

# Exploring a New Link to the *Ṭabaqāt* of Exegetes: The Literature of *Ṭhabat* - with Special Focus on Ibn ‘Aqīlah al-Makkī’s Life Story\*

ZAKİR DEMİR\*\*

## Abstract

Numerous genres of writing have emerged in the tradition of Islāmic thought including *ṭabaqāt*, *ṭhabat*, *ta’rifāt*, *mufradāt*, and *muṣṭalaḥāt*. The present study delves into the possibility that the genre of *ṭhabat* is a new field within the tradition of *ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*. By ascertaining the works written in the genre of *ṭhabat*, one can obtain comprehensive information about the life stories of scholars including such details as their lineage, family, birth, patronymic-teknonymic and toponymic names, cultural background, scholarly personality, intellectual journeys, masters, pupils, contemporaries, works, denomination, and time of death. Unlike bio-bibliographical works, details such as the dates when the polymaths were students of which teachers, what books they read, the curriculum of their training periods, and where and for what purpose they travelled on which date can be commonly determined by referring to the *ṭhabat* literature. Therefore, the tradition of *ṭhabat* is an important referential source for finding out the biographies of the commentators, particularly those specialized in ḥadīth narratives. In the final analysis this study elucidates that the tradition of *ṭhabat* is convenient for being a subsidiary link to the tafsīr *ṭabaqāt*, inferring from its possibility of providing comprehensive information about the life stories, erudite personalities, travels, and works of exegetes like Ibn ‘Aqīlah al-Makkī, who was also an authority in the science of ḥadīth and proved his knowledgeable maturity in other fields particularly tafsīr.

**Keywords:** Tafsīr (Qur’ānic Exegesis), *al-Mufasssīr* (Exegete), *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn* (the Literature of Historiography of Tafsīr), the Tradition of *Ṭhabat* (Intellectual Autobiography), Ibn ‘Aqīlah al-Makkī.

\* This study was supported by Siirt University Scientific Research Projects (SIU-BAP) Commission (Project No: 2022-SİÜLH-043).

\*\* Assistant Professor, Siirt University Faculty of Theology, Department of Tafsīr, Siirt, Türkiye. / Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Siirt Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi, Tefsir Anabilim Dalı  
ORCID: orcid.org/0000-0003-3620-7233. e-mail: zakirdemir42@gmail.com

DOI: 10.26570/isad.1505801 • Gelis/Received 27.06.2024 • Kabul/Accepted 28.10.2024

Atif/Citation Demir, Zakir, "Exploring a New Link to the *Ṭabaqāt* of Exegetes: The Literature of *Ṭhabat* - with Special Focus on Ibn ‘Aqīlah al-Makkī’s Life Story", *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 53 (2025): 29-55.

## İbn Akile el-Mekki'nin Hayat Hikâyesi Örneğinde Tefsir Tabakat Geleneğine Yeni Bir Halka: Sebet Literatürü

### Öz

İslam düşünce geleneğinde *tabakat*, *sebet*, *ta'rifat*, *müfredat* ve *mustalahat* gibi birçok telif türü bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışma mezkûr telif modellerinden sebet yazım türünde kaleme alınan çalışmalara yoğunlaşmakta ve bunların tefsir tabakat geleneğine yeni bir alan olmasının imkânını irdelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Zira sebet türünde kaleme alınan eserlerin muhtevâsından hareketle ilim adamlarının nesebi, ailesi, doğumu, kültürel birikimi, ilmî şahsiyeti, seyahatleri, hocaları, talebeleri, meclis arkadaşları, çağdaşları, eserleri, mezhebi, vefatı gibi hayat hikâyelerine dair kapsamlı malumatlar, ilgili döneme dair belirgin kanıtlar elde edilebilir. Bir diğer ifadeyle biyo-bibliyografik türde kaleme alınan eserlerin aksine sebet edebiyatına başvurularak ilim adamlarının hangi tarihte hangi hocaların rahle-yi tedrisinde buldukları, hangi kitapları okudukları, kendi dönemlerinin eğitim müfredatı, hangi tarihte nereye ne maksatla seyahat ettikleri gibi ayrıntılı veriler yaygın olarak saptanabilmektedir. Dolayısıyla sebet geleneği, başta hadis yönü bulunan müfessirlerin kartografyasını çıkarmada önemli kaynak olma niteliği taşımaktadır. Son tahlilde bu çalışmada İbn Akile el-Mekki gibi hadis ilminde otorite olup başta tefsir olmak üzere diğer ilimlerde de yetkin kabul edilen müfessirlerin hayat hikâyeleri, ilmî şahsiyetleri, entelektüel ilişkileri, yolculukları ve eserlerine dair kapsamlı malumatları tespit etmenin imkânından hareketle sebet geleneğinin tefsir tabakatına yeni bir halka olduğu kanaatine ulaşılmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Tefsir, müfessir, tefsir biyografi edebiyatı (tabakâtü'l-müfessirîn), sebet geleneği, İbn Akile el-Mekki.

## Introduction

There are parallels between a polymath's life story and his/her developing ideas, as well as between traces of his/her personal life experience and the period in which s/he lived. In other words, a nexus exists between ideas and events, namely the influence of social, communal, and political events on the thoughts and works of most scholars, is generally acknowledged. From this point of view, bio-bibliographical literary works such as *ṭabaqāt al-mufasssirin*, *ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā'*, *ṭabaqāt al-naḥwīyīn*, *ṭabaqāt al-muḥaddithīn*, *ṭabaqāt al-awliyā'*, *ṭabaqāt al-shu'arā'*, and *tarājim aḥwāl* are the most noteworthy sources of reference for understanding the thought world of Muslim scholars and their works in terms of content and scope. When the case is the tafsir tradition, there is a distinct literature that incorporates information about the life stories, works, and especially the commentaries of exegetes. In this regard, the expression *ṭabaqāt al-mufasssirin* usually includes in the title system of the relevant works. In this context al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), al-Dāwūdī (d. 945/1539), Adirnawī (d. after 1095/1684), Sirri Pasha of Crete (d. 1313/1895), Aḥmad Jawdat Afandi of Pergamon (d. 1344/1926), 'Umar Naṣūḥī Bilman (d. 1391/1971),

Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Banjabīri (d. 1407/1986), Muḥammad al-Fāḍil Ibn 'Āshūr (d. 1390/1970) and 'Ādil Nuwayhid (d. 1417/1996) are some of the authors whose works are found in the relevant literature. In these works, which are kindred and similar to biographies, the alphabetical method is generally adopted, and the life stories of the commentators are analyzed in a concise and categorical manner.

In the prominent sources in the tradition of *ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn* there exists quite limited data on the life stories of Qur'ān commentators. By way of illustration, al-Suyūṭī gives a brief descriptive information on 136 exegetes; al-Dāwūdī, 704; Adirnavī, 644; Sirrī Pasha, 54; Jawdat Afandī, 98; Bilman, 709; Banjabīri, 688; Ibn 'Āshūr, 10, and Nuwayhid about 2000.<sup>1</sup> However, based on the data mentioned in these works, the lineage, family, birthdate, birthplace, cultural background, scholarly personality, intellectual journeys, teachers, students, contemporaries, works, denomination and time of death of exegetes cannot be determined sufficiently. The same is true for the works written under titles such as *mu'jam al-mufasssīrīn*, *al-tafsīr wa-al-mufasssīrīn*, *manāhij al-mufasssīrīn*, and *tāriḫ al-tafsīr*, which are used in a close sense to the term *ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*. Accordingly, such works written exclusively for the literature of historiography of tafsīr are inadequate due to containing restricted biographical information, and this literature has not progressed adequately regarding content and scope, and it remains scrawny and undeveloped in terms of method, quantity, and quality. Based upon this motive, my thesis is that in order for this field to enhance, it is indispensable to add alternative types and models of bio-bibliographical writing encountered in genres different from the tradition of *ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*. The present study argues that *thabat* and its equivalents, supplying detailed data for both transmitters (*muḥaddithūn*) and exegetes' lifespan, is a new subsidiary link to the literature of historiography of tafsīr.<sup>2</sup>

- 1 Some of the recent studies on the literature of *ṭabaqāt* of exegetes are as follows: Abay, "Yeni Bir Tabakātü'l-Müfesssīrīn Denemesi", 275-288; Saleh, "Preliminary Remarks on the Historiography of Tafsīr in Arabic", 6-40; Kaya, "Hadis ve Tarih İlimleri Arasında Tefsir Tabakat Literatürü", 33-65; Özcan, "Tefsir Tabakāt Eserleri", 66-87; Deliser, "Tarihsel Arka Planlı Yüzyıl Okumaları-I", 298-329.
- 2 There are also a number of works entitled *al-fihrist*, *al-fihris*, *al-fahrasah*, *al-mu'jam*, *al-mashyakhah*, and *al-barnāmaj* which are equivalent to the term *thabat*. For example, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Bāqī b. Muḥammad al-Anṣārī's (d. 535/1141) *al-Mashyakhah al-kubrā* and Badr al-Dīn Ibn Jamā'ah's (d. 733/1333) *al-Mashyakhah*, are some of them. All of these works, which are equivalent to the term *thabat*, contain important biographical data on the historiography of tafsīr. Therefore, I believe that the literature that includes all the works on the subject of *thabat* and its equivalents, is a field that complements the deficiencies in the *ṭabaqāt* of exegetes. However, as my aim is to add a new link to the *ṭabaqāt* of exegetes with the example of Ibn 'Aqilah al-Makki, and biographical data on him can be found in

The works written in the genre of *thabat*, in a way resembling autobiographical literature, are the most basic referential sources when it comes to comprehending the life story, world of thought, intellectual personality, activities, scholarly journeys, and works, if any, of the relevant author. *Thabat* also provides comprehensive information on the life stories of the teachers, contemporaries, and students of its author, and the educational curriculum of that period. Therefore, essential historical data and some clues such as the places where the polymaths settled, their erudite positions, and the dates on which their lectures began and ended are found in *thabat*. In other words, since the relationship between teacher and pupil is observed in *thabats*, the author of the *thabat* is an eyewitness or primary source for himself/herself as well as for the scholar s/he addresses. In this respect, these works are like court records, containing detailed findings and diegetics about scholars with many facets, particularly exegesis, narration, and mysticism. Based on the fact that the tradition of *thabat* comprises encyclopedic biographical information and is important in determining the life stories of the commentators, this study reveals that it is a subsidiary field to the literature of historiography of tafsir.

In addition to making up for a deficiency in the historiography another motivation that prompted me to prepare this study is the fact that the tradition of *thabat* and its relationship with the literature of *ṭabaqāt al-mufasssirin* has not been sufficiently represented as the subject of any academic study, explicitly or implicitly.<sup>3</sup> This study, therefore, begins to fill the desideratum and gap caused by the lack of information and material on this subject. In this regard, this methodological research which queries whether the tradition of *thabat* is either an alternative or a new link to the literature of historiography of tafsir is original. As from the example of Muḥammad b. ‘Aqilah al-Makki (d. 1150/1737)—one of the towering figures in the history of Islāmic thought as well as a versatile and prolific scholar who wrote works in almost every field of Islāmic sciences including exegesis, ḥadith narrations, jurisprudence, mysticism, theology, history and prophetic biography (*siyar*)—the relationship

---

works on the subject of *thabat* literature, I have preferred to confine the whole of my article to the genre of *thabat*. For terms used in a close sense with *thabat*, see Muwaffaq ‘Abd Allah, *‘Ilmu al-athbāt*, 15–22.

