During this time, the Hanbalis were not as established as the other juridical *madhāhib* and wished to promote themselves. Al-Tabari was a great jurist well connected with the state administration and he developed an independent legal method, crystallizing into *madhhab Jarīrī* (Mårtensson 2016:19). Al-Tabari and other individuals of prominence were likely considered rivals, and

among the Hanbalis at this time were those who did not reject the use of violence (Rosenthal 1989:63-71). Rosenthal also mentions al-Barbahari in the introduction, and holds that his name was never mentioned in connection with al-Tabari in the sources, but he states that "he probably must be seen as the person behind much of it" (Rosenthal 1989:72).

As an example of how correction could look like in practice, the following will mainly focus on the approach to Shiites on behalf of the Barbaharians, not least because this is explicitly addressed in historiographical sources. Al-Barbahari is mentioned in the first volume of the chronicles by historian Ibn Miskawayh (932–1030), *Tajārib al-umam* (Experiences of nations), where he is described as the head of the Hanbalis (*ra'īs al-hanbaliya*), and it is written that he was arrested together with some of his supporters and they were sent to Basra by boat. The chronicles explains that it was the result of popular agitation, following an incident when a courtier proposed that the Umayyad caliph Mu'awiya should be cursed in mosques (Ibn Miskawayh 1920:260–261). This caused unrest, which is understandable considering that it was a political issue. The Shiites were critical of Mu'awiya due to his opposing 'Ali and establishing the Umayyad dynasty. Naturally, cursing him would outrage Sunnis, especially Traditionalists, and as a result they took to the streets (see Hurvitz 2011:44).

Al-Barbahari went into hiding after the chief of the police in Baghdad decided in 935 that al-Barbahari's followers were not allowed to meet and some of them were imprisoned. This was two years after the cursing proposal. The explanation given in the chronicles to their arrest is their assaults on people (Ibn Miskawayh 1920:322). It is not clear what actually started the unrest, whether it was the courtiers or generals or the rumor spread about the cursing of Mu'awiya, but the chronicles agree that the caliph and Hanbalis were on a collision course, which was at its peak between 930–939 (Hurvitz 2011:45. See also Melchert 1997:150–152).

Although al-Barbahari was hiding, and some Hanbalis deported, the unrest continued. The Hanbalis looted shops in 935, attacked wine

sellers, singing girls and they smashed musical instruments. They put a
Shiite quarter in Baghdad on fire, following the arrest of one of al-
Barbahari's followers (Hurvitz 2011:48). In 939 they molested people
going to festivities at a mosque (Melchert 1997:151. See also Cook
2001, chapter 6). They "broke into homes, poured out wine, smashed
musical instruments, and even interrogated couples on the street to as-
sure that they were conducting themselves properly" (Kraemer
1986:61). Al-Radi even issued an edict that condemned Hanbalis for
promoting anthropomorphism, for molesting other Muslims and accus-
ing Shiites of infidelity. They were also accused of inviting to veneration
by the tomb of Ibn Hanbal, simultaneously as they condemned the
Shiites for pilgrimage to the tombs of the Imams (Kraemer 1986:61–
62). In 941, his followers attempted to destroy a Shiite mosque and
attacked money changers and bankers. A month later al-Barbahari died
from hemorrhage (*qiyām al-dam*), and was secretly buried in the house
where he hid (Melchert 1997:151).

The Barbaharians thus caused rioting in the streets as a part of their
activist hands-on forbidding of wrong and as a result, they were on a
constant collision course with the caliphal authorities. This was not a
successful strategy and as we shall see, this kind of behavior did not
continue.

DEVELOPMENT OF QUIETISM

We may ask why the Hanbali *madhhab* did not spread as the others.
One reason is that it developed later and did not produce many judges.
We should note though that Ibn Hanbal's son Salih (d. 980) took up a
position as judge, unwillingly but forced to due to debts. However, this
attitude had changed with Abu Ya'la ibn al-Farra' (990–1066). He
vitalized the Hanbalis and brought forth a systematic legal framing
(Cook 2001:123) As seen, Ibn Hanbal refused to take any official
position, which seems to have been the rule among early Traditionalists.
Moreover, later Hanbali use of violence, severity and fanaticism
alienated people, "especially in forbidding the bad as under al-

Barbahārī" (Melchert 1997:153). Melchert argues that other reasons can be added, such as the fact that many students arrived in Baghdad who came from affluent classes, who would not appreciate the Barbaharian way of correcting others (Melchert 1997:154).

