

Authority Construction in Biographical Texts: The Cases of Humran b. A‘yan and al-Ahwal Mu‘min al-Ta‘q

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A salient feature of eighth and ninth century Shi‘ism was the presence of numerous disciples representing the imams in the Shi‘i community. This article will discuss how Shi‘i biographical texts profile some disciples of the imams (also called the *rijal*) and attempt to resolve the differences that arose between the imams and their associates. Focusing on two prominent disciples, it will also discuss an important concept that has been largely neglected in western scholarship on Shi‘ism – the construction of authority in biographical texts.

The deputyship and authority of the *rijal*

A corollary to the Shi‘i belief in the imamate is the Shi‘i world-view which maintains that, as the inheritors of the Prophet’s comprehensive and charismatic authority, the imams were to provide authoritative guidance to their followers at all times. It was the need to perpetuate divine guidance through the leadership of the imams that necessitated authoritative figures who could occupy the position of the imams and transmit their teachings to their followers when access to the imams became difficult.

In all probability, it was the failure of the various ‘Alid revolts to overthrow the ‘Abbasid caliphate¹ and the repressive measures adopted by the caliphs against any opposition to their regimes that persuaded the imams to accentuate their role as the exponents of the *shari‘a* rather than assuming the comprehensive, socio-political leadership that had been envisaged for the Prophet himself. The rise to prominence of certain

individuals who could undertake various functions on behalf of the imams can be construed as a pragmatic response to the Shi‘i community’s need for religious leadership and guidance under inimical socio-political conditions.

The delegation of the imams’ authority to their close associates was also an important landmark in Shi‘i intellectual history insofar as it signified a transition from the centralized, universal, authority of the imams to a more structured and regionalized office of the *rijal*. In the process of divesting their authority to their close disciples, the imams were creating a symbiotic structure, one that was dominated by the *rijal*. Thus the universal and all-embracing authority of the imam that was located in Medina was complemented by the regional authority of the *rijal* in distant areas like Kufa, Qum and Khurasan. Geographical and political considerations factors segmented Shi‘ism into regional communities, each with its own distinct scholar or group of scholars expressing the teachings of the imam. Yet, as I shall discuss, it was precisely this factor (the segmentation of the imams’ authority) that precipitated a challenge to the imams’ own authority.

The investiture of the imams’ authority to their associates is evident in various statements in which the imams are reported to have recommended their distant followers to seek religious guidance from their trusted authorities. When the Shi‘is approached Ja‘far al-Sadiq (d. 765) after the uprising of Abu‘l-Khattab (d. 755) and urged him to appoint someone whom they could refer to in matters pertaining to religious guidance and the canonical ordinances (*al-ahkam*), he is reported to have said, ‘I appoint over you Mufaddal b. ‘Umar (d. 796), listen to him and associate [yourselves] with him, for he does not say [anything] about God and me except what is true.’² The Shi‘is were

specifically asked to refer to those who had been personally trained by the imams in the juridical and theological fields.

The imams reportedly trained the *rijal* so that they could transmit their teachings. As disciples who had been instructed by the imams, the *rijal* were recognized as possessors of the authentic knowledge that could protect God's religion against innovation or adulteration. The divinely bestowed 'ilm that was reportedly located in the imam could only be passed on within a specified line of transmission. Since they embodied the knowledge of the imams, it was only the *rijal* who could disseminate their teachings to other Shi'is. It is in this context that we can comprehend the instruction of the seventh imam, Musa al-Kazim (d. 799) to his followers. He is reported to have written to a disciple, 'Do not take knowledge pertaining to religion from other [persons] than our Shi'is.'³

The discussion on the function of the *rijal* as the transmitters of the teachings of the imams indicates that the *rijal's* authority was epistemic. This mode of authority refers to the leadership of those erudite or experts in a given field who serve as a referent point for others.⁴ Since it is confined to a specialized field, epistemic authority tends to endow its bearer with extra authority especially as only a few trained experts can participate in the field. The *rijal's* epistemic authority was anchored in the training that they had received from the imams and in their functions as the jurists and theologians in the Shi'i community. The epistemic authority of the *rijal* can be further discerned from their engagement in various forms of discourses and in their ability to instruct other Shi'is. This mode of authority was also expressed in their public articulation and pronouncement of matters pertaining to Islamic law and beliefs.

Whereas epistemic authority provided the basis for transmitting the teachings of the imams and inferring rulings from their teachings, the delegation from the imams showed, for the Shi'is, that the knowledge of the *rijal* was rooted in its authentic source, the family of the Prophet. Epistemic authority demanded obedience from the masses as it reflected the teachings of the imams and a proper articulation of the law. Delegation from the imams was equally crucial as it ratified the *rijal*'s position as the appointed deputies of the imams.

Having briefly considered the deputyship of the disciples of the imams, I will now discuss the concept of authority construction in Shi'i biographical texts. I intend to show how the authority of the disciples is created and preserved by examining the profiles of two prominent disciples of the imams, Humran b. A'yan and Muhammad b. Nu'man al-Ahwal.

Humran b. A'yan (floruit in the eighth century)

Biographical dictionaries employ various methods to both construct and enhance the authority of the figures they profile. The authority of the disciples of the imams in Shi'i *rijal* literature is constructed and expressed by emphasizing their loyalty to the imams, transmission of their traditions and their administrative contributions to the community. The authority of the *rijal* is also predicated on their juristic and epistemic accomplishments, their literary compositions, narratives from the imams and other disciples, their ascetic qualities and their engagement in polemical discourses. Thus it is correct to maintain that the authority of the *rijal* in the biographical texts is based on their juristic and other accomplishments rather than on their personal qualities. It is in this

context that we can examine the profile of a prominent disciple of the imams, Humran b. A‘yan.