- 3 The Spanish scholar José María Fórneas Besteiro (1926-2003) wrote a doctoral thesis on Ibn ‘Aṭīyah al-Andalusī’s (d. 541/1147) *al-Fihrist* in 1970. See Besteiro, *Elencos Bibliográficos Arábigoandaluces*. A summary of this thesis was published in 1971. For a detailed evaluation on this subject, see Celia del Moral Molina, “José M<sup>a</sup> Fórneas Besteiro (1926-2003),” *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos Sección Árabe-Islām (MEAHI)* 52 (2003), 276; Eşer, *Hadis İlminde Fehrese Literatürü*, 11. In the aforementioned work, Besteiro may have established a relationship between the literature of *fahrasah* and *ṭabaqāt al-mufasssirin*. However, I did not have access to the study.

between the tradition of *thabat* and *ṭabaqāt al-mufasssirin* is examined and elaborated in this study.

The reason for choosing Ibn 'Aqilah al-Makki as an illustration is that although he is the author of *al-Ziyâdah wa-al-ihsân fî 'ulûm al-Qur'ân*, which is kind of the encyclopedia of Qur'anic sciences and one of the most comprehensive work produced in this field, he is not sufficiently recognized, and his work is not adequately referred to by the tafsîr chairs of academia in various parts of the Islâmîc world. This observation is supported by the fact that he and his work are neglected in the most important works on Qur'anic sciences written in the modern period. For instance, in Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Azîm al-Zurqânî's (d. 1367/1948) *Manâhil al-'irfân fî 'ulûm al-Qur'ân*, Muḥammad Abû Shuhbah's (d. 1403/1982) *al-Madkhal li-dirâsat al-Qur'ân*, Şubhî al-Şâlih's (1926-1986) *Mabâhith fî 'ulûm al-Qur'ân* and Mannâ' al-Qaṭṭân's (1925-1999) *Mabâhith fî 'ulûm al-Qur'ân*, it is observed that they do not mention Ibn 'Aqilah's work in their considerations of '*Ulûm al-Qur'ân* literature and do not refer to him in the integrity of their books.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, since Ibn 'Aqilah's life story and works have not been sufficiently studied, he is chosen as an example for the *thabat* literature to be a new field to the literature of historiography of tafsîr.<sup>5</sup>

In this direction the basic questions of the present study are as follows: What are the meanings attributed to the term *thabat* or its equivalents in Islâmîc thought? What are the works written in the tradition of *thabat*? In the case of Ibn 'Aqilah al-Makki—specifically is it possible to figure out an exegete's lineage, family, birth, cultural background, scholarly personality, educational journeys, masters, students, contemporaries, works, denomination, and time of death? Answering these and similar questions is an endeavor to understand the tradition of *thabat* as an alternative field to the tafsîr *ṭabaqât*. To answer these questions in this study, firstly, the etymological structure and terminological meanings of the word *thabat* are determined. Subsequently, the authors of *thabat* and their works in this genre are identified. Then, Ibn 'Aqilah's birth, his scholarly journeys, his intellectual personality, and his works are anatomized based on the genre

4 The majority of the authors who wrote works in the genre of '*Ulûm al-Qur'ân* in the modern period tried to comprehensively scrutinize the literature of Qur'anic sciences in their works. For the classifications in which Ibn 'Aqilah is not mentioned, see Zurqânî, *Manâhil al-'irfân*, I, 29-36; Abû Shuhbah, *al-Madkhal*, 27-43; Şâlih, *Mabâhith*, 117-287; Qattân, *Mabâhith*, 5-11.

5 Some of the academic studies on Ibn 'Aqilah al-Makki's life story, scholarly personality, and works are as follows: Birişik, *Muhammed b. Akile*, 2-48; Birişik, "İbn Akile", 304-6; Şener, *Haneî İbn Akile el-Mekki'nin el-Cevherü'l-Manzûm'da Ukûbât Âyetlerini Tefsirde Rivâyet Yöntemi*, 5-13; Demir, "İbn 'Akile el-Mekki'nin Kur'ân Lafızlarının İllâhîliğine Yaklaşımı", 602-19.

of *thabat*. And along the way important points that constitute a problem regarding his life story are scrutinized. Finally, on the basis of the example of Ibn ‘Aqilah, it is discussed whether *thabat* can be a subsidiary field for the science of exegesis or a new link to it.

## 1. A Descriptive Analysis of the Term *Thabat* and the Historical Development of the Related Literature

### 1.1. The Etymological Structure and Terminological Meaning of *Thabat*

In early dictionaries the word *thabat*, which derives from the root “th-b-t,” means “to stand firm, to be stable, to be constant, to be fixed, to be reliable, to hold out; to establish, to make fast; to prove; to pursue something.”<sup>6</sup> By way of illustration, in the Arabic language, there is an expression *lā aḥkum bikdhā illā bi-thabatin*, which means, “I judge this only on the basis of evidence.” Therefore, as a noun, *thabat* means “witness, testimony, proof, and evidence.” Moreover, the statement *rajulun thabatun/thabitun fī al-ḥarb* refers to “a person who is resistant in war.” The phrase *athbatahu al-suqmu* is an instrumental to express “illness haunted the person.”<sup>7</sup> Six forms of this root occur in the Qur’ān, totaling eighteen uses with meanings such as “to hold firmly, to stand firm, to make firm; to confirm; to consolidate; to hold fast, to persevere; to leave, to resist; being steadfast, firm, fixed, sure; act of confirming, affirming.”<sup>8</sup> For example, in the twenty-seventh verse of Sūrah Ibrāhīm, the phrase *al-qawl al-thābit* occurs with the meaning “firmly rooted, steadfast, sure, firm saying/word.”<sup>9</sup>

In ḥadīth terminology, when the *sukūn* diacritic (consonant stop) followed the letter “b”, i.e., the technical term *al-thabt* (الثَّبْتُ), is defined as ‘a reliable, trustworthy, and sound narrator (al-rāwī) in terms of his ability to memorize, transmit and ground narratives. The narration of a narrator who is identified with *al-thabt* is taken as valid evidence. Therefore, the term *al-thabt* is authoritatively used in the sense of “a reliable narrator who possesses the qualities of morality and competence” and is one of the most superior qualities in the way of degree among the phases of *ta’dīl* (narrator criticism). In this context when it is used in a singular form as

6 Ibn Durayd, *Jamharah al-lughah*, I, 252; Jawharī, *al-Sihāh*, I, 245; Zamakhsharī, *Asās al-balāghah*, I, 103-104; Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, II, 19. See also Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 101-102.

7 Jawharī, *al-Sihāh*, I, 245; Zamakhsharī, *Asās al-balāghah*, I, 103-104; Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, “thbt,” II, 19; Zabīdī, “thbt,” *Tāj al-‘arūs*, IV, 472.

8 Isfahānī, “thbt,” *Mufradāt*, 171; Ḥalabī, “thbt,” *Umdat al-huffāz*, I, 273. See also Badawi - Abdel Haleem, “thbt,” *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur’ānic Usage*, 140-41.

9 Demir, “Kur’ān’ın Bütünlüğünde Kullanılan Kav/Söz Terkiplerinin Mâhiyeti”, 920.

*thabtun*, it refers to the third level of *ta'dil*; and when it is used repeatedly as *thabtun-thabtun*, it signals the second phase of it. Accordingly, the narration of a narrator who is described as *thabtun* or *thabtun-thabtun* is considered reliable and acceptable.<sup>10</sup>

When the *fatḥah* diacritic (a small diagonal line placed above a letter) followed by the letter “b”, namely the term *al-thabat* (الثَّبَات) is used to refer to the indexes, catalogues and works in which an intellect recorded the ḥadīths, the people who heard the ḥadīths, their teachers, their narrations, and the books they read together.<sup>11</sup> Thereby, in ḥadīth terminology, *thabat* is a separate genre in which a polymath writes his own intellectual autobiography stemming from a long-phased learning and training period. As far as I can determine, the first scholar to define the word *thabat* in this technical and terminological meaning was Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497).<sup>12</sup> After him Zakariyā b. Muḥammad al-Anṣārī (d. 926/1520) explained this term in *Fatḥ al-Bāqī bi-sharḥ Alfīyat al-'Irāqī*; Muḥammad al-Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (d. 1205/1791), in *Tāj al-'arūs min Jawāhir al-Qāmūs*; and Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī (1886-1962), in *Fihris al-fahāris wa-al-athbāt*.<sup>13</sup>

Across the Muslim world, ḥadīth scholars also used the terms *al-fihrist*, *al-fihris*, *al-fahrasah*, *al-mu'jam*, *al-mashyakhah*, and *al-barnāmaj* in a close sense with the term *thabat*.<sup>14</sup> While in the eastern Islāmic world the *thabat* type was widespread, in the West Andalusian *muḥaddithis* generally preferred the word *barnāmaj* as the equivalent of this term.<sup>15</sup> The genres of *thabat*, *fihrist*, *fihris*, *fahrasah*, *mu'jam*, *mashyakhah*, and *barnāmaj* are employed in terms of recording the ḥadīths heard by a *muḥaddith* in various geographies. These terms, which proved the scholarly maturity in a sense and reflected the intellectual background of polymaths are used in a close sense with each other.<sup>16</sup>

10 Ibn al-Athīr, “thbt,” *al-Nihāyah*, I, 205-206; Irāqī, *al-Taḥqīd*, 133-134; Sakhāwī, *Fatḥ al-Mughīth*, II, 279; Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb al-rāwī*, I, 516-517. See also Uğur, *Ansiklopedik Hadis Terimleri Sözlüğü*, 353-354.

11 Sakhāwī, *Fatḥ al-Mughīth*, II, 279; Zabīdī, “thbt,” *Tāj al-'arūs*, IV, 477; Kattānī, *Fihris al-fahāris*, I, 68.

12 Sakhāwī, *Fatḥ al-Mughīth*, II, 279.

13 Anṣārī, *Fatḥ al-Bāqī*, I, 344; Zabīdī, “thbt,” *Tāj al-'arūs*, IV, 477; Kattānī, *Fihris al-fahāris*, I, 68.

14 For comprehensive analyses of the terms associated with *thabat*, see Kattānī, *Fihris al-fahāris*, I, 67-71; Pellat, “Fahrasa”, II, 743-744; Kandemir, “Fehrese”, 297-299; Reynolds, *Interpreting the Self*, 42; Eren, “Hadis Edebiyatında Mu'cem-Mesyaha Türü Kitaplar”, 19-28.

15 For far-reaching evaluations of the term *barnāmaj*, see Ahwānī, “Kutub barāmij”, 91-120.

16 For detailed evaluations on the *thabat*, see Sakhāwī, *Fatḥ al-mughīth*, II, 279; Zabīdī, “thbt,” *Tāj al-'arūs*, IV, 477; Kattānī, *Fihris al-fahāris*, I, 68.

## 1.2. The Historical Development of *Thabat* Literature

In the history of Islāmīc thought the catalogues and tractates written by a well-known scholar to record the names of those who participated in a learning activity with him, his masters, and the names of the works they studied together are generally known as *thabat*. There is a broad literature on this subject dating back to the classical period. Among the bio-bibliographical sources ‘Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī provided a wide coverage on the literature of *thabat*. In his work *Fihris al-fahâris wa-al-athbât* he stated that he had identified 112 *thabats* written by different authors from the Mashriq and Maghreb regions.<sup>17</sup> In relation to the literature of *thabat*, *al-Fihrist* by the commentator and narrator Ibn ‘Aṭīyah al-Andalusī (d. 541/1147) is considered to be the first work of this genre in which the name “al-Fihrist” appears in the title of the book.<sup>18</sup> However, this work is different from the genre of *thabat*.<sup>19</sup>

As far as I have been able to ascertain, the work of Abū Ja‘far Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Balawī al-Wādīāshī (d. 938/1532), called *al-Thabat*, is one of the earliest works of this genre surviving until modern times.<sup>20</sup> Likewise, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Bābili’s (d. 1077/1666) *thabat*, titled *Muntakhab al-asânid fī waṣli al-muṣannafât wa-al-ajzâ’ wa-al-masânid*, is one of the earliest examples of this genre.<sup>21</sup> Bābili was the master of Abū al-Mawāhib Muḥammad al-Ḥanbalī (d. 1126/1714), one of Ibn ‘Aqīlah al-Makki’s teachers. This indicates the existence of *thabat* tradition at least two generations before Ibn ‘Aqīlah.