Melchert notes that: "[t]he street-fighting Ḥanbalism of al-Barbahārī lasted for some time, but it was al-Khallāls semi-rationalist jurisprudence that led to Ibn Taymīyah and the survival of Ḥanbali vitality into modern times" (Melchert 1997:155). And it is to Abu Bakr al-Khallal (ca 848–923) that we shall turn next. Melchert holds that "al-Barbahārī's program of violent opposition to these disturbers of public decorum went directly against al-Khallāl's teaching. Enforcement of morality by private parties had long been termed enjoining the good and forbidding the bad" (Melchert 1997:151). There is nothing that indicates that al-Khallal would have approved of wine and singing girls and the like, but, unlike the Barbaharians, he "discouraged active interference" (Melchert 1997:151). This called for a more quietist approach, and one that did not cause the attention of the caliphal court.

Not much is known about al-Khallal apart from him being a jurist among Ibn Hanbal's students, and that he compiled responses by Ibn Hanbal. In the biography of Ibn al-Jawzi on Ibn Hanbal, al-Khallal is described as very dedicated to collecting Ibn Hanbal's knowledge (*'ulūm*) (Ibn al-Jawzi 100:22). Through al-Khallal, *masā'il* were collected from vast geographical areas and he is credited with several writings. Most of them have not survived, but are cited by well-known scholars, such as Ibn Taymiya (1263–1328) and some of his students (Ahmad 1970:248). Al-Khallal is thus credited with preserving the teaching of Ibn Hanbal. He is described as a great authority during his time (Ahmad 1970:245–247). Due to him, the Hanbali *madhhab* formed into a tradition like the other *madhāhib* (Melchert 1997:137, 143–147).

The duty of forbidding wrong has been thoroughly analyzed by Cook, who notes that there are textual sources bearing on this duty. However, these do not provide detailed descriptions of daily practice. Cook notes though that the exception is the early period when Hanbalism took shape. From this time, responsa exist that address

concerns of an everyday life character. He also notes that Hanbalis were not theoretically interested but rather concrete and specific, which has a bearing on the responsa (Cook 2001:87).

Among the collections of al-Khallal is a treatise on Ibn Hanbal's views on forbidding wrong. The treatise is very much a repetition of Ibn Hanbal's passive stance. It does not call for violence. Rather, one should forbid wrong in private. But if confronted with wine, one should pour it out. However, a sealed container with wine should not be disturbed. One should not actively search for wine or interfere with those selling wine under the protection of the caliph. Upon seeing musical instruments, they should be broken, but one should not seek the source if hearing drumming or singing (Melchert 1997:151).

Al-Khallal's treatise brings some illuminating aspects on forbidding wrong. Cook notes that most examples refer to wine, women and song. One feature is that one should admonish and forbid the offender, and the stance of leaving authorities (*sultān*) out is explicit (Cook 2001:90. For an extensive presentation of the treatise, see Cook 2001, chapter 5 "Ibn Hanbal"). One reason to leave authorities out is that one cannot be sure what kind of punishment they will impose on the offender. It may be too much or too little, and the risk of the authorities being brutal is vital. Cook illustrates that the treatise can be arranged on a continuum from the public sphere to the intimate sphere of the privacy of people's homes. Drinking in public or quietly at home are very different matters and should be corrected differently (Cook 2001:93–94). This attitude was most likely not considered a threat to the authorities, which may explain why it grew more popular and became the dominant strategy.

The responses to offences that appear in al-Khallal's treatise are not explicitly stated however, and there is no evidence of how it was conducted in practice by al-Khallal or his supporters. However, it seems that all adults had this duty of forbidding wrong. It also seems that Ibn Hanbal accepted performance of forbidding wrong with the heart as "easement" (*tashīl*), even though some kind of action seems to have been preferred (Cook 2001:95). Cook's reading of the treatise suggests that "with the heart" means nothing more than an "unobservable mental

act" (Cook 2001:96). He holds that the "default mode" of commanding and forbidding is with the tongue, normally in a civil fashion. Rudeness is only accepted when a wrongdoer (*fāsiq*) does not listen to the correcting person – and calling someone *fāsiq* is considered speaking rudely in the responsa (Cook 2001:96). However, to correct with the hands is also present. One example is the destruction of objects deemed offensive, such as instruments or containers of wine, but only when confronted with such objects in public. Another is action directed to the offender, but the level of violence is low. One example is separating fighting boys in the street. Another is simply to remove yourself from the scene where you confront offence. Cooke exemplifies with when you hear a drum and cannot break it, you can simply leave (Cook 2001:97). Furthermore, correcting others appears to be an individual duty, but you may bring helpers. Ibn Hanbal suggested making a fuss to draw a crowd to help in preventing an offence, such as when you encounter someone playing music (Cook 2001:98).