According to the Shi‘i biographer Kashshi (d. 978), Humran was initially a student of al-Hakam b. ‘Utayba, who was reportedly a Sunni jurist.⁵ Later, Humran, together with his brothers Zurara (d. 767) and ‘Abd al-Malik, under the influence of Abu Khalid al-Kabuli and Salih b. Marwan, converted to Shi‘ism.⁶

A contemporary of the fifth and sixth imams, Muhammad al-Baqir (d. 737) and Ja‘far al-Sadiq (d. 765), Humran was reportedly one of the closest associates of the imams. Al-Baqir is quoted as saying, ‘Humran is from our Shi‘is in this and the next world.’⁷ Humran’s loyalty is further exemplified in the following tradition that is reported from Ja‘far al-Sadiq,

‘I have not found anyone who has accepted my words, is obedient and followed the footsteps of the associates of my father except for two people, may God have mercy on them – ‘Abd Allah b. Ya‘fur and Humran b. A‘yan. They are sincere believers among our Shi‘is.’⁸

In another report that further accentuates Humran’s close relationship with the imams, al-Sadiq is even reported to have said that he and his father would intervene for Humran on the day of judgement and that they would lead him to heaven.⁹

Although he mentions derogatory remarks regarding several other companions, Kashshi does not cite a single pejorative remark concerning Humran, a point that further corroborates the view that he was seen as a very loyal companion to the imams. Besides his loyalty to the imams, the authority of Humran in the biographical literature is also predicated on his being the recipient of certain secrets of the imams that were not to be divulged to non-

Shi'is. Therefore, when Zurara, Humran's brother, met Muhammad al-Baqir in Mina during the pilgrimage, the imam is quoted as telling him:

'..he (Humran) is a true believer, he will never turn away [from his belief]. If you meet him, convey my regards to him and ask him, 'Why did you narrate my tradition to al-Hakam b. 'Utayba [concerning the belief] that the *awsiya* (successors to the Prophet) are *muhaddathun* (have the ability to hear but not see angels)? Do not report these [genres of] reports to him or those like him.''¹⁰

As I have discussed elsewhere¹¹ al-Fasawi (d. 890) cites a report that indicates that Zurara had also propagated the belief that the imams possessed divinely inspired '*ilm*. Both Sunni and Shi'i ninth century sources indicate that the belief in the special '*ilm* of the imams was accepted by eighth and ninth century Shi'is. They also indicate that disciples such as Humran and Zurara were primarily responsible for propagating such beliefs.

Humran was also important to the Shi'is due to the genre of traditions related from him. For example, he quotes al-Sadiq as reporting that 'Ali had conversed with his Lord at Ta'if.¹² Traditions such as these, reported by disciples who had been pronounced as reliable in the biographical works, could be used to support the beliefs in the special '*ilm* and supernatural qualities of the imams.

Besides his loyalty, Humran was also important to the Shi'is as he is reported to have engaged in various polemical discourses. He was reportedly instructed by al-Sadiq to debate with a Syrian on doctrinal matters.¹³ He had also discussed the central doctrine of the imamate. Thus, according to al-Sadiq, he spoke of the extension of the rope (*kana yaqulu bi-madd al-habl*) of, presumably, the imamate. Humran is also reported to have dissociated himself from those who believed in a non-'Alid imam,¹⁴ a point that

underlines his close relationship with the imams. It was reports such as these, transmitted by the loyal *rijal*, that could be used by subsequent theologians in their vindication of the belief in the imamate.

Humran's role as an elucidator of Shi'i beliefs is further attested to in his appearance in *asanid* (pl. of *isnad* - chains of transmission of traditions) pertaining to the occultation of the Mahdi, a point that would make him an important figure in upholding the Shi'i messianic belief.¹⁵ For the Shi'is, Humran was not only an epitome of loyalty to the imams but also an exemplary paragon, as seen in the genres of traditions he transmitted and beliefs he held. It was these that the Shi'i could cite in the justification of their doctrines. In the figure of Humran, they found a prominent disciple through whom they could trace their doctrines to the times of the imams.

Humran is not reported to have composed any books. Neither Tusi (d. 1067) nor Najashi (d. 1058-9) mention him in their works that enumerate the compositions of erstwhile Shi'is. Thus in the biographical works, his positive image was premised on other factors, like his loyalty to the imams, discourses and *hadith* transmission.

For the Shi'is, Humran was very important not only because of the multitudinous traditions that he allegedly reported but also because he was depicted as a proponent of Shi'i beliefs. Furthermore, he could always be cited as an exemplary disciple of the imams for, unlike many of the other Shi'is, not a single disparaging report on him is narrated.

The foregoing discussion on Humran suggests that traditions reported by disciples like him were used by subsequent Shi'is in tracing their theological and juridical views to the imams. This served to validate tenth century Shi'i beliefs and practices and enabled them to construct a coherent picture of a group of close disciples performing various

functions on behalf of the imams. In a sense the functions of the post-*ghayba* (occultation) Shi'i jurists as agents of the occult imam were also validated by the *rijal* who had reportedly performed similar functions on behalf of the earlier imams.