It is fairly hard to allege that neither al-Balawī nor al-Bābili were the initiators of the genre of *thabat*. As previously stated, the fact that Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī was the first to define the term *thabat* means that literature about it existed at least before the 8<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century. Despite all these findings, this study does not aim to analyse the term genealogically, that is according to when the *thabat* first appeared and all the corresponding secondary literature on this subject. In other words, it is beyond the scope of this research to identify the individual authors who wrote works in the literature of *thabat*. Wherefore, it is circumscribed to mentioning the works of Ibn ‘Aqīlah himself, his masters, and his students with the title of *thabat* in the relevant literature. In this context, it should be noted that Ibn ‘Aqīlah, who has been chosen as the sample

17 Kattānī, *Fihris al-fahâris*, I, 51.

18 Eşer, *Hadis İlminde Fehrese Literatürü*, 7-15, 18, 45, 117.

19 Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, *Fihris Ibn ‘Aṭīyah*, 60-142.

20 Balawī, *al-Thabat*, 104-473.

21 Bābili, *Muntakhab al-asânid*, 33-164.



in this study, wrote a work in the genre of *thabat* in which he defined and introduced himself, entitled *al-Mawâhib al-jazîlah fî marwîyât al-faqîr ila Allah Muḥammad b. Aḥmad 'Aqîlah*.<sup>22</sup> He also bears another work, which he calls *Thabat ṣaghîr*. One of Ibn 'Aqîlah's students, Abû al-Ḥasan 'Alî b. Aḥmad b. Mukarram al-Şa'îdî al-'Adawî al-Mâlikî al-Azhari (d. 1189/1775), summarised his master's work *Thabat ṣaghîr* and entitled *Mukhtaşar thabat al-Sayyid Muḥammad b. Aḥmad 'Aqîlah*.<sup>23</sup>

Abû al-Baqâ' Ḥasan b. 'Alî b. Yaḥyâ b. 'Umar b. Aḥmad al-'Ujaimî al-Ḥanafi al-Makki (d. 1113/1702), one of Ibn 'Aqîlah's masters, also wrote two works in the genre of *thabat*, namely *Khabâyâ al-zawâyâ* and *Isbâl al-satr al-jamil 'alâ tarjamat al-'abd al-dhalîl*.<sup>24</sup> In these two books al-'Ujaimî included the biographies of his teachers. Likewise, another master of Ibn 'Aqîlah, Abû Muḥammad Shihâb al-Dîn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Nakhlî al-Makki al-Shâfi'î (d. 1130/1718) wrote a *thabat* treatise called *Bughyat al-ṭâlibîn li-bayân al-mashâyikh al-muḥaqqiqîn al-mu'tamadîn*.<sup>25</sup> As a final example, another of his masters, Jamâl al-Dîn 'Abd Allâh b. Sâlim b. Muḥammad al-Başrî al-Makki (d. 1134/1722), also wrote a *thabat* entitled *al-Imdâd bi-ma'rifat 'ulûw al-isnâd*.<sup>26</sup> Al-'Ujaimî, al-Nakhlî, and al-Başrî are considered to be three famous scholars whose the vast majority of the scholars living in al-Ḥijâz, Yemen, Egypt, al-Shâm, and other places in their time narrated ḥadîth and on whom the *isnad* of ḥadîth is based (*al-musnid*).<sup>27</sup>

22 Ibn 'Aqîlah, *al-Mawâhib*, 41-583.

23 Saîdî, "Mukhtaşar thabat", 587-610. For a detailed evaluation on al-Saîdî as a student of Ibn 'Aqîlah, see Murâdî, *Silk al-durar*, III, 206; Kattânî, *Fihris al-fahâris*, II-712; Zirikli, *al-A'lâm*, IV, 260; Kahhâlah, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifîn*, VII, 29-30.

24 Ibn 'Aqîlah includes Ḥasan b. 'Alî al-'Ujaimî among his teachers in his famous work called *al-Fawâ'id* and narrates sixteen *al-musalsal* ḥadîth through his attribution there. See Ibn 'Aqîlah, *al-Fawâ'id*, 102, 108, 110-111, 115, 117, 120, 122-123, 125, 131, 135, 144, 169, 174, 177, 184, 187, 190. For more detailed information on al-'Ujaimî as Ibn 'Aqîlah's master, see Murâdî, *Silk al-durar*, IV, 30; Ahdal, *al-Nafs al-yamâni*, 70-71; Abû al-Khayr, *al-Mukhtasar min Kitâb Nashr*, 171, 462; Kawtharî, *Fiqh ahl al-'Iraq*, 75; Muallimî, *A'lâm al-Makkiyîn*, II, 690; Hilah, *al-Târikh wa-al-mu'arrikhûn*, 393.

25 In the sixty-first chapter of *al-Ziyâdah wa-al-ihsân fî 'ulûm al-Qur'an*, Ibn 'Aqîlah, while transmitting the narrations of *al-musalsal* ḥadîths from the Qur'an, identifies one of his teachers as Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Nakhlî. As far as I have been able to ascertain, he makes five direct references to him in the entire of *al-Ziyâdah*; see Ibn 'Aqîlah, *al-Ziyâdah*, III, 152, 155-157.

26 As Ibn 'Aqîlah states in his book, *al-Mawâhib al-jazîlah*, one of his masters was 'Abd Allâh b. Sâlim al-Başrî. See Ibn 'Aqîlah, *al-Mawâhib al-jazîlah*, 43-44. In this regard, see also Murâdî, *Silk al-durar*, IV, 30; Abû al-Khayr, *al-Mukhtasar min Kitâb Nashr*, 462; Kattânî, *Fihris al-fahâris*, II, 607; Muallimî, *A'lâm al-Makkiyîn*, II, 690; Hilah, *al-Târikh wa-al-mu'arrikhûn*, 393.

27 Abû al-Khayr, *al-Mukhtasar min Kitâb Nashr*, 167.

After Ibn ‘Aqilah his pupils carried on the tradition of *thabat*. One of his learners, Abū al-Fidā’ Ismā’īl b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Hādī al-‘Ajlūnī al-Dimashqī al-Shāfi’ī (d. 1162/1749), wrote a *thabat* entitled *Hilyat ahl al-faḍl wa-al-kamāl bi-ittiṣāl al-asânîd bi-kummali al-rijâl*.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, another of his disciples, ‘Abd al-Karīm b. Aḥmad b. ‘Ulwān b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Sharābātī al-Shāfi’ī al-Ḥalabī (d. 1178/1764), who received the license or permission denoting the authorisation of various sciences (*al-ijāzah*) from him in Aleppo, wrote a *thabat* entitled *Inālah al-ṭālibîn li’awālî al-muhaddithîn*.<sup>29</sup> It is self-evident that when al-Sharābātī returned to Aleppo after his last pilgrimage, he joined the teaching circles of Ibn ‘Aqilah, who was a resident there, and was awarded a ḥadīth *ijāzah* by him.<sup>30</sup> While Ibn ‘Aqilah stayed in Aleppo, Abū ‘Abd Allāh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad al-Ba’lī al-Dimashqī al-Khalwatī al-Ḥanbalī (d. 1192/1778) was another of his students who attended his lectures and received a ḥadīth *ijāzah* from him; he has written a *thabat* treatise called *Manār al-is’ād fī ṭuruq al-isnād*.<sup>31</sup> His last pupil, Muḥammad Sa’īd b. Muḥammad Amīn Safar al-Madanī al-Ḥanafī al-Atharī (d. 1194/1780), wrote a poetic *thabat* in which he mentioned the names of his masters.<sup>32</sup>

All things considered, it is taken for granted that the tradition of *thabat*, which certainly existed two generations before Ibn ‘Aqilah, was spread and developed through his works and the treatises of his students. Therefore, the fact that Ibn ‘Aqilah himself, his masters, his teachers’ teachers, and his students wrote works in the field of *thabat* indicates that a tradition regarding this literature became widespread at that time. It can be seen that some scholars, especially those specialising in ḥadīth and other Islāmīc disciplines, have written works in the genre of *thabat* in the past decades, aiming to continue this tradition. In this regard, Muḥammad Zāhid

28 ‘Ajlūnī mentions Ibn ‘Aqilah among his ḥadīth teachers in his *thabat*, *Hilyat ahl al-faḍl*. According to him, Ibn ‘Aqilah gave him the license/permission of various sciences (*al-ijāzah*), including tafsīr, ḥadīth and mysticism twice, once in 1133/1721 in Mecca and once in 1143/1730 in Damascus. See Ajlūnī, *Hilyat ahl al-faḍl*, 108-110. See also al-Murādī, *Silk al-durar*, I, 259-260; Baghdādī, *Hadīyah al-‘arīfīn*, I, 220-221; Abū al-Khayr, *al-Mukhtasar*, 462; al-Kattānī, *Fihris al-fahāris*, I, 98-100.

29 Sharābātī, in his book *Inālah al-ṭālibîn*, claimed that he attended the lectures of Ibn ‘Aqilah while he was in Aleppo and received *al-ijāzah* from him; see Sharābātī, *Inālah al-ṭālibîn* (Süleymaniye Library, Hafid Efendi, 23), 60<sup>b</sup>-61<sup>b</sup>. See also al-Murādī, *Silk al-durar*, III, 63-64; al-Kattānī *Fihris al-fahāris*, II, 1076-1077.

30 Murādī, *Silk al-durar*, III, 63-64; Kattānī, *Fihris al-fahāris*, II, 1076-1077.

31 Al-Ba’lī, in his a *thabat*, *Manār al-is’ād*, clearly explains that he attended Ibn ‘Aqilah’s lectures; see Ba’lī, *Manār al-is’ād*, 87-90. See also Murādī, *Silk al-durar*, II, 305; al-Kattānī, *Fihris al-fahāris*, II, 737.

32 Kattānī, *Fihris al-fahāris*, II, 986; al-Muallimī, *A’lām al-Makkīyīn*, VI, 140; Kakhālāh, *Mu’jam al-mu’allifīn*, X, 37.

al-Kawthari's (d. 1371/1952) *al-Tahrir al-wajiz fimâ yabtaghihi al-mustajiz*, Abû 'Ali Hasan b. Muḥammad al-Mashshât al-Makki's (d. 1399/1979) *al-Thabat al-kabir* and *al-Thabat al-saghir* and 'Umar b. al-Jilani b. 'Umar al-Shibli al-Tunisi's *Thabat al-Shaykh al-'Allamah al-Imam Muhammad Tahir b. 'Ashûr* are examples of *thabat* in modern times.<sup>33</sup>

The vast majority of those who have written works in *thabat* literature are scholars whose ḥadīth background predominates. Additionally, the relevant scholars have also penned works on the science of tafsīr as well as other sciences in their *thabat* and mention the list of tafsīr classics in alphabetical order. This is because *thabats* arranged in keeping with sciences usually begin with the Qur'anic sciences, followed by ḥadīth, siyar, ansāb, fiqh, uṣūl al-fiqh, kalām, lexicon, grammar, literature, and poetry. In this context, the *thabat* literature is a subsidiary field to the biography of the tafsīr.