Another question addressed in the treatise is when one should *not* perform the duty. Cook notes that there are three reasons that can be deduced, namely when you fear for your safety, when the offender ignores your corrections after repeated attempts, and the third is related to the demands of privacy. Heroism, or martyrdom, is neither expected nor recommended (Cook 2001:98–99). As Cook stressed, the examples in the treatise show that privacy is stressed and that the duty must relate to that, and "[t]his severely limits any kind of gate-crashing of people's homes" (Cook 2001:99). This follows the dictum "Do not investigate what is not out in the open (*mā ghāba*)" (Cook 2001:100). This is a different approach than that of the Barbaharians. It is this passive stance that has dominated Hanbalism after the 10th century, and which follows the example of Ibn Hanbal. This strategy seems to have been tolerated by the authorities as well which may explain its continuation and establishment as the dominant Hanbali view.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Thus, we can note Ibn Hanbal's apolitical and passive stance towards the duty of forbidding wrong, and that there seems to have been different Traditionalist strategies during the 10th century. There is no evidence of a united Hanbali *madhhab* during the 10th century. Al-Khallal and al-Barbahari seem to have been heading two of the Traditionalist parties. There is mentioning of three parties in the sources. The Hanbali theologian Ibn Battah (916–997), who knew al-Barbahari, relates that a follower of al-Barbahari passed a heretic scoffing at "these Hanbalis". The Barbaharian said that there were three kinds of Hanbalis: "the type of the ascetics, who fast and pray; a type who write [*hadīth*] and learn jurisprudence; and a type who slap every scoffer like you," and then he slapped him (Melchert 1997:150). Another distinction between the two is that al-Khallal promoted a Traditionalism of elaboration of legal doctrine, while al-Barbahari rather promoted Traditionalism as a style of public life (Melchert 1997:150). Melchert mentions that he did not bring up al-Barbahari in his history of Hanbali jurisprudence because his contributions seem to be negligible and he found no references to his juridical opinions. Rather, al-Barbahari is described as becoming famous due to rioting (Melchert 1997:150). This is perhaps the case, and there is no evidence that al-Khallal did support any of the urban unrest caused by other Hanbalis. We should also note that the formal and systematic accounts that we have from later Hanbalis seem to promote a stance similar to that of Ibn Hanbal. If we only had these sources, we would not be able to say anything about what was going on in the streets (Cook 2001:138). This is apparent in *Sharh al-Sunnah* by al-Barbahari in which he does not call for any explicit action towards wrongdoers, but rather provides examples of the strategy of avoiding wrongdoers (such as not sitting with them). The advocated correction very much resembles Ibn Hanbal's passive stance (al-Barbahari 2014. See also Cook 2001:128). The image of al-Barbahari and his followers as rioters and forbidding evil hands on is thus based on the descriptions found in later historiographical sources.

From the above, we can note that al-Barbahari seems to have been a trouble-maker with a strong activist invocation. He must have considered himself superior, and he and his followers actively displayed contempt for others. His behavior attempted to construct authority in religious and moral terms, where the forbidding of wrong was to be active and hands on, and the correction of others an obligation. Considering the situation of the populace in Baghdad and the increasing influence of Shiites, this does not appear as strange. However, it seems that it was rather al-Khallal who "won" the Traditionalist internal battle of the 10th century, and influenced later developments. His view on correction has since influenced Hanbali interpretations, and due to him, Traditionalism as a *madhhab* developed. This may well be the result of realizing pragmatically that the rioting of the Barbaharians did not have a future, and in order to preserve Traditionalism it was necessary to adopt a more lenient strategy, which would not cause the authorities too much concern.