It is also significant to note there are no reports that prohibit Humran from engaging in debates. As I shall discuss below, whereas other disciples were forbidden from speaking due to their 'deviant views', Humran was allowed to engage in discourses, a point that further substantiates the view that he was seen as a faithful and loyal disciple of the imams.

In Shi'i biographical works, the authority of disciples like Humran was also predicated on association. The *rijal* were judged based on who they were associated with and narrated traditions from. Disciples who were reported to have been associated with the *ghulat* (extremists) or the Waqifis (those who believed in the messianism of the seventh imam), for example, were unequivocally condemned as having deviated from the circle of the imams, the ultimate source of authority for the *rijal*. Based on these multivariate accounts, the veracity or mendacity of a transmitter was assessed and he was either authenticated or dismissed as weak. Humran's authority in the biographical sources was predicated on his close association with the imams as he was reportedly trained by them in the theological realm to uphold major Shi'i beliefs.

A notable point regarding Humran's profile in the biographical texts concerns the methodology pursued by a twentieth century *rijal* scholar, Ayatullah al-Khu'i (d. 1992). When he examines reports that are favorable to Humran, he notes that most of these contain *asanid* (chains of transmission) that are defective since they are transmitted by persons who are regarded as weak. Rather than discounting these reports, Khu'i claims that the gist of

these reports (*al-mu'tabara minha*) is sufficient to indicate the elevated status of Humran. Since there are no negative reports on Humran, Khu'i does not defend him against any accusation.¹⁶

The preceding discussion indicates that the biographical literature became important as they constructed and identified a sense of a normative reading of the historical lives of the *rijal*. Disciples like Humran were categorized as the bearers of Islamic canonical tradition and the embodiment of correct juridical praxis. By citing the disciples' literary and other contributions and by providing an appraisal of their veracity or mendacity Tusi and Najashi provided a sense of orthodoxy and expressed a normative presentation of the disciples of the imams.

The discussion of the image of Humran in the Shi'i works can be contrasted with his profile in the Sunni biographical texts. Among the extant Sunni works, one of the earliest references to Humran is in Bukhari's (d. 870) *Ta'rikh al-Kabir*. Bukhari's entry amounts to just three lines in which some of Humran's sources of *hadith* transmission (Abu Tufayl, Abu Harb) and those who related from him are enumerated.¹⁷

Humran's profile in Sunni works was amplified by the tenth century. By al-'Uqayli's time (d. 933), Humran was described as the 'most intense' (*ashadd*) of the three brothers (including Zurara and 'Abd al-Malik) in his Shi'ism. Al-'Uqayli also quotes Yahya b. Ma'in (d. 847) as saying that Humran, along with his brother 'Abd al-Malik, were not worthy of consideration (*laysa bi-shay'in*)¹⁸ and that Humran was *da'if* (weak in transmitting traditions).¹⁹

Sunni *rijal* authors who wrote in the tenth century did not concur on their assessments of Humran. Ibn Hibban (d. 965), for example, contradicts al-'Uqayli's negative

evaluation of Humran. He states that Humran was reliable (*thiqa*).²⁰ Another Sunni biographer, Ibn Abi Hatim (d. 938) states that his father had deemed Humran to be a *shaykh*²¹ a view that clearly conflicts with Ibn Ma‘in’s negative assessment. There is no attempt to reconcile what are clearly contradictory appraisals on Humran nor are any explanations provided as to the reasons for these contrasting assessments.

The fourteenth century biographer Jamal al-Din Mizzi (d. 1340) indicates that Humran transmitted traditions from al-Baqir. This, however, is cited in a casual manner suggesting that al-Baqir was one of several figures that Humran related his traditions from.²² Mizzi also quotes the assessments of his predecessors on Humran. He cites Ibn Ma‘in’s negative assessment and adds that al-Nasa’i (d. 916) had also deemed Humran to be *da‘if*.²³ Abu Dawud is quoted as saying that Humran was a Rafidi, a position that would corroborate the Shi‘i contention that he was a close associate of the imams. Mizzi also quotes al-Juzajani (d. 870), who, after profiling Humran and his brothers Zurara and ‘Abd al-Malik says Humran was the most extreme of them and that his views were repulsive (*kana ‘ala ra’y su*).²⁴ It is also significant to note that the ‘repulsive’ views that Humran is alleged to have espoused are not mentioned.

A tradition cited in Sunni sources further re-inforces the view that Humran had transmitted *hadith* regarding the knowledge of ‘Ali. He reports that ‘Ali had said, ‘O people, *‘ilm* can be seized quickly. You are on the verge of losing me, [therefore] ask me, you will not question me on a Qur’anic verse from the book of God except that I will inform you concerning what it was revealed. You will not find anyone who can relate to you in this manner.’²⁵

It should also be noted that although he is accused of being a Rafidi in the Sunni biographical sources, Humran is not mentioned to have argued for or maintained specific Rafidi doctrines nor does he not appear to have engaged in substantial polemical discourses. He is not, for example, reported to have argued for beliefs in *bada'* (alteration of a divine decree), *raj'a* (the return of the imams at the end of time) or on anthropomorphism, all of which were linked to several other Shi'i figures. It was probably because of this factor that he was not criticized in the Sunni theological works. Frequent mention is made in the polemical and heresiographical works of Ibn Qutayba (d. 889) (*Ta'wil Mukhtalaf al-Hadith*), al-Khayyat (floruit in the ninth century) (*Kitab al-Intisar*), al-Ash'ari (d. 935) (*Maqalat al-Islamiyyin*) and al-Baghdadi (d. 1037) (*Farq bayn al-Firq*) of Rafidi figures who had argued for various doctrines related to Rafidi beliefs. Their views are refuted in these works. However, the name of Humran is not mentioned as having propagated such beliefs. In all probability, Humran was not as prominent as other Shi'i theologians like Hisham b. al-Hakam (d. 807), Hisham b. Salim al-Jawaliqi (n.d.) and Zurara whose views are frequently quoted and refuted in the ninth and tenth century Sunni polemical works. This factor may further explain the paucity of reference to and relatively mild criticism of Humran in the Sunni sources.

