

bearers of truth.¹⁶ He had to emphasise the element of faith contained in every consensus, because Abū 'Īsā used the time-honoured strategy¹⁷ of pointing to the Jews and Christians who did not arrive at the truth with their consensus regarding Christ's death on the cross.¹⁸

8.2.2.3.2 *The K. al-tāj*

We know much less about the other books, but we are able to see the place they held within contemporary debate. The *K. al-tāj* was directed against the classic proof of the existence of God of the 'four premises' drawn up by Abū l-Hudhayl.¹ One cannot, Ibn al-Rēwandī said, draw conclusions regarding the transience of bodies based on the transience of the accidents.² *Prima vista* it is much more probable that bodies are eternal; no-one has experienced a time when they were not.³ This was not as revolutionary as it sounded; it corresponded to the accusations against Jāhīz.⁴ Ibn al-Rēwandī even unearthed it in the theories of Mu'ammār and Naẓẓām.⁵ He made every effort to connect with his Mu'tazilite colleagues. If they claimed in the context of their *aṣlah* theory that God could have created innumerable other worlds that are the same as this one in every respect, Ibn al-Rēwandī twisted it into the statement that if there really was complete similarity, this world had to be just as uncreated as those.⁶ He delighted in enlarging on criticism of the believers in potentiality – who were still in the minority at the time: if that which is not is 'something', then it would have to be eternal as well.⁷ As we have seen,⁸ he was not one of them, but he came up with enough reasons to show that the same conclusion could be drawn from his own position. He went through all the wordings, but in the end always arrived at the same: from nothing, nothing comes. Thus that which is, would have to have always been there.⁹

16 Text 83, b–c. Ibn al-Rēwandī counts himself as one of the *ahl al-ḥaqq*.

17 See vol. III 417f. above and p. 723 below.

18 Text 83, a, and 84, a.

1 See vol. III 250 above.

2 Text 41; also 37, b–c. Also Mānkḏīm, ShUKh 113, 10ff.

3 Text 39; this was the beginning of the book.

4 See p. 125 above.

5 *Intiṣār* 21, 10ff. (= Text XXII 25).

6 Text 42. Nāṣir-i Khosraw reports this slightly sophistic argument without any criticism. The 'Ḥashwites', against whom he tells us it was directed, were probably non-Isma'īlites in general in his view, including the Mu'tazilites.

7 Text 40, d; cf. p. 55 and 159 above.

8 See p. 351f. above.

9 Text 40, a–c and e–h.