This relation to the political authorities is an explanation to why the passive stance became dominant. As seen, Ibn Hanbal avoided the authorities as much as he could. He, like al-Khallal, advocated forbidding of wrong with the heart, and a kind of "passive resistance" which seems to have been rather pleasing, or at least not disturbing, to the political authorities. Such Hanbalis demanded loyalty to, or even avoidance of, the authorities. As time went on, more Hanbalis were drawn into the caliphal bureaucracy as judges and advisors, which seem to have strengthened the passive political stance and the stress on loyalty towards the authorities, as well as the strategy of passive correction being conducted mainly "with the heart". Such an attitude did not constitute a threat to the political authorities and it appears to have become the established consensus concerning the forbidding of wrong among Hanbalis. And thus, Hanbalism developed into a tradition like the other *madhāhib*. That the Barbaharians were rioting in Baghdad appears to have been an exception to this dominant passive interpretation of forbidding wrong, and it must be explained by the persona of al-Barbahari, who managed to gather followers among the urban masses who were

neither pleased with their situation at large, nor with the weakening 'Abbasid caliphate and increasing Shiite influences.

One explanation to the changes in attitude to the duty of forbidding wrong between Ibn Hanbal and the Barbaharians of the 10th century may simply be the increase of the number of Hanbalis, which most likely increased their confidence. Cook refers to the geographer Muqaddasi (ca 945/946–991) who stated that Shiites and Hanbalis dominated Baghdad's population in the second half of the 10th century. One century later, the Shafi'ite Nizam al-Mulk (1017–1092), a very influential vizier in the Seljuq empire, admitted that Hanbalis were predominant. Moreover, one explanation is that the 'Abbasid state was in a continuous decline during both the Buyids and the later Seljuqs who had usurped the actual power. In this context, the Hanbalis and the declining 'Abbasid caliphate were in need of each other facing these rival Shiite powers. One indication of the new relationship to the court is that Hanbalis did accept taking public office, which, as we have seen, was not the case of Ibn Hanbal and most of the Hanbalis of the 10th century. The close connections lasted until the fall of the 'Abbasids (Cook 2001:121–126). Cook further notes that the closer the alignment between the Hanbalis and the 'Abbasid court, the less talk about the duty of forbidding wrong appears in the sources (Cook 2001:127–128).

As a final comment, we can note that the duty to forbid wrong has resurfaced recently. There has been an increase in anti-Shiite polemics from Sunni Muslims, especially those adhering to Wahhabism or forms of Hanbali inspired fundamentalism (see for example Abdo 2013; Larsson 2016; Linge 2016; Maréchal & Zemni 2013; Olsson 2017a; Steinberg 2011). What is noticeable is that the method of forbidding of wrong is promoted by the majority as ideally being "in the heart" or "with the tongue" (in a civil manner), which is a method in line with the examples of Ibn Hanbal as portrayed in the biographical notes, as well as the views collected by al-Khallal. In some cases the forbidding of wrong is promoted as "with the hands", as within the frames of the Islamic State and other similarly violently inclined groups. We can also note that among apolitical Salafis today, al-Barbahari's *Sharh al-sunnah* is used

to identify what a good lifestyle is and how to relate to others, not be-longing to the in-group. As mentioned, *Sharh al-sunnah* promotes for-bidding of wrongs as mainly an act "in the heart". In such groups, no attention seems to be payed to historiographies or what kind of correction al-Barbahari in fact committed in practice. Hence, even al-Barbahari is used today as promoting the forbidding of wrong rather as a method of distancing oneself from wrong and condemning wrongdoers in the heart (Olsson 2017b).

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ABSTRACT

The article focuses on the formative period of juridical traditions in the 'Abbasid city of Baghdad. Ibn Hanbal (d. 855) was an early important Traditionalist, who practiced a passive resistance towards those he considered to hold faulty beliefs, or was considered guilty of faulty conduct. The focus of the article is the conflictual situation that can be related to conflicts of interpretative authority, especially regarding the duty of forbidding wrong, not the least during the 10th century, when several conflicts lead to social upheaval and violent conflict, for example during the lead of al-Barbahari (d. 941). The political, social and economic situation in the city of Baghdad is the context and functions as an explanatory background to the conflicts of inter-pretations between various Islamic factions. Following the violence and turbulence addressed in the article, a comment is made on the reasons as to why a more passive form of correction when forbidding wrong became the dominant strategy, which was promoted and practiced by, amongst others Abu Bakr al-Khallal (d. 923). One explanation is the pragmatic realization that rioting did not have a future, and in order to preserve Traditionalism it was necessary to adopt a more lenient strategy, which would not cause the caliph too much concern.