In comparing the treatment of Humran in the Shi'i and Sunni sources, it is correct to state that despite some differences, early Sunni *rijal* authorities like Abu Dawud and al-Juzajani had deemed Humran to be 'extreme in his Shi'ism,' confirming thus Shi'i claims of his belief in the imamate. Most of the Sunni *rijal* works mention his Shi'i proclivities and maintain that he was not reliable in his *hadith* transmissions. Even the few prophetic

traditions that he does narrate do not decisively influence Sunni legal/theological formulations suggesting that he was not very important to them.²⁶

Whereas the Sunni *rijal* works enumerate Humran's *mashayikh* (teachers) and narrators, the Shi'i biographical texts concentrate on reporting his activities as an important disciple of the imams. Stated differently, the Shi'is regard Humran as an important disciple who performed various functions on behalf of the imams. These ranged from transmitting *hadith* to promulgating and defending major Shi'i doctrines. The Sunnis restrict his role to that of being a *muhaddith* who transmitted traditions from various figures including the imams.

Sunni biographical profiles on Humran indicate that in the ninth century when the affiliations and reliability of various figures were appraised, Humran's image was disputed with contradictory views on him being cited. It was possibly due to the few favorable appraisals that his traditions were cited in the Sunni works despite his reputation of being a Shi'i. Subsequently, the developing image of Humran in Shi'i literature as a close disciple of the imams made his Shi'i identity more strong. Therefore it was his Shi'i affiliations rather than his reliability in reporting traditions that was recorded in the tenth century Sunni *rijal* works although favorable erstwhile reports on him were also cited. Overall, in the Sunni biographical literature, his image was negative.

Since there were no derogatory remarks cited by the imams against Humran and as the attacks against him in the Sunni works were relatively mild, there were fewer attempts made by the Shi'is to foster an idealized image of Humran or to construct his authority by refuting Sunni attacks against him. This, as we shall see, is in contrast to the next disciple that I shall profile.

Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Nu‘man al-Ahwal (floruit in eighth century)

Authority construction in the biographies takes different forms. One method is to list the various compositions of the disciples of the imams. In enumerating the literary achievements of the *rijal*, Shi‘i biographical works mention not only the Shi‘i works available in their times but also that due to these texts, Shi‘i beliefs, practices and *hadith* could be traced to the times of the imams.

The biographical texts also accentuate the authority of the *rijal* by enumerating and emphasizing their various juridical works and theological discourses including a list of those works of the disciples that refuted (*radd*) the arguments of their opponents.

The compositions of Kashshi, Tusi and Najashi, the primary Shi‘i biographers of the tenth and eleventh centuries on the companions of the imams, are indispensable for constructing a coherent picture of the authority that the *rijal* purportedly wielded in the Shi‘i community during the times of the imams. These biographers constructed their profiles on the disciples based on discrete components that they found in various genres of literature. The texts they used in defining the *rijal* and depicting their functions ranged from erstwhile Shi‘i autobiographical fragments, doctrinal works, polemical discourses, to juridical compilations. They also used reports that were contained in various Sunni polemical, biographical and heresiographical tracts. These accounts were complemented by oral narratives that had been transmitted by the Shi‘i community.

Shi‘i biographical works constructed the authority of the *rijal* by employing various genres of terminologies to express the status and authority of the disciples. As a matter of fact, Tusi, Najashi and Kashshi make frequent use of certain terms to describe and

accentuate the authority of some of the *rijal* they profile. For example, they introduce terms like eminence (*wajih*) and pillar (*rukn*) when describing the prominent associates of the imams. It is in this context that we can examine the profile of Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Nu‘man al-Ahwal.

A resident of Kufa, al-Ahwal is described in the Shi‘i sources as an ardent follower of both al-Baqir and al-Sadiq. The latter is quoted as saying, ‘al-Ahwal is most beloved to me, whether dead or alive.’²⁷ In his profile of al-Ahwal, Tusi calls him reliable (*thiqa*), a specialist and proficient in *kalam* (theological) disputation. Tusi further enhances the authority of al-Ahwal by listing the books that he composed to vindicate the doctrine of the imamate and its transmission in a concatenated chain.²⁸ Al-Ahwal is also reported to have written numerous polemical tracts that refuted the doctrinal positions adopted by the adversaries of the Shi‘is. These included a book entitled *if‘al la taf‘al* (do it and do not do it), which, Najashi says, he had seen.²⁹ Najashi also praises al-Ahwal for his erudition and ability to refute the arguments of his opponents. In particular, he mentions al-Ahwal’s disputations with Abu Hanifa.³⁰ That these genres of terminologies and descriptions regarding the *rijal* were introduced by scholars like Tusi, Najashi, and Kashshi can be evinced from the fact that they did not claim that such remarks were cited in erstwhile biographical texts.