## 2. Ibn 'Aqilah al-Makki's Life Story in the Context of the *Thabat* Literature

### 2.1. His Family and Birthdate

Ibn 'Aqilah's full name, which incorporated his sobriquet, patronymic-teknonymic, toponymic, and pedigree names, was Abû 'Abd Allāh Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad<sup>34</sup> b. Aḥmad b. Sa'īd b. Mas'ūd al-Ḥanafi al-Makki.<sup>35</sup> In the introduction to *al-Ziyādah wa-al-iḥsān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, he explained that he was known as 'Aqilah: "The poor man of God (*al-faqir ilā mawlāh*),

33 Kawthari, *al-Tahrir*, 5-80; Mashshât, *al-Thabat al-kabir*, 107-108; Shibli, *Thabat*, 13-80.

34 Ismā'il b. Muḥammad al-Baghdādī (1839-1920) records Ibn 'Aqilah's name as "Shams al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad b. 'Aqilah" only in one place in his book called *Īdāh al-maknūn*. See Baghdādī, *Īdāh al-maknūn*, II, 402. In various contexts in his aforementioned work and in his book, *Hadiyah al-'arifin*, his name is mentioned as "Muḥammad b. Aḥmad." This clearly shows that the recording of Ibn 'Aqilah's name as Maḥmūd is erroneous. This error may be caused by the copyist (*mustansikh* or *nāsikh*). Because in almost all bio-bibliographical works his name is recorded as "Muḥammad b. Aḥmad". See, for example, the following works: Zabdi, *Tāj al-'arūs*, XXX, 39; Murādī, *Silk al-durar*, IV, 30; al-Baghdādī, *Īdāh al-maknūn*, II, 224; al-Baghdādī, *Hadiyah al-'arifin*, II, 323; Kattānī, *Fihris al-fahāris*, II, 865, 921-922; Zirikli, *al-A'lām*, VI, 13; Kahhālah, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifin*, VIII, 264; al-Muallimī, *A'lām al-Makkiyin*, II, 690; al-Hilal, *al-Tārīkh wa-al-mu'arrikhūn*, 393.

35 Ibn 'Aqilah, *Iqd al-jawāhir*, I, 3; Zabidi, *Tāj al-'arūs*, XXX, 39; al-Murādī, *Silk al-durar*, IV, 30; Baghdādī, *Īdāh al-maknūn*, II, 224; al-Baghdādī, *Hadiyah al-'arifin*, II, 323; Kattānī, *Fihris al-fahāris*, II, 865, 921-922; Zirikli, *al-A'lām*, VI, 13; Kahhālah, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifin*, VIII, 264; Nuwayhid, *Mu'jam al-mufasssirin*, II, 487; Muallimī, *A'lām al-Makkiyin*, II, 690; Hilal, *al-Tārīkh wa-al-mu'arrikhūn*, 393.

Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Sa'īd, known by the sobriquet 'Aqilah, says...."<sup>36</sup> Likewise, as per the *thabats* of his disciples, Ismā'il b. Muḥammad al-'Ajlūni and 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ba'li, Ibn 'Aqilah's father, who was Aḥmad b. Sa'īd, was well-known with 'Aqilah (*al-ma'rūf wāliduhu 'Aqilah*).<sup>37</sup> Al-Zabīdī, Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī (1893-1976), 'Adil Nuwayhid (1923-1996), and 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Muallimī (1928-2007), who are among the bio-bibliographical authors, also agree with this assessment.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, it is fair say that the relevant scholar is recorded in the sources as both 'Aqilah and Ibn 'Aqilah, and is known with two qualities, sobriquets.<sup>39</sup> Ibn 'Aqilah, as the attribution of al-Makkī implies, was born, grew up, and died in Makkah. In other words, since he spent his entire life in Makkah, he must have received the patronymic title of al-Makkī. Because he adopted the Hanafi *madhhab* in jurisprudence, he is also known as al-Ḥanafī. This finding is supported by the fact that Zāhid al-Kawtharī ranked Ibn 'Aqilah in the hundredth place in his book, *Fiqh ahl al-'Irāq wa-ḥadīthuhum*, in which he analysed one hundred and ten *muḥaddiths* abiding by the Hanafi *madhhab*.<sup>40</sup>

Ibn 'Aqilah's exact date of birth is unknown. The bio-bibliographical sources I have examined do not give a definite date of birth. Probably because he was not descended from a famous family, his date of birth was not noted. In the history of Islāmic thought, the date of birth of a child who does not come from a prominent family is usually not written because it is not considered an important event. In other words, a newborn child is not regarded as a memorable record, but a minor numeric detail, unless s/he is the offspring of a ruler or a member of the social elite. In my opinion, as a result of this situation, only information about Ibn 'Aqilah's adulthood is available in the relevant literature. However, based on Ibn 'Aqilah's *thabat*—entitled *al-Mawāhib al-jazilah fī marwiyāt al-Sharīf Muḥammad 'Aqilah* and in which he talks about his scholarly life, his teachers, and the lessons he studied—some conclusions can be drawn about his time of birth. In this work, he says the following about his master, Abū al-Mawāhib Muḥammad al-Ḥanbalī, and his son, 'Abd al-Jalīl (d. 1119/1707):

I met with 'Abd al-Jalīl b. Abū al-Mawāhib Muḥammad in Makkah in the month of Dhū al-Ḥujjah in 1114 [1703].... Under his guidance I read

36 Ibn 'Aqilah, *al-Ziyādah*, I, 83.

37 Ajlūni, *Hilyat ahl al-fadl*, 108; Ba'li, *Manār al-is'ād*, 87-88.

38 Zabīdī, *Tāj al-'arūs*, XXX, 39; Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, VI,13; Nuwayhid, *Mu'jam al-mufasssīrīn*, II, 487; Muallimī, *A'lām al-Makkīyīn*, II, 690.

39 Ibn 'Azzūz, *Umdat al-athbāt*, 128; Nuwayhid, *Mu'jam al-mufasssīrīn*, II, 487.

40 Kawtharī, *Fiqh ahl al-'Irāq*, 75.

some passages from al-Bukhārī's *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*. Later I asked him to give me *al-ijāzah* of ḥadīth. However, he refrained from giving *al-ijāzah* and pointed to his father for this job. He promised to send the text of an *al-ijāzah* involving the narrations of his father, Abū al-Mawāhib, when he returned to Damascus. Indeed, in accordance with this pledge, he sent me *al-ijāzah* of ḥadīth.<sup>41</sup>

Ibn 'Aqilah's statements about his own life demonstrate that, at the time of the above dialogue, he was at least of mature/independent age (*mumayyiz*), able to understand events, and respected in scholarly gatherings. Likewise, this is supported by the fact that in his aforementioned *thabat*, he noted the dates of death of many of his masters including: 'Abd Allāh b. Shams al-Dīn al-'Atāqī al-Makki, Sālim b. 'Abd Allāh al-Mashad, Idrīs b. Aḥmad b. Idrīs b. 'Alī al-Shammā' al-Sa'dī al-Makki al-Shāfi'i, 'Alī al-Mazjāji al-Makki al-Ḥanafī, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Qaṭṭān al-Makki al-Mālikī, and Muḥammad Akram b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Hindī, as 1100/1689.<sup>42</sup>

In conclusion, considering the customary methods of ḥadīth learning from a teacher, teaching them to others and narrating them (*taḥamul al-ḥadīth*), it is likely that he was born in Makkah before 1080/1670.<sup>43</sup> Additionally, Ibn 'Aqilah, in another *thabat* entitled *'Iqd al-jawāhir fī salāsīl al-akābir*, stated that he corresponded with al-Ṣūfi and the mystic, 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥusayn b. 'Abd Allāh al-'Aydārūs (d. 1078/1688), and received a written *al-ijāzah* from him.<sup>44</sup> When all these historical information and dates mentioned by Ibn 'Aqilah in relevant *thabats* are taken together, it can be concluded that he was born in Makkah at least in the last quarter of the 11/17<sup>th</sup> century.

## 2.2. His Intellectual Development

The birthplace of Ibn 'Aqilah, Makkah, was an extremely fertile ground in terms of Muslim scholarship. During his lifetime, the destinations of a pilgrimage were deemed important meeting places for many scholars and one of the centres where different ideas were shared and disseminated. As an illustration, one of his masters, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Dimyāṭī (d. 1117/1705), who was originally from Egypt, travelled to Makkah three times to make a pilgrimage. He settled there on his last voyage and hosted

41 Ibn 'Aqilah, *al-Mawāhib*, 131.

42 Ibn 'Aqilah, *al-Mawāhib*, 550, 553, 554, 559, 560, 562.

43 Birışık is of the opinion that Ibn 'Aqilah was born after 1070/1660; see Birışık, "İbn Akile", 305.

44 Ibn 'Aqilah, *'Iqd al-jawāhir*, 13-14.

the local educational circles (*ḥalaqah*) on various sciences.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, in addition to the scholars from al-Ḥijāz, intellectuals such as al-Dimyāṭī, who later came to Makkah or visited it for serving a pilgrimage, contributed to the training of the students of that city. Ibn ‘Aqilah, like the other pupils of Makkah, had the opportunity to learn from the masters of different traditions.

Ibn ‘Aqilah received his early education under the instruction of the leading scholars of Makkah. In the same way, he collected knowledge from the scholars residing in Makkah and the intellectuals who came there annually from various regions to perform a pilgrimage and *al-‘umrah*, by connecting with them, and he reached an erudite proficiency that proved his scientific maturity in miscellaneous disciplines, and the city in which he was located, provided him with the opportunity to become a scholar of the highest and superior *ṭabaqah* (*al-isnād al-‘ālī*). In other words, his residence in Makkah facilitated his contact with scholars and contributed to his educational development as an authority in a variety of fields.<sup>46</sup>

The authors of bio-bibliographical works provided neither a comprehensive assessments about Ibn ‘Aqilah’s intellectual world, nor a chronology of his masters and pupils, nor or an account of his relations as a teacher or as a student. Nevertheless, these points about his life story can be easily clarified through the *thabat* tradition. According to Ibn ‘Aqilah’s explicit statement in his book, *al-Mawāhib al-jazīlah*, the first teacher in whose presence he sat to learn was Sālim b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Mashad (d. 1100/1689). He read and memorized many books under his guidance including Ibn Mālik al-Ṭā’ī’s (d. 672/1274) *al-Alfiyah*, Ibn Ājurrūm’s (d. 723/1323) *al-Ājurrūmiyah*, Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsī’s (d. 895/1490) *Umm al-Barāhīn*, and Ibrāhīm b. Ibrāhīm al-Laḡānī’s (d. 1041/1631) *Jawharah al-tawḥīd*.<sup>47</sup> He also became a student of Mīr al-Ūzbakī al-Mu‘ammar (d. 1114/1702) and read many classical works under his instruction, notably ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Zanjānī’s (d. 660/1262) *al-Taṣrīf*.<sup>48</sup> He attended the lecture circles of ‘Abd Allāh b. Shams al-Dīn al-‘Atāqī al-Makkī (d. 1100/1689) in the masjid of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās and read ḥadīth classics from him.<sup>49</sup> From Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Qaṭṭān al-Makkī al-Mālikī (d. 1100/1689) he had the opportunity to construe many books, notably Abū al-Barakāt al-Nasafī’s (d. 710/1310) *Manār*

45 Abū al-Khayr, *al-Mukhtasar min Kitāb Nashr*, 88-89.

46 Muallimī, *A’lām al-Makkīyīn*, II, 690; Hilah, *al-Tārīkh wa-al-mu’arrikhūn*, 393-394.

47 Ibn ‘Aqilah, *al-Mawāhib*, 553.

48 Ibid, 549.

49 Ibid, 550.

*al-anwār*, al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī's (d. 739/1338) *Talkhīs al-Miftāh* and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī's (d. 911/1505) *Sharḥ al-Alfiyah*.<sup>50</sup>

Similarly, according to the aforementioned *thabat*, Ibn 'Aqilah became a student of Yūnus b. Aḥmad al-Maḥallī al-Azharī al-Kafrāwī al-Shāfi'ī (d. 1120/1709) for about ten years, attended his tafsīr, ḥadīth, and fiqh lectures, and later received *al-ijāzah* of these sciences from him.<sup>51</sup> He was also a student of Sadr al-Dīn al-Ūzbakī (d. ?), with whom he read Abū al-Ḥasan Najm al-Dīn Dabīrān 'Alī b. 'Umar b. 'Alī al-Kātībī's (d. 675/1277) *Ḥikmat al-'ayn*, which analyzes the subjects of divinity and nature.<sup>52</sup> It is, therefore, apparent that Ibn 'Aqilah's master of philosophy was Sadr al-Dīn al-Ūzbakī.

