



AZAL

AZAL, Arabic theological term derived from Pahlavi *a-sar* “without head” and meaning, already in early Mu‘tazilite *kalām*, “eternity *a parte ante*,” as opposite to *abad*, “eternity *a parte post*.” It corresponds to the Greek term *ánarchon*. The etymology frequently brought up by Arab lexicographers which connects *azal* with *lam yazal* “he did not cease (being or doing something)” is certainly wrong (cf., e.g., Aḥmad b. Fāres, *Maqāyīs al-loġa*, ed. ‘Abd-al-Salām Moḥammad Hārūn, Cairo, 1366-/1946-, I, p. 97). But the assonance may account for the fact that the early Muslim theologians always circumscribed the eternal existence of God’s attributes, etc., with the verbal expression *lam yazal . . . wa-lā yazālo* (*‘āleman*, *qāderan*, etc.; cf., among innumerable examples, Aš‘arī, *Maqālāt*, p. 156, l. 4). Nöldeke proposes to derive the word from Syr. *ezal*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also “Abad” and “Ḳadam” in *EI*² (with further references).

For the etymology see G. Monnot, *Penseurs musulmans et religions iraniennes*, Paris, 1974, p. 152 n. 6; Th. Nöldeke, *Belegwörterbuch der klassischen arabischen Sprache*, Berlin, 1952, p. 21b; and cf. H. S. Nyberg, *A Manual of*



Pahlavi II, Wiesbaden, 1974, p. 31.

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