The terminologies that were employed to describe disciples like al-Ahwal were significant as they promoted an authoritative image of and defined future biographic discourse on the disciples. By stressing the *rijal*’s epistemic accomplishments, the biographical terminologies also assumed polemical undertones as they indicated the superiority of a disciple over his adversaries. The terms used in the profiles also had the

effect of reducing the plurality of views on a disciple to a singular biographical opinion. This can be discerned from the fact that the terminologies that were cited by Tusi, Najashi and Kashshi were frequently reproduced in subsequent appraisals on the *rijal*. The terminologies were thus important in imparting a sense of standardized evaluation on the disciples of the imams.

Another feature of Shi'i biographical works is that they tend to assume polemical undertones. This is to assure the Shi'is that they represent the correct and 'orthodox' version of Islam and to establish the preponderance of the Shi'i community over other sectarian groups. In the polemical genre, the literary compositions, discourses, excellences and traditions favorable to the *rijal* are interwoven into a historical narrative. These are important factors in the crystallization of beliefs and in establishing the superiority of a school. In the process, the authority of the disciples who represented the imams in the Shi'i community is tacitly enhanced.

The biographies engaged in polemics by proclaiming the preponderance of the arguments of the *rijal* over their interlocutors. For example, due to Tusi's statement that Aban b. Taghlib (d. 758) was well versed in every field of Islamic sciences, the twentieth century biographer Mamaqani (d. 1932) claims that Aban was better than the seven Qur'an writers, better than Sibawayh and al-Kasa'i (the grammarians) and the authors of the six *sahih* works. Aban was also better than Abu Hanifa, Shafi'i, Malik and Ibn Hanbal, adds Mamaqani.³¹ In this way, Mamaqani tries to prove the superiority of the Shi'i *rijal* over Sunni figures. Al-Ahwal is also depicted as an important defender of Shi'i beliefs. He is portrayed as one who

confronted and defeated the adversaries of the Shi'is in his debates. By stressing their polemical functions, the authority of disciples like al-Ahwal and their pivotal role as the defenders of Shi'i beliefs and praxis becomes more pronounced.

Polemical overtones in bibliographical literature can be evinced from reports concerning al-Ahwal's discourses. According to Kashshi, he argued and overcame Zayd b. 'Ali (d. 737) on the question of the need for an imam to whom obedience was obligatory.³² Due to his polemical disputations, al-Ahwal is also described by al-Khayyat (n.d.) as among the *shuyukh* of the Rafidis.³³

One of his greatest adversaries is said to have been Abu Hanifa with whom he had discussions on the imamate and on the doctrine of the *raj'a* (belief in the physical return of the imams before the day of resurrection). The poet Sayyid Himyari (d. 789) praised al-Ahwal for his discussions with Abu Hanifa whom he confuted.³⁴ According to Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 1449), al-Ahwal would discuss with Abu Hanifa, among other things, the *fada'il* (excellencies) of 'Ali.³⁵

One of the favorite Shi'i accounts of his debates with Abu Hanifa is the following anecdote: When al-Sadiq died, Abu Hanifa said to al-Ahwal, 'Your imam is dead.' Retorting quickly, al-Ahwal said, 'Yes, but your imam [Satan] will not die until the day of judgement.'³⁶

In his profile of Hisham b. al-Hakam (d. 807), another prominent disciple of al-Sadiq, Tusi mentions the various polemical tracts that Hisham wrote.³⁷ These were mainly in the form of refutations (*radd*) of the views of others. Although directed primarily at the Sunni majority the polemical works were also aimed at other 'deviant' Shi'i factions like the Fathis, Waqifis and the *ghulat*, all of whom had challenged the

authority of a succeeding imam. The polemical overtones in the biographical dictionaries were also meant to define Shi'i normative beliefs and to distinguish the orthodox from the heretical disciples of the imams.

A tradition cited by Kashshi indicates how the Shi'is portrayed the role of Al-Ahwal as an authoritative agent and spokesman of the imams and a transmitter of their teachings. Al-Sadiq had apparently prepared al-Ahwal for his debates and, through his prevision, had told him what genres of questions to expect and how to respond to them.³⁸ The tradition alludes to a point that is assiduously mentioned in the Shi'i works, i.e., the disciples of the imams performed many functions, including that of disseminating their teachings, in their capacity as the agents of the imams. The polemical discourses were seen as an alternative way of disseminating the imams' *'ilm* for the disciples were, in theory, functioning on behalf of the Imams.

Differences between the imams and their disciples

It was in some of the theological debates that differences between the imams and their disciples became apparent. Like Hisham b. Salim al-Jawaliqi (n.d.), another Shi'i theologian, al-Ahwal is mentioned in both Sunni and Shi'i literature as having differed with Ja'far al-Sadiq on many theological issues. Both are accused of believing that God is hollow to the navel and solid thereafter.³⁹ He is also believed to have maintained that God has a form of a man.⁴⁰ Al-Ahwal is also accused of saying that God's knowledge of things is limited, i.e., He knows of things only when he determines (*qaddara*) or wills (*aththara*) them.⁴¹ Before He determines them, it is impossible for Him to know a thing. This is because a thing is not a thing until He decrees it and creates it by that decree. The decree,

according to al-Ahwal, is God's will. It is to be further noted that even the heresiographers are not agreed on al-Ahwal's views. Thus, contrary to what al-Ash'ari (d. 935) says, al-Shahrastani (d. 1153) claims that al-Ahwal was not an anthropomorphist.⁴²

During the times of the *rijal* Shi'i doctrines and jurisprudence were in an embryonic form. The lack of a coherent, standardized doctrine or a unified legal system is reflected not only in various statements uttered by the *rijal* that contradicted the imams' pronouncements but also from numerous other reports which state that the *rijal* differed among themselves on many theological issues, agreeing only on the central doctrine of the imamate. I will cite only a few of the many differences between the *rijal* that have been reported.