Ibn 'Aqilah proved his proficiency in almost every field of the Islāmic sciences including exegesis, narration, mysticism, jurisprudence, and theology. For instance, he has a book entitled *'Iqd al-jawāhir fī salāsīl al-akābir*, which reveals his personal ascetism and his qualification as Qādirī Sheikh. Therefore, besides his other qualities, it is undeniable that he had the facet of renunciation (*zuhd*) and scrupulosity (*warā'*).<sup>53</sup> As al-Murādī and al-Kattānī point out, Ibn 'Aqilah related in this work information about eighteen *ṭarīqah* lineages from whom he received *al-ijāzah*, including Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. 'Alī b. 'Alī b. Aḥmad al-Aḥmadī, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Alī BāḤusuyyin al-Saqqāf, and Ḥusayn b. 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Makki. Furthermore, according to them, Qāsim b. Muḥammad al-Baghḍādī al-Rūmī made him wear the cardigan of al-Qādiriyah *ṭarīqah*.<sup>54</sup>

Ibn 'Aqilah's narrative style throughout *al-Ziyādah wa-al-iḥsān* is also an indication of his ascetism. To illustrate, the following prayer of *al-Ziyādah* in his introduction, in which he made *tawassul* with the Prophet Muḥammad, supports the fact that he was a Šūfi:

We ask Allah Almighty to grant us the knowledge of his beloved book and guide us to understand its sublime meanings of it, by the medium (*al-tawassul*) of Prophet Muḥammad, the prophet of mercy, the intercessor of al-ummah, the leader of the worlds, and the best of those who know and understand.<sup>55</sup>

50 Ibid, 560.

51 Ibid, 126. For detailed information about Yūnus b. Aḥmad al-Kafrāwī, see al-Murādī, *Silk al-durar*, IV, 265-267.

52 Ibn 'Aqilah, *al-Mawāhib*, 556.

53 Kattānī, *Fihris al-fahāris*, II, 607, 865; Abū al-Khayr, *al-Mukhtasar min Kitāb Nashr*, 462.

54 Murādī, *Silk al-durar*, IV, 30; Kattānī, *Fihris al-fahāris*, II, 865.

55 Ibn 'Aqilah, *al-Ziyādah*, I, 82.

‘Abd Allāh b. Husayn al-Suwaydī (d. 1174/1761), one of the disciples of Ibn ‘Aqīlah, referred to the mystical tendency of his master in his related *thabat* and said the following about him: “My master follows the paths of righteousness, adheres in all his circumstances to the bond of forthrightness, and abounds in divine knowledge. He is described as a high-ranking, righteous, hermetic, pious, and mystical person.”<sup>56</sup> These statements by al-Suwaydī are evidence of his competence in the field of mysticism. However, on the basis of the scholarly style of Ibn ‘Aqīlah’s works and his endeavours to obtain *al-ijāzahs* from various denominations, it can be concluded that he was not bigoted or obsessively attachment to any sect.<sup>57</sup>

Besides mysticism, Ibn ‘Aqīlah reached a high intellectual proficiency in almost every field of Islāmic sciences and wrote many works showing his erudite maturity. As will be mentioned in the section on his works, he achieved a high scholarly position among savants thanks to his works. Indeed, both his students and contemporaries as well as many polymaths from later periods have praised his leadership and virtuous role in the sciences. One of his students, ‘Alī b. Aḥmad b. Mukarram al-Şa’īdī al-‘Adawī, characterized him in his *thabat* with qualities such as worldly and religious beauty (*jamāl al-dunyā wa-al-dīn*) and titles like the great and unique scholar of his time (*imām ‘aşrihi wa-farīd mişrihi*), a renewer/reformer of *ṭarīqah* (*mujaddid al-ṭarīqah*), a scholar to be consulted and instructed on the meaning of truth (*al-mushār ilayhi fī ma’ānī al-ḥaqīqah*), the schoolman of Islāmic law (*muḥarrir al-sharī‘ah*), the gnostic man (*al-‘arif bi’llāh*), and the signifier of God’s way (*al-dāll ‘alā başirah ilā Allāh*).<sup>58</sup> Another of his students, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ba’lī, in his *thabat*, described his master as *al-imām*, *al-fāḍil*, *al-muḥaqqiq*, *al-‘allāmah*, *al-humām*, *al-kāmil*, *al-mudaqqiq*, *‘umdat al-muḥaqqiqīn*, and *qudwah al-mudarrisīn*.<sup>59</sup>

Based on the information written down in the first *waraqah* of Nevsehir Dāmād İbrāhīm Pasha’s manuscript (*nuskhah*) of *al-Ziyādah wa-al-iḥsān*, the following evaluation of Ṭāhir b. ‘Īsā al-Ḥuşaynī (d. ?), who was a contemporary of Ibn ‘Aqīlah, also supports his scholarly maturity: “al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Sa’īd, known as ‘Aqīlah, was a jurist (*al-faqīh*), the man of most knowledge (*al-‘allāmah*), a schoolman (*al-mudarris*), and a scholar who wrote highly systematic works and spoke eloquently (*ghāyat al-taḥrīr wa-al-tajwīd*).”<sup>60</sup> Likewise, Muḥammad ‘Ābid

56 Suwaydī, *al-Nafhah al-miskīyah*, 77.

57 Mollaibrahimoğlu, *Yazma Tefsir Literatürü*, 573; Şener, *İbn Akile’nin el-Cevherü’l-Manzûm’u*, 8.

58 Sa’īdī, “Mukhtaşar *thabat*”, 588.

59 Ba’lī, *Manâr al-is’âd*, 87.

60 Ibn ‘Aqīlah, *al-Ziyādah*, Nevsehir Damad İbrāhīm Pasha Library, no. 48/1, 1<sup>a</sup>-1<sup>b</sup>. See also Muslim, *al-Dirâsah of al-Ziyādah*, I, 35, 39.



al-Sindi (d. 1257/1841) wrote the following about Ibn 'Aqilah in his work *Majmū' ijāzāt wa-al-rasā'il*:

al-Shaykh Muḥammad 'Aqilah al-'Alawī was a scholar, *al-ṣūfī*, and *muḥaddiṣ*. He had a great reputation in the sciences, including *fiqh*, renunciation (*zuhd*), and scrupulosity (*warā*). He had a prescription of exercises (*al-riyādāt*) and spiritual struggle (*al-mujāhadah*) in the path of mysticism. 'Abd al-Khāliq b. Abū Bakr al-Mazjāji praised him and stayed with him for a long time.<sup>61</sup>

In bio-bibliographical works, besides the above qualifications, Ibn 'Aqilah is also described as *jamāl al-dīn*, *shams al-dīn*, *al-shams*, *al-shaykh*, *al-'ālim*, *al-awḥad*, *al-muḥaddiṣ*, *muḥaddiṣ al-Ḥijāz*, *al-mu'arrikh*, *al-musnid*, *al-ṣūfī*, *al-niḥrīr*, *al-fahhāmah*, *al-thiqah*, *al-mutqin*, *al-bārī*, *al-tāhir*, *al-nabl*, *al-faḍl*, and *al-zāhir*.<sup>62</sup> Such characteristics, which indicate his competence in the scientific fields, reveal his scholarly proficiency, religious and intellectual identity in Islāmic sciences such as exegesis, narration, history and mysticism. In this context Muḥammad Khalīl al-Murādī (d. 1206/1791), one of the scholars who wrote the biography of Ibn 'Aqilah, said the following about him: "Ibn 'Aqilah was an honourable and virtuous man who excelled in many sciences."<sup>63</sup>

Both the explicit information specified by Ibn 'Aqilah in his *thabat*, *al-Mawāhib al-jazīla*, the qualities described by his disciples in their *thabats*, and by his contemporaries in their works, and all the above portrayals and characterisations of his scholarly personality by the authors of the *ṭabaqāt*, reveal that he received a good education, was trained by the leading scholars of his time, and proved his maturity in almost every field of Islāmic sciences. Similarly, as I will express in the following pages, the fact that the students of his time attended his lectures—both in Makkah and on his scientific journeys to various centers—benefited from his scholarly knowledge, and sought to receive *al-ijāzah* from him reinforces these praises. It can therefore be concluded that Ibn 'Aqilah's authority and fame in Islāmic sciences spread to diverse territories of the Islāmic world during his lifetime.

### 2.3. A Chronology of His Scholarly Journeys

Ibn 'Aqilah made a series of scholarly journeys (*al-riḥlah fi ṭalab al-'ilm*) to various territories in an effort to deepen further in Islāmic sciences

61 Abū al-Khayr, *al-Mukhtasar min Kitāb Nashr*, 462.

62 Murādī, *Silk al-durar*, IV, 30; al-Kattānī, *Fihris al-fahāris*, II, 607, 922; Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, VI, 13; Kahhālāh, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifin*, VIII, 264; Nuwayhid, *Mu'jam al-mufassirin*, II, 487; al-Hilāh, *al-Tārikh wa-al-mu'arrikhūn*, 393.

63 al-Murādī, *Silk al-durar*, IV, 30.

and to attain to scholarly degrees and ranks, and he placed a special emphasis on education and training activities during these travels. This is why his journeys were so effective in developing and recognising of his intellectual development. He was not a scholar who spent his life in one center. Accordingly, he travelled first to the territory of al-Shām, then to Baghdād, and finally to Istanbul to carry out educational activities. He lived for a long time in Aleppo and Damascus, where he attended ḥadīth classes. In this direction, he participated in lecture gatherings and remembrance (*dhikr*) assemblies at al-Madrasah al-Jaqmaqīyah,<sup>64</sup> located near the Umayyad Mosque, and attributed to the Mamlūk sultan, al-Malik al-Zāhir Abū Sa'īd Sayf al-Dīn al-'Alā'ī Jaqmaq (d. 857/1453), and served as a scholar (*al-mudarris*) at this madrasah. While he was in the territory of al-Shām, he gave *al-ijāzah* to many students, including al-Ajlūnī, al-Sharābātī, and al-Ba'li.<sup>65</sup> He later travelled to Baghdād and Anatolia, where he attended lectures by famous scholars and gave ḥadīth *al-ijāzahs* to his students.<sup>66</sup> The majority of the authors of bio-bibliographical works do not mention the dates and chronological order of Ibn 'Aqīlah's scholarly journeys. However, as Muṣṭafā Muslim (1940-2021) points out, even if they do not give a chronological date range and detailed information about his scholarly travels, the information they provide on this subject clearly indicates that these had a great impact on his life.<sup>67</sup>

Some conclusions about Ibn 'Aqīlah's scholarly journeys can be drawn from some detailed information mentioned by scholars such as al-Ajlūnī, al-Sharābātī, and al-Ba'li in their *thabats*. al-Ajlūnī, in his *thabat*, *Hilyat ahl al-faql*, states that he received from Ibn 'Aqīlah *al-ijāzah* of ḥadīth and other sciences twice, once in 1133/1721 in Makkah and once in 1143/1730 in Damascus.<sup>68</sup> Al-Sharābātī, known as the Aleppo *muḥaddīṣ* and the reference source of his time, mentions in his *thabat*, *Inālah al-tālibin*, that Ibn 'Aqīlah travelled to Aleppo between 1140/1728 and 1150/1738. He records that he attended Ibn 'Aqīlah's lectures and received a general *ijāzah* from him during this period. His statements are as follows:

One of the scholars of al-Ḥaramayn, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad 'Aqīlah, came to the city of Aleppo between 1140/1728 and 1150/1738. A huge crowd

64 For a comprehensive assessment about al-Madrasah al-Jaqmaqīyah see Badrān, *Munādamat al-atlāl*, 160-162.

65 Ajlūnī, *Hilyat ahl al-faql*, 108; Sharābātī, *Inālah al-tālibin* (Hafid Efendi, 23), 61<sup>a</sup>; Ba'li, *Manār al-is'ād*, 88. See also Kattānī, *Fihris al-fahāris*, II, 737, 1076.

