

Caifer b. Harb

030019

J

MADDE YAYIMLANDIKTAN  
SONRA GELEN DOKÜMAN

15 Eylül 2022

## Ja'far b. Harb

Abū l-Faḍl **Ja'far** b. Muḥammad b. **Harb** al-Hamdānī (d. 236/850) was an early Mu'tazilī theologian of Baghdad, who was also known by the less favourable *nisba* of al-Ashajj ("the one with a headwound") in some non-Mu'tazilī sources (for example, al-Nasafī, 2:649). The record in which his theology and biography survive is highly fragmented. Of the twelve extant titles of works attributed to him, only one, titled *Kitāb al-uṣūl* ("The book of the principles of religion"), has survived in part, and its attribution to him is not entirely certain (Madelung, Frühe mu'tazilitische Häresiographie, 230; van Ess, *TG*, 6:288–9). It has been argued that one of his lost works, titled *Kitāb mutashābih al-Qur'ān* ("On the ambiguous verses of the Qur'ān"), had a significant impact on the genre of works dealing with Qur'anic *mutashābihāt* ("ambiguous verses"; Mourad, 91). Even with the limited information that has survived about Ja'far's life and work, his overall theological career can be described as uniquely representative of the predicament of the Mu'tazilīs of his time, who were polarised between

those who engaged with the 'Abbāsīd court and the urban ascetics who shunned it. Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 380/990) singled him out as "the leading Mu'tazilī of his time" (Ibn al-Nadīm, 213).

Ja'far spent the first part of his career in various offices at the 'Abbāsīd court and in the army ('Abd al-Jabbār, 278, 281–3; al-Jishumī, *Sharḥ 'Uyūn al-masā'il*, 63ab). He met and debated Abū l-Hudhayl (c. 135–227/752–842), a highly influential early Mu'tazilī ('Abd al-Jabbār, 255), and, despite their many disagreements—as documented, for example, in Ja'far's *Tawbīkh Abī l-Hudhayl* ("Censure of Abī l-Hudhayl"; Ibn al-Nadīm, 213)—there is also ample evidence that Ja'far was influenced by Abū l-Hudhayl (al-Tawḥīdī, 4:214–5). The claim that Ja'far was a disciple of Abū l-Hudhayl is noted only in two sources (al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, 8:43; al-Jishumī, *Sharḥ 'Uyūn al-masā'il*, 63a) and has been rightly doubted (Madelung, Frühe mu'tazilitische Häresiographie, 231–2). In most sources, Ja'far is categorised as a student of Abū Mūsā l-Murdār (d. 226/841), a Mu'tazilī renowned for his asceticism and for being a disciple of Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir (d. 210/825), who is