According to Ibn al-Nadim, Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Sakkak (n.d.) differed with his teacher Hisham b. Hakam on most things apart from the question of the imamate.⁴³ Hisham b. al-Hakam is said to have written a book entitled, 'A refutation of [the views held by] Hisham b. Salim al-Jawaliqi.'⁴⁴ So pronounced were these differences that Hisham b. al-Hakam also composed a book in which he refuted the views of al-Ahwal.⁴⁵ 'Abd Allah b. Ya'fur & Mu'alla b. Khunays, two prominent disciples of Ja'far al-Sadiq, disagreed on the status of the imams. The former maintained that the imams were merely righteous and pious learned men whereas Mu'alla compared the imams with Prophets.⁴⁶

Differences between the *rijal* in legal and theological issues reflect the range of views that were possibility maintained in early Shi'ism. The differences between the disciples may have been precipitated by their own understanding and formulations of various theological and legal points that were often at variance with the imams' stated positions. It is to the source of the diversity that I turn to next.

The role of *ra'y* in engendering differences between the imams and their disciples

A close study of Kashshi's work indicates that the affirmation of the regional office of the *rijal* militated against the comprehensive, centralized, authority of the imams. Initially, the *rijal* were regarded as veracious transmitters of the traditions that they had heard from the imams. At this point, the imams are reported to have uttered many remarks in favor of the *rijal*. However, the deputyship of the *rijal* provided the matrix through which the disciples often expressed disparate views. Gradually the *rijal* emerged as independent thinkers who often challenged statements of the imams engendering much friction between the imams and their disciples.

The main cause of the differences appears to have been the disciples resorting to personal reasoning (*ra'y*) and analogical deduction (*qiyas*) in formulating distinct theological and juridical stances. Disciples like Zurara and Muhammad b. Muslim al-Thaqafi are reported to have resorted to *ra'y* and *qiyas* in their debates. Al-Ahwal, for example, used *qiyas* in his polemical discourses. His mode of argumentation was based on principles that were seemingly contrary to al-Sadiq's teachings for the imam is reported to have told al-Ahwal after he had defeated his interlocutor in a debate, 'You did not utter a word of truth [this is] because you resorted to *qiyas* which is against my religion.'⁴⁷

As their authority increased, the *rijal* became more than passive transmitters of traditions. Since they engaged in interpretive and at times legislative enterprises, *ra'y* and *qiyas* empowered the *rijal* with hermeneutical strategies to make a finite tradition yield a myriad of different interpretations on juridical rulings. The hermeneutical constructs that were intrinsic to *ra'y* meant that, like many other jurists of Kufa, the practices and legal

opinions of the *rijal* were sometimes premised on the exercise of juristic reasoning in solving problems that were not explicitly discussed in the revelatory texts or in the traditions of the imams.

The hermeneutical tools inherent in *ra'y* and *qiyas* also enabled the *rijal* to depart significantly from the pronouncements of the imams. This resulted in a clash of authority between the imams and their disciples. If left unchecked, *ra'y* would threaten the authority of the imams since the *rijal* would no longer be bound to their pronouncements. A *topos* in Shi'i biographical literature is the laudatory remarks concerning disciples who had memorized and preserved the *hadiths* of the imams. As mentioned earlier, al-Sadiq is reported to have praised 'Abd Allah b. Ya'fur and Humran b. A'yan since they had followed the footsteps of the associates of his father.⁴⁸ In contrast, those who resorted to *ra'y* and *qiyas* were unequivocally condemned as having deviated from the imams.

The differences that have been reported between the *rijal* and the imams substantiate the view that the disciples were actively engaged in religious discourses. Paradoxically, the very function that the *rijal* performed on behalf of the imams appears to have engendered differences between the imams and their associates due mainly to the *rijal's* recourse to their own understanding and interpretation of the imams' teachings. In propounding their disparate views, the *rijal* had, at times, encroached on the authority of the imams.

In response, the imams occasionally found it essential to refute statements that were contrary to their teachings since they could not possibly condone any aberration from their theological and juridical positions. This was done so as to create a strict and more structured method of *hadith* transmission and to discourage the disciples from

resorting to *ra'y* and *qiyas*. It was possibly the cleavage that *qiyas* and *ra'y* were causing within the Shi'i ranks that several anti-*ra'y* and *qiyas* traditions were recorded in the Shi'i works. It is *ra'y*, al-Sadiq says, that leads people to perdition.⁴⁹ Even if they reached the right conclusion based on *ra'y*, al-Sadiq states in another tradition, they will not be rewarded for it. If they erred, they will be punished.⁵⁰ The only safe path was to stick to the traditions of the imams.

Traditions that prohibit the Shi'is from using *qiyas* and *ra'y* indicate the refractoriness that independent thinking was causing among the Shi'is. By the vehement attacks against *ra'y*, Shi'i literature acknowledges its important role in eighth century Shi'ism, its challenge to the authority of the imam, and the need to nullify its potency.⁵¹ It was possibly due to the awkward position the imams found themselves in that al-Ahwal was instructed by al-Sadiq not to indulge in any further debates.⁵²

Reports such as these clearly challenge the authority of the *rijal*. The response was to come from the biographical texts that not only constructed the authority of the *rijal* but reconstituted it to preserve and present an idealized image of the disciples.