66 Murādī, *Silk al-durar*, III, 205, IV, 30; Nuwayhid, *Mu'jam al-mufasssirin*, II, 487; Muallimī, *A'lām al-Makkīyin*, II, 690; al-Hīlah, *al-Tārīkh wa-al-mu'arrikhūn*, 393-394.

67 Muslim, *al-Dirāsah of al-Ziyādah*, I, 21.

68 Ajlūnī, *Hilyat ahl al-faql*, 108.

rushed to welcome him, and he was very well received there. He certainly deserved this respect and importance. The majority, and perhaps all, of the students of Aleppo joined his lectures. Praise and thanksgiving be to God, I attended his lectures and copied some of his works for myself. He gave me *al-ijazah* of his *al-Musalsalat* and his other works. In 1148/1736, after Ibn 'Aqilah returned to Makkah from Istanbul, God gave me the opportunity to perform another pilgrimage. He allocated for me a room in his house while I stayed in Makkah.<sup>69</sup>

Similarly, al-Murādi and al-Kattāni, when referring to al-Sharābātī's life story in their *ṭabaqāts*, mention that he met Ibn 'Aqilah during his second pilgrimage. Accordingly, al-Sharābātī performed his second pilgrimage in 1143/1730, when his return to Aleppo, he met Ibn 'Aqilah and received from him *al-ijazah* of ḥadith on this date.<sup>70</sup> When the autobiographical data mentioned by al-Sharābātī in his *thabat* and the historical knowledge narrated by al-Murādi and al-Kattāni about him are considered together, it becomes clear that the pilgrimage referred to in his *thabat* was likely his third or last pilgrimage. According to this, he met Ibn 'Aqilah in Aleppo during his second pilgrimage and became his disciple. When al-Sharābātī travelled to Makkah for the last pilgrimage, he met with his teacher again and resided in his house.

As mentioned in al-Ba'li's *thabat*, *Manār al-is'ād*, Ibn 'Aqilah travelled to Damascus on his return from a pilgrimage in 1143/1730, and after staying there for a while he went to Aleppo. Al-Ba'li stated that he received *al-ijazah* from him in Aleppo on Jamādi al-Ākhirah 11, 1144/December 11, 1731.<sup>71</sup> In his *thabat*, al-Ba'li described his meeting with Ibn 'Aqilah as follows:

When I came up to Aleppo, I met Ibn 'Aqilah in the house of al-Sayyid 'Umar Afandī Ṭahā Zādah (d. ?), who was then in charge of the affairs of al-sayyids and al-sharīfs (*naqīb al-ashrāf*). A huge crowd rushed to greet him, and he was very well received there. Everyone lined up to kiss his hand, including al-Sayyid Aḥmad Afandī Sayfī Zādah, al-Qādi of Aleppo. Ibn 'Aqilah organised a lecture circle to read al-Bukhārī's *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*. A large crowd including our teacher and friend, 'Alī al-Dabbāgh, joined his lecture circle. I attended this assembly to listen to a part of al-Bukhārī's *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*. I heard many ḥadīths from him, especially *al-musalsal bi-al-awwaliyah*. He gave me a general *al-ijazah* for all of the narrations that he had, including his great *thabat*. He wrote *al-ijazah* that he gave to me in his own hand.<sup>72</sup>

69 Sharābātī, *Inālah al-ṭālibin* (Hafid Efendi, 23), 60<sup>b</sup>-61<sup>a</sup>.

70 Murādi, *Silk al-durar*, III, 63; al-Kattāni, *Fihris al-fahāris*, II, 1076.

71 Ba'li, *Manār al-is'ād*, 89-90.

72 Ba'li, *Manār al-is'ād*, 88.

Based on all this historical data found in the *thabats* of al-Ajlūni, al-Sharābāti, and al-Ba'li, it is reasonable to suggest that Ibn 'Aqilah was in the territory of Aleppo and Damascus between 1143/1730 - 1144/1731. After Aleppo and Damascus, Ibn 'Aqilah was known to have made a scholarly journey to Baghdād. As a matter of fact, al-Sharābāti and al-Ba'li, mentioned in their *thabats* that he travelled to Baghdād primarily to visit the tomb of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilāni (d. 561/1166) and for some scholarly activities.<sup>73</sup>

'Abd Allāh b. Ḥusayn al-Suwaydī, another student of Ibn 'Aqilah, provided some detailed information on this subject in his *thabat*, entitled *al-Nafhah al-miskīyah fi al-rihlah al-Makkīyah* and in which he examined his own scholarly journeys. In this book, al-Suwaydī not only stated that he was a student of Ibn 'Aqilah, but also clarified the date of his teacher's scholarly journey to Baghdād. His statements on this subject are as follows: "When our al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Aqilah was residing in Baghdād in 1145/1735, I wore an araḳi cardigan from his hands (*labistu al-khirḳata wkānat 'araḳīyah*). I received from him *al-ijāzah* of mysticism concerning the inculcation of remembrance (*dhikr*)."<sup>74</sup> In the same way, al-Murādi described the time and place in which al-Suwaydī was a student of Ibn 'Aqilah as follows: "'Abd Allāh al-Suwaydī took some oral lessons from Shihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. 'Aqilah, who visited Baghdād in 1143/1731."<sup>75</sup>

When al-Suwaydī's expression on his own life and al-Murādi's detailed assessments are considered together, it may at first appear that Ibn 'Aqilah did not leave Baghdād immediately after he arrived in 1143/1731 but left in 1145/1735 to travel to Makkah or another city. However, this view is contradicted by the consequent implication that he was in Aleppo and Damascus at the same time as well as by the tentative date of his trip to Istanbul, which will be discussed hereafter. From this it can be concluded that Ibn 'Aqilah made two scholarly trips to Baghdād, one in 1143/1731 and the other in 1145/1735.

After returning from Baghdād, Ibn 'Aqilah also made a scholarly journey to Istanbul, where he stayed for a while and gave *al-ijāzah* of ḥadith to his students. al-Sharābāti and al-Ba'li, in their *thabats*, state that their master Ibn 'Aqilah travelled to Istanbul to convey his request to repair the water channels of 'Arafah ('Ayn Zubaydah), which lie to the east of Makkah and where the most important element of pilgrimage, pause (*waqfah*), is performed, and to obtain support from the caliphate center in this regard. Public services like repairing 'Arafah's water canals were resolved as a

73 Sharābāti, *Inālah al-tālibīn* (Hafid Efendi, 23), 61<sup>a</sup>; Ba'li, *Manār al-is'ād*, 90.

74 Suwaydī, *al-Nafhah al-miskīyah*, 78.

75 Murādi, *Silk al-durar*, III, 85.

result of his bureaucratic efforts. According to al-Sharābātī and al-Ba'li, while he was in Istanbul, the Ottoman Sultan Maḥmūd I (d. 1168/1754) attended his ḥadīth assemblies three times and made large donations. The fact that Maḥmūd I participated in his congregation showed his notoriety at the time in various sciences.<sup>76</sup>

Although the date of Ibn 'Aqilah's scholarly journey to Istanbul is not known with certainty, his student Ḥāmid b. Yūsuf b. Ḥāmid al-Bāndirmahwī al-Uskudārī al-Ḥanafī (d. 1172/1758), known as Kūjuk Ḥāmid Afandī of Bāndirmah, provided a detailed account of it in his treatise, *Ṭanīnu al-mujaljlāt bi-tabyīn al-musalsalāt*. In line with *Ṭanīnu al-mujaljlāt*, Ḥāmid Afandī received *al-ijazah* of the work entitled *al-Fawā'id al-jalīlah fī musalsalāt Ibn 'Aqilah* regarding the *musalsal* ḥadīths from Ibn 'Aqilah's own hands in Istanbul on Monday, Jamādī al-Awwal 18, 1145/November 6, 1732, at the house of Anfi Zādah, in the presence of a large number of scholars, including Anfi Zādah, Labīb Wā'iz Jāmi' al-Sulṭānī, Ismā'il Mu'abbir Zādah Afandī, 'Alī al-Munfi Shaykh al-Qādiriyah and Masjid Zādah 'Abd Allāh Afandī. Ibn 'Aqilah, not only gave him *al-ijazah* of ḥadīth but also let him wear the cardigan of al-Qādiriyah in the same congregation. Likewise, it is also known that the manuscript of *al-Fawā'id al-jalīlah* in the Süleymaniye Library (Hacı Mahmud Efendi, no. 638, 682; 'Âşir Efendi, no. 68) was copied in Istanbul in 1144/1731.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, the fact that the Ottoman archival documents contain an order dated 1145/1732 sent to the captain of a galleon to facilitate Ibn 'Aqilah's return by sea from Istanbul to Makkah via Egypt, confirms that he travelled to Istanbul around this time.<sup>78</sup> Based on all this detailed information, especially in the *thabat* literature, it can be concluded that Ibn 'Aqilah travelled to Istanbul one or more times in the period 1144-1145/1731-1732 and gave *al-ijazah* of his works there.<sup>79</sup> In the final analysis, according to al-Sharābātī and al-Ba'li, his last trip was to Istanbul, from which place he returned to Makkah and spent the rest of his life there.<sup>80</sup>

76 Sharābātī, *Inālah al-tālibin* (Hafid Efendi, 23), 61<sup>a</sup>; Ba'li, *Manār al-is'ād*, 90.

77 Bāndirmahwī, *Ṭanīnu al-mujaljlāt*, 42. See also Aydınlı, "Osmanlı Hadis Âlimlerinden Bāndirmahwī Küçük Ḥāmid Efendi'nin Hayatı ve Eserleri", 5-6; Altuntaş, *Osmanlı Döneminde Hadis İlmi*, 279-280.

78 Ottoman Archive BOA, *Bāb-ı Âsafī Mühimme Defterleri [A.DVNSNMH.d.]*, No. 139, 61.

79 Birişik, the author of the article "Ibn 'Aqilah" in the *Turkish Religious Foundation Encyclopedia of Islām (DIA)*, which is considered to be the standard for academic studies in Turkey, states that he has no concrete data to support Ibn 'Aqilah's scholarly journey to Istanbul, and makes the following assessment on this issue: "Some sources suggest that he also travelled to Anatolia or Istanbul, but there is no clear information on this." see Birişik, "İbn Akile", 19/304.

80 Sharābātī, *Inālah al-tālibin* (Hafid Efendi, 23), 61<sup>a</sup>; Ba'li, *Manār al-is'ād*, 90.

Ibn 'Aqilah was not a scholar who was satisfied with the aforementioned scientific journeys to meet with the scholars of his time. On the contrary he endeavoured to contact those whom he would not have the opportunity to meet or to listen to, owing to their distance from the region of al-Ḥijāz. For example, he corresponded with al-Ṣūfī and mystic 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥusayn al-'Aydārūs who resided in Bandar Sūrāt within the Indian subcontinent and asked him for *al-ijāzah* and cardigan dress-up (*ilbās*).<sup>81</sup> Al-'Aydārūs accepted his request and sent him a letter containing his *al-ijāzah* of *al-ṭariqah*.<sup>82</sup> His correspondence with al-'Aydārūs further shows that he was in contact with al-Ṣūfī scholars.

#### 2.4. His Works

In their *thabats*, al-Sharābātī and al-Ba'li are only acquainted with the following six works of Ibn 'Aqilah: (1) *al-Jawhar al-manẓūm fī al-tafsīr bi al-marfū' min kalām Sayyid al-Mursalīn wa-al-mahkūm*; (2) *al-Ziyādah wa-al-ihsān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*; (3) *Kathīb al-anwār fī dhikr Allāh al-'Azīz al-Jabbār*; (4) *Nuskah al-wujūd fī al-akhbār 'an hāl al-mawjūd*; (5) *'Iqd al-jawāhir fī salāsil al-akābir*; and (6) *al-Mawāhib al-jazīlah fī marwiyāt al-faqīr ilā Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad 'Aqilah*.<sup>83</sup> Bio-bibliographical reference works, on the other hand, provide more comprehensive information on the number of works he produced. For example, al-Murādī, in *Silk al-durar*, states that Ibn 'Aqilah wrote important works and mentions eight of them.<sup>84</sup> Similarly, Abū al-Khayr in *al-Mukhtaṣar min Kitāb Nashr*, after giving the names of nineteen works of Ibn 'Aqilah, concluded the following about him, "A reliable person informed me that Ibn 'Aqilah had about ninety works (*akhbarānī thiqatun bi-anna la-hu naḥwa tis'in mu'allafan*)."<sup>85</sup> Additionally, while Ismā'īl b. Muḥammad al-Baghdādī provides the names of twelve of Ibn 'Aqilah's works in *Hadīyah al-'arīfīn*, 'Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥālāh mentions only five of them in *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*.<sup>86</sup>

In the final analysis, comparing the list of Ibn 'Aqilah's books mentioned in the tradition of *thabat* with the information given in the bio-bibliographical works, it is concluded that it is difficult to determine the list of all his works based on the tradition of *thabat*. This shows that the life story of an author cannot be revealed in all aspects and details based on the tradition of *thabat*.

81 Muḥibbī, *Khulāsat al-athar*, III/172; Hasani, *Nuzhat al-khawātir*, VI, 764.

82 Ibn 'Aqilah, *'Iqd al-jawāhir*, 13–14. See also al-Murādī, *Silk al-durar*, IV, 30; al-Kattānī, *Fihris al-fahāris*, II, 865.

83 Sharābātī, *Inālah al-tālibīn* (Hafid Efendi, 23), 60<sup>b</sup>–61<sup>a</sup>; Ba'li, *Manār al-is'ād*, 88–90.

84 Murādī, *Silk al-durar*, IV, 30.

85 Abū al-Khayr, *al-Mukhtaṣar min Kitāb Nashr*, 463.

86 Baghdādī, *Hadīyah al-'arīfīn*, II, 323; Kaḥḥālāh, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, VIII, 264.

## Conclusion

Resembling an intellectual autobiography writing, containing comprehensive information about the history and methods of education teaching, the social and cultural history, and the history of sciences of the periods in which they were written, and revealing the relationship between teacher and pupil, the genre of *thabat* writing is used in a close sense with the terms *al-fahrasah*, *al-fihrist*, *al-fihris*, *al-mu'jam*, *al-mashyakhah*, and *al-barnāmaj*. Accordingly, *thabat* and these other subgenres are the common designations of the catalogues in which scholars, usually as a means of *al-isnād* and *al-ijāzah*, inscribe the names of the books they read from their teachers of the relevant time and the books they read from them on the basic classics in various fields in accordance with the date of their death or alphabetically. The *thabat* literature, which came into existence in the classical period with its various equivalents, is a significant area that has not been sufficiently studied by modern researchers and has not been the subject of a comprehensive study. However, if the works on the subject of *thabat* are evaluated quantitatively, it can be observed that they have reached a number that could constitute a tradition in the history of Islāmic literature. There can be no doubt with certainty that at least three of Ibn 'Aqilah's teachers, his teachers' teachers, himself, and his students have written works in this genre, and that their works have reached the modern period, so that the genre of *thabat* writing is a tradition that has existed for four generations and continued into the modern era.

Scholars such as Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Balawī al-Wādīāshī, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Bābīlī, Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-'Ujaymī, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Nakhlī, 'Abd Allāh b. Sālīm al-Başrī, Ibn 'Aqilah al-Makkī, Ismā'il b. Muḥammad al-'Ajlūnī, 'Abd al-Karīm b. Aḥmad al-Sharābātī, 'Alī b. Aḥmad al-Şa'īdī al-'Adawī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ba'li and Muḥammad Sa'īd Safar al-Atharī, who have works in the *thabat* tradition, focused more on the science of ḥadīth and wrote works in this field. Besides narration, these scholars also have works in other disciplines, especially Qur'ānic exegesis. Therefore, while trying to determine that the tradition of *thabat* is an alternative link to the history of tafsīr and especially to *ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, it is observed that the tafsīr-ḥadīth duo is closely related in terms of using the same sources. In this regard, while delving into the possibility of the *thabat* literature as a new link to the tradition of tafsīr *ṭabaqāt* in the example of Ibn 'Aqilah al-Makkî's life story, it is concluded that the field in which comprehensive information on the life stories of the ḥadīth-identified exegetes is available is the genre of *thabat* writing.

On the other hand, based on the tradition of *thabat*, the life stories of scholars can be recovered, and their interactions with each other and their

scholarly networks can be identified. The bio-bibliographical works, such as al-Murādi's *Silk al-durar*, Ismā'il b. Muḥammad al-Baghdādi's *Hadīyah al-'ārifīn* and his *Īdāh al-maknūn*, 'Abd Allāh Mirdād Abū al-Khayr's *al-Mukhtasar min Kitāb Nashr al-nawr wa al-zahar fī tarājim afādil Makkah*, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattāni's *Fihris al-fahāris wa-al-athbāt*, and 'Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥālah's *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, which incorporate information about Ibn 'Aqīlah's life story, are too limited in comparison with the data available in the *thabat* tradition. That is to say, the former do not sufficiently cover biographical and bibliographical details such as the period of his birth, the chronological list of his teachers, his scholarly personality and journeys, his activities, works, and the educational curriculum of the relevant period. It can be said that the relevant literature is superficial because it has limited information on this issue, whereas the *thabat* literature provides sophisticated information about Ibn 'Aqīlah's birth, scholarly personality, intellectual journeys and works, and offers the opportunity to navigate the capillaries of the period in which he lived.

In other words, although there are points that remain silent and not all questions can be answered completely, some findings about Ibn 'Aqīlah's life story can be identified by referring to the tradition of *thabat*. For instance, Ibn 'Aqīlah's trip to Istanbul, his meeting with the Ottoman Sultan Maḥmūd I, the Sultan's repeated participation in the ḥadīth assemblies that he coordinated there, the existence of his political relations, and other detailed information supporting his scholarly maturity in various sciences can only be identified through the tradition of *thabat*. However, in the case of Ibn 'Aqīlah's life story, it is also possible to say that there are parallels both in the literature of *thabat* and in the general bio-bibliographical works.

In the final analysis, the most reliable first-hand/primary source to obtain detailed information on the life story, scholarly personality, and works of any scholar can be considered as the literature of *thabat*, which contains both written and oral, cultural sources, notes, and elements. Therefore, by adding *thabat* literature as a new link to the tradition of *ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, erudite biographies of classical commentators can be rewritten, unknown aspects of their lives can be analysed, and between the lines of their works can be better understood.



## Bibliography

- Abay, Muhammet, "Yeni Bir Tabakâtü'l-Müfessirîn Denemesi", *Tarihten Günümüze Kur'an İlimleri ve Tefsir Usûlü*, İstanbul: İlim Yayma Vakfı Kur'an ve Tefsir Akademisi, 2009, 275-288.
- Abû al-Khayr, 'Abd Allah Mirdâd, *al-Mukhtasar min Kitâb Nashr al-nawr wa al-zahar fî tarâjim afâdil Makkah*, ed. Muḥammad Sa'îd al-'Âmûdî - Ahmad 'Ali, Jiddah: Âlam al-ma'rifah, 1986.
- Abû Shuhbah, Muhammad, *al-Madkhal li-dirâsat al-Qur'an*, Riyadh: Dâr al-liwâ', 1987.
- Ahdal, 'Abd-al-Rahmân b. Sulaymân, *al-Nafs al-Yamâni wa-al-rûh al-ruhâni fî ijâzat al-quḍâti banî al-Shawkân*, ed. 'Abd Allâh b. Muhammad al-Habashî, Riyadh: Dâr al-sumay'î, 2012.
- Ahwânî, Abd al-Azîz, "Kutub barâmîj al-ulamâ' fi al-Andalus". *Majallat Ma'had al-Makhtûṭât al-'Arabiyah*, 1 (1955): 91-120.
- Ajlûnî, Ismâ'il b. Muhammad, *Hilyat ahl al-fadl wa-al-kamal bi-tittisâl al-asânid bi-kummali al-rijâl*, ed. Muhammad Ibrâhîm al-Husayn, 'Ammân: Dâr al-fath, 2009.
- Altuntaş, Mustafa Celil, *Osmanlı Döneminde Hadis İlmi* (PhD dissertation), İstanbul University, 2018.
- Ansârî, Zakariyâ b. Muhammad, *Fath al-Bâqî bi-sharh Alfîyat al-Îraqî*, Beirut: Dâr al-kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2002.
- Aydınlı, Abdullah, "Osmanlı Hadis Âlimlerinden Bandırmalı Küçük Hâmid Efendi'nin Hayatı ve Eserleri." *Journal of Sakarya University Faculty of Theology*, 8 (2003): 1-11.
- Bâbilî, Shams al-Dîn Muḥammad b. Alâ' al-Dîn, *Muntakhab al-asânid fi wasli al-musannafât wa-al-ajzâ' wa-al-masânid*, Beirut: Dâr al-bashâ'ir al-Islâmîyah, 2004.
- Badawi, Elsaid M. - Abdel Haleem, Muhammad, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur'anic Usage*, Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Badrân, Abd al-Qâdir b. Ahmad, *Munâdamat al-atlâl wa-musâmarat al-khayyâl*, ed. Zuhayr al-Shâwish, Damascus: al-Maktab al-Islâmî, 1379.
- Baghdâdî, Ismâ'il b. Muhammad, *Hadîyah al-ârifîn asmâ' al-mu'allifîn wa-âthâr al-musannifîn*, Beirut: Dâr ihyâ' al-turâth al-Arabî, n.d.
- Baghdâdî, Ismâ'il b. Muhammad, *Îdâh al-maknûn fi al-Dhayl alâ Kashf al-zunûn*. ed. Şerefettin Yaltkaya - Rifat Bilge, Beirut: Dâr ihyâ' al-turâth al-Arabî, n.d.
- Balawî, Abû Ja'far Ahmad b. Ali al-Wâdiâshî. *al-Thabat*, ed. Abd Allah al-Umrânî ,Beirut: Dâr al-gharb al-Islâmî, 1983.
- Balı, Abd al-Rahman b. Abd Allah, *Manâr al-is'âd fi turuq al-isnâd*, ed. Wâ'il Muhammad Bakr Zahrân, Ammân: Dâr al-Fath, 2023.
- Bândirmahwî, Hâmid b. Yûsuf, *Tanînu al-mujaljlât bi-tabyîn al-musalsalât*, ed. Abû al-Hasan Abd Allah b. Abd al-Azîz al-Shabrâwî, Beirut: Dâr al-Risâlah, 2013.
- Besteiro, José María Fórneas, *Elencos Biobibliográficos Árabeandaluces: Estudio Especial de la Farsa de Ibn 'Aṭīya al-Garnāṭī*, PhD Dissertation: Universidad Complutense, 1970.
- Birşık, Abdulhamit. "İbn Akile", *DİA*, 1999, XIX, 304-306.
- Birşık, Abdulhamit, *Muhammed b. Akile ve ez-Ziyâde ve'l-Ihsân fi 'Ulûmi'l-Kur'an'ı* (MA thesis), Marmara University, 1990.
- BOA, Ottoman Archive, *Bâb-ı Âsafî Mühimme Defterleri [A.DVNSNMH.d.]*, No. 139, 61. <https://katalog.devletarsivleri.gov.tr>
- Deliser, Bilal, "Tarihsel Arka Planlı Yüzyıl Okumaları-I: Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen'in Büyük Tefsir Tarihi/Tabakatü'l-Müfessirîn Adlı Eserinin İlk Üç Tabakası." *Academic Platform Journal of İslamic Research* 7/3 (2023): 298-329.
- Demir, Zakir, "İbn 'Akile el-Mekki'nin Kur'an Lafızlarının İlahîliğine Yaklaşımı". *The Journal of Tafsir Studies* 6/2 (2022), 602-619.
- Demir, Zakir, "Kur'an'ın Bütünlüğünde Kullanılan Kavı/Söz Terkiplerinin Mâhiyeti ve Bunların Kutsal Kitab'a Arzı", *Marife*, 22/2 (2022): 911-936.
- Eren, Mehmet, "Hadis Edebiyatında Mu'cem-Meşyaha Türü Kitaplar", *Selçuk Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 20 (2005): 19-28.
- Eşer, Ahmet, *Hadis İlminde Fehrese Literatürü* (PhD dissertation), İstanbul University, 2021.