Idealization and authority construction in the biographical texts

Biographies not only inform us about the past, they often idealize it by promoting and even exaggerating accounts of a person's achievements through the deployment of various hermeneutical stratagems. Biographical texts are good examples of a major dynamic operative in biographical writing: the moulding of a person's character to a preconceived model.⁵³

A salient trait of the Shi'i *rijal* literature is the rehabilitation and refutation of all charges that would discredit the disciples in the eyes of the Shi'is. In later Shi'i biographical literature, much effort is exerted to maintain the integrity and emphasize the loyalty of the *rijal*. Idealization thus became an important component in the process of authority construction. It must be remembered that disciples like Zurara, Muhammad b. Muslim, Hisham b. al-Hakam and al-Ahwal have been regarded as pillars from which many Shi'i theological and legal traditions derive support. Reports discrediting the disciples could endanger the various teachings and legal opinions of the imams that they transmitted. Therefore, any report that might tarnish their image as the ideal disciples of the imams has been regarded as unreliable or as deliberately uttered by the imams so as to safeguard the lives of these eminent personages.

The reason for the idealization of the *rijal* is obvious - they report the traditions upon which the Shi'i jurisprudential edifice rests. Moreover, they represented the imams in their absence or when they were exiled. Thus no statement from the disciples could be accepted if it could not be accommodated within the framework of the imams' legal or theological pronouncements.

In Shi'i biographical history, the texts of Tusi, Najashi and Kashshi constructed hermeneutical parameters, limiting, thereby, the later development of other biographical texts. The cumulative efforts by the biographers in selecting, preserving and evaluating the disciples meant that they created a normative and 'standardized' reading of the lives of the *rijal*, a construction that was impossible for later scholars to ignore. Thus when one discusses the reliability of the disciples of the imams one is invoking the criteria and authority constructed by the interpretive culture of these earlier biographers. Eventually,

biographic literature generated an embellished portrait of the group of disciples under the dominant and charismatic figure of the imams.

Different literary devices are employed in Shi'i biographical literature to idealize the *rijal* and to explain the negative comments made by the imams concerning some of their most prominent disciples. Tusi, for example, wrote a redaction of Kashshi's work. He and Najashi were fully aware of the negative remarks made against some of the prominent disciples. Yet neither of them makes any mention of the pejorative remarks against the *rijal*. In fact the works of Tusi and Najashi are notable for what they omit as much as for what they state. These biographers profiled disciples like Zurara, Hisham b. al-Hakam, and al-Ahwal without a negative comment or expressing any reservation regarding their reliability. In the case of al-Ahwal, neither Tusi nor Najashi make any reference to his anthropomorphic views nor to the reports of him employing *qiyas* in his arguments. Their biographical dictionaries are historical exempla of homogenizing biographical profiles, portraying ideal traits of these disciples based on preconceived ideas of the characteristics of the imams' disciples.

Due to numerous charges against him in both the Sunni and Shi'i sources the Shi'is had to exercise hermeneutics to save the reputation of Ahwal. Shi'i scholars maintain that the disparate views reportedly held by al-Ahwal and other Shi'i theologians were falsely imputed to them by their opponents so as to discredit them and to create confusion among their ranks. The view is corroborated by Najashi's statement, 'Many things have been ascribed to him [al-Ahwal] which are not accepted by us.'⁵⁴

Twentieth century *rijal* scholars like al-Khu'i and Mamaqani have attempted to exonerate al-Ahwal from the derogatory remarks reportedly uttered by the imams against

him thereby presenting an idealized image of him. Al-Khu'i dismisses the traditions that Kashshi cites against al-Ahwal, saying that their *asanid* are weak. In refuting one report against al-Ahwal he states it is weak as it has been reported by Mufaddal 'Umar who has been condemned by the imams.⁵⁵ Al-Khu'i is not consistent for he authenticates the same Mufaddal when he profiles him elsewhere in his biographical work.⁵⁶ As I mentioned earlier, al-Khu'i accepts traditions that are reported in Humran's favor even though they are weak since, he says, the purport of these traditions indicate the elevated status of Humran. However, al-Khu'i rejects traditions that are against al-Ahwal on the same basis, that is, weak *isnads*.

When he considers the reports on al-Ahwal's usage of *qiyas*, al-Khu'i states that al-Ahwal only used *qiyas* as he was forced to do so since his opponent was using the same method of argumentation. He further adds that al-Sadiq did not approve of the usage of *qiyas* unless it was necessary.⁵⁷ Since he was compelled to use *qiyas*, al-Ahwal is exonerated from any blame.

In his assessment of al-Ahwal, al-Khu'i does not consider the numerous reports in both Shi'i and Sunni literature on al-Ahwal's anthropomorphism. Al-Ahwal is thereby rehabilitated by al-Khu'i and the reservations expressed by earlier scholars like Kashshi are dismissed.

Al-Khu'i then cites the favorable remarks on al-Ahwal including those on his discourses with Abu Hanifa to project an idealized image of al-Ahwal. Mamaqani, on the other hand, uses different hermeneutical constructs to idealize disciples like al-Ahwal. He differs from al-Khu'i in that he states that it is not sufficient to examine the *asanid* and their deficiencies. For example, in examining the numerous negative remarks against Zurara,

another eminent disciple, Mamaqani states, ‘how can we reject more than thirty unfavorable traditions [against Zurara] based only on weak *asanid* especially when the purport of these traditions (condemning Zurara) is repeatedly transmitted (*al-mutawatir al-ma‘ni*),’ he asks?⁵⁸ The only way to explain these remarks is by appealing to *taqiyya* (dissimulation). The remarks against the disciples are meant to act as a camouflage, to conceal the close links that the imams had with their associates.