- Halabî, al-Samîn, *Umdat al-huffaz fi tafsîr ashraf al-alfâz*, ed. Muhammad Bâsil Uyûn al-Sûd, Beirut: Dâr al-kutub al-ilmîyah, 1996.
- Hasanî, Abd al-Hayy, *Nuzhat al-khawâtir wa-bahjat al-masâmi' wa-al-nawâzir*, Beirut: Dâr Ibn Hazm, 1999.
- Hilah, Muḥammad al-Habîb, *al-Târikh wa-al-mu'arrikhûn bi-Makkah min al-qarn al-thâlith al-Hijrî ilâ al-qarn al-thâlith 'ashar*, Makkah: Mu'assasat al-furqân lil-turâth al-Islâmî, 1994.
- Ibn al-Athîr, Majd al-Dîn, *al-Nihâyah fi gharib al-hadîth*, ed. Tâhir Ahmad al-Zâwî - Mahmûd Muhammad al-Tanâhî, Beirut: al-Maktabah al-Islâmîyah, n.d.
- Ibn Durayd, Muḥammad b. al-Hasan, *Jamharah al-lughah*, ed. Ramzî Munîr Ba'labakki, Beirut: Dâr al-ilm lil-malâyîn, 1987.
- Ibn Aqîlah, Muhammad b. Ahmad, *al-Fawâ'id al-jalilah fi musalsalat Ibn Aqîlah*, ed. Muhammad Ridwân al-Qahwajî, Beirut: Dâr al-Bashâ'ir al-Islâmîyah, 2000.
- Ibn Aqîlah, Muḥammad b. Ahmad, *al-Mawâhib al-jazilah fi marwiyât al-faqîr ilâ Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad Aqîlah*, ed. Abd Allah b. 'Abd al-Azîz al-Shabrâwî, Cairo: Dâr al-risâlah, 2018.
- Ibn Aqîlah, Muhammad b. Ahmad, *al-Ziyâdah wa-al-ihsân fi ulûm al-Qur'ân*, al-Shâriqah: Markaz al-Buhûth wa-al-Dirâsât, 2006.
- Ibn Aqîlah, Muhammad b. Ahmad, *Iqd al-jawâhir fi salâsil al-akâbir*, ed. Ömer Özgül, Izmir: Dokuz Eylül University, 2005.
- Ibn Atîyah, Abû Muhammad Abd al-Haqq, *Fihris Ibn Atîyah*, ed. Muhammad Abû al-Ajfân - Muhammad al-Zâhî, Beirut: Dâr al-gharb al-Islâmî, 1983.
- Ibn Azzûz, Muhammad al-Makki, *Umdat al-athbât fi al-ittisâl bi-al-fahâris wa-al-athbât*, ed. Umar b. al-Jilânî al-Shiblî al-Zaytûnî, Tunus: al-Dâr al-mâlikîyah, 2015.
- Ibn Manzûr, Muhammad b. Mukarram, *Lisân al-Arab*, Beirut: Dâr as-sâdir, n.d.
- Irâqî, Zayn al-Din Abd al-Rahîm, *al-Taqyîd wa-al-idâh*, Beirut: Dâr al-hadîth, 1984.
- Isfahânî, Abû al-Qâsim al-Husayn b. Muhammad al-Râghib, *Mufradât alfâz al-Qur'ân*. ed. Safwân Adnân al-Dâwûdî, Damascus: Dâr al-Qalam, 2009.
- Jawharî, Abû Nasr Ismâil b. Hammâd, *al-Sihâh: Tâj al-lughah wa-sihâh al-Arabiyyah*, ed. Ahmad Abd al-Ghafûr Attâr, Beirut: Dâr al-ilm lil-Malâyîn, 1979.
- Kahhalah, Umar Ridâ, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifin*, Beirut: Dâr ihyâ' al-Turâth al-Arabî n.d.
- Kandemir, M. Yaşar, "Fehrese", *DİA*, 1995, XII, 297-299.
- Kattânî, Muḥammad Abd al-Hayy, *Fihris al-fahâris wa-al-athbât*, Beirut: Dâr al-gharb al-Islâmî, 1982.
- Kawtharî, Muhammad Zâhid, *al-Tahrîr al-wajîz fîmâ yabtaghîhi al-mustajîz*, ed. Abd al-Fattâh Abû Ghuddah, Aleppo: Maktabat al-Matbû'ât al-Islâmîyah, 1993.
- Kawtharî, Muhammad Zâhid, *Fiqh ahl al-Irâq wa-hadithuhum*, ed. Abd al-Fattâh Abû Ghuddah, Beirut: al-Maktabah al-Azhariyyah, 2002.
- Kaya, Mesut, "Hadis ve Tarih İlimleri Arasında Tefsir Tabakat Literatürü: Histogram Bir İnceleme". *Turkish Journal of Islamic Studies*, 31 (2014): 33-65.
- Mashshât, Hasan b. Muhammad, *al-Thabat al-kabîr*, ed. Muhammad b. Abd-al-Karîm b. Ubayd, Makkah: Mu'assasat al-Furqân lil-turâth al-Islâmî, 2005.
- Molina, Celia del Moral, "José M<sup>o</sup> Fórneas Besteiro (1926-2003)", *Miscelânea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos Sección Árabe-Islâm*, 52 (2003): 275-286.
- Mollaibrahimoğlu, Süleyman, *Yazma Tefsir Literatürü*, Istanbul: Damla yayınevi, 2007.
- Muallimî, Abd Allah b. Abd al-Rahman, *A'lâm al-Makkîyin min al-qarn al-tâsi ilâ al-qarn al-râbi' 'ashar*, London: Mu'assasat al-Furqân lil-Turâth al-Islâmî, 2000.
- Muhibbî, Muhammad Amîn, *Khulâsat al-athar fi a'yân al-qarn al-hâdi' 'ashar*, Beirut: Dâr sâdir, n.d.
- Murâdî, Muhammad Khalîl, *Silk al-durar fi a'yân al-qarn al-thâni ashâr*, Cairo: Dâr al-kitâb al-Islâmî, n.d.
- Muslim, Mustafa, *al-Dirâsah of al-Ziyâdah*, al-Shâriqah: Markaz al-Buhûth wa-al-Dirâsât, 2006.
- Muwaffaq Abd Allah, Abd al-Qâdir, *Ilmu al-athbât wa-ma'âjim al-shuyûkh wa al-mashyakhât wa al-fann kitâbat al-tarâjim*, Makkah: Jâmi'at Umm al-Qurâ, 1421.

- Nuwayhid, Âdil, *Mu'jam al-mufasssîrîn min sadr al-Islâm wa-hattâ al-'aşr al-hâdir*, Beirut: Muassasat Nuwayhid al-Thaqâfiyah, 1983.
- Özcan, Esat, "Tefsir Tabakât Eserleri", *Harran İlahiyat Journal*, XXVI/44 (2020): 66-87.
- Pellat, Ch. "Fahrâsa", *The Encyclopedia of Islâm* (new edition), Leiden: Brill, 1991, II, 743-744.
- Qattân, Mannâ', *Mabâhith fi 'ulûm al-Qur'ân*, Cairo: Maktabah wahbah, 1995.
- Reynolds, Dwight F., (ed.), *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, London: University of California Press, 2001.
- Saïdi, Ali b. Ahmad al-'Adawî, "Mukhtasar *thabat* al-Sayyid Muhammad b. Ahmad 'Aqilah". *al-Mawâhib al-jazilah fi marwîyât al-Sharîf Muhammad 'Aqilah*, Cairo: Dâr al-risâlah, 2018.
- Sakhâwî, Shams al-Dîn Muhammad, *Fath al-Mughith bi-sharh Alfîyat al-hadîth*, Riyadh: Maktabat dâr al-minhâj, 1426.
- Saleh, Walid A., "Preliminary Remarks on the Historiography of Tafsir in Arabic: A History of the Book Approach", *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 12 (2010): 6-40.
- Sâlih, Subhî, *Mabâhith fi 'ulûm al-Qur'ân*, Beirut: Dâr al-'İlm, 1977.
- Sharâbâtî Abd al-Karîm b. Ahmad b. 'Ulwân, *Inâlah al-tâlibîn li'awâli al-muhaddithîn*. Istanbul: Süleymaniye Library, Hafid Efendi, nr. 23, 1<sup>a</sup>-88<sup>a</sup>.
- Shibli, 'Umar b. al-Jilânî b. 'Umar al-Tûnisî, *Thabat al-Shaykh al-'Allâmah al-Imâm Muhammad Tâhir b. 'Ashûr*, Tunus: Dâr al-Salâm, 2018.
- Suwaydi, Abd Allah b. Husayn, *al-Nafhah al-miskiyah fi al-rihlah al-Makkiyah*, ed. 'Imâd 'Abd al-Salâm Ra'ûf. Abû Zaby, 1424.
- Suyûtî, Jalâl al-Dîn, *Tadrîb al-râwî fi sharh Taqrib al-Nawâwî*, ed. Mâzin b. Muhammad al-Sirsâwî, al-Dammâm: Dâr Ibn al-Jawzî, 1431.
- Şener, Fatma Nur, *Hanefî İbn Akile el-Mekkî'nin el-Cevherü'l-Manzûm'da Ukûbât Âyetlerini Tefsirde Rivâyet Yöntemi* (MA thesis), Marmara University, 2018.
- Uğur, Mücteba, *Ansiklopedik Hadis Terimleri Sözlüğü*, Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 1992.
- Wehr, Hans, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, ed. J. Milton Cowan, Ithaca: Spoken Language Services, 1976.
- Zabidî, Muhammad al-Murtadâ. *Tâj al-'arûs min jawâhir al-qâmûs*, ed. 'Abd al-Sattâr Ahmad Farrâj - et al. al-Kuwayt, 1965.
- Zamakhsharî, Abû al-Qâsim Maḥmûd b. 'Amr, *Asâs al-balâghah*, ed. Muhammad Bâsil 'Uyûn al-Sûd, Beirut: Dâr al-kutub al-'ilmîyah, 1998.
- Zirikli, Khayr al-Dîn, *al-A'lâm*, ed. Zuhayr Fath Allah, Beirut: Dâr al-'ilm lil-malâyîn, n.d.
- Zurqânî, Muhammad 'Abd al-'Azîm, *Manâhil al-'irfân fi 'ulûm al-Qur'ân*, ed. Fawwâz Ahmad Zamarli, Beirut: Dâr al-kitâb al-'Arabî, 1995.