By various forms of hermeneutics, both Mamaqani and al-Khu‘i are able to accommodate al-Ahwal and other important disciples. Biographers like al-Khu‘i and Mamaqani reassert the earlier normative and standardized profiles of the disciples. They restate an image of loyalty that may have reflected their own values and times. Through the intervention of the biographer, he decides how the disciples are to be portrayed in the biographical discourse and their authority constructed. As I have argued elsewhere,⁵⁹ the idealization of the *rijal* even took the form of authenticating and rehabilitating those disciples who had been considered weak by earlier Shi‘i biographers.

The idealization of the *rijal* also shows the Shi‘i concern for projecting that what is expressed in the post-*ghayba* era (Shi‘i beliefs, practices and the *fuqaha*’ as the authoritative spokesmen of the imam) was not new. Rather, the concepts could be traced to the times of the imams. Through this process, prevalent beliefs and conduct were legitimized. By extolling the virtues of the associates and expressing complete confidence in their reliability, not only is the authority of the *rijal* legitimized but their status as the embodiment and transmitters of the imams’ *‘ilm* is enhanced.

In comparing Sunni and Shi‘i profiles on al-Ahwal, it can be said that many Sunni accusations against al-Ahwal are confirmed in Shi‘i texts. The Sunni charge of al-

Ahwal's anthropomorphic views are repeated and then dismissed in the Shi'i sources. Sunni accusations against al-Ahwal for his beliefs in the imamate and the transmission of the imams' *'ilm* are accepted by the Shi'is as being an intrinsic part of their religious beliefs. The Shi'is could readily accept most Sunni accusations against al-Ahwal since they had espoused most of these beliefs. For them, it was only al-Ahwal's anthropomorphic views that they found difficult to justify. This, they claimed, was falsely imputed to him.

The Shi'is also had to contend with some derogatory remarks against al-Ahwal in their own literature. This they did by dismissing them as uttered by the imams to protect the lives of their ardent followers or by claiming that such reports were baseless since they were transmitted by reporters who had been deemed to be weak in the biographical works.

Al-Ahwal's profile can be contrasted with that of Humran. Due to his limited engagement in polemical discourses, attacks against Humran in Sunni biographical works were relatively mild. This meant that the Shi'i biographers did not have to expend much effort in building or defending the image and authority of Humran. The Shi'is projected Humran as a close associate of the imams and extolled his virtues. Al-Ahwal, on the other hand, is repudiated in virtually all the Sunni works. He is branded with other Shi'i theologians and characterized as belonging to a group that not only propagated the belief in the imamate but also held anthropomorphic beliefs. To preserve his image and to defend him against attacks from the Sunnis, the Shi'is had to expend much effort not only to emphasize his close association with the imams and his various contributions in the theological field but also to distance him from charges of anthropomorphism, charges that

tenth and eleventh century Shi'is found unpalatable since this belief had been rejected by them.

It should also be noted that the Sunni sources do not mention any association between the *rijal* and the imams. Sunni sources present the Shi'i *rijal* as formulating their own distinct theological views, quite independently of the imams. In many instances, the imams are portrayed as distancing themselves from the *rijal*.⁶⁰ In the case of al-Ahwal, despite copious Shi'i reports of his close association with al-Sadiq, Sunni heresiographical works quote many of al-Ahwal views (some of which are cited in Shi'i sources too) but make no mention of his links with the imams. Sunni sources attempt to create a wedge between the imams and the *rijal* by imputing to the latter the responsibility of formulating various Shi'i doctrines. Stated differently, whereas the Shi'i sources foster and insist on a link between the *rijal* and the imams, the Sunni sources indicate that the disciples had operated independently of the imams. Thus the *rijal* of the imams in the Shi'i biographical literature become the heretical Rafidis in the corresponding Sunni texts.

Conclusion

Textual authority is contingent not only on what the text contains but is also dependent on the history of how that text is understood. The appraisals of the biographers lay claims to an exclusivist hermeneutic and can become sufficiently entrenched to impose an authoritarian construction of the history of those profiled. The imposition of normative or canonical evaluations in the biographical literature also has the effect of reducing subsequent biographical pluralism.

I have argued that in the Shi'i biographies there is a clear concern to depict the Shi'i

community in the eighth century as a well-disciplined and largely monolithic unit. There is also a palpable attempt to embellish and idealize the past. In exonerating the *rijal* from all blame the functions of the biographical expositions included those of generating and embellishing a portrait of the *rijal* as the loyal disciples of the imams.

The Shi‘i biographies that I have considered also posit the vision of a vibrant and an erudite community existent during the times of the imams. They further predicate the credentials of the *rijal* as the deputed authorities, jurists and theologians who significantly moulded and impacted the Shi‘i community in their time.

Shi‘i biographical literature is a good example of how exemplum, polemic, rejection and marginalization all combined in biographical portraits. The confluence of these literary devices are used to construct the authority of the *rijal* and to portray ideal traits of these disciples. Citation of favorable reports from the imams, their alleged loyalty to the imams, epistemic knowledge, rejection of denigrating remarks even if they have strong *asanid*, the development of ideal models based on their contribution to the Shi‘i community, and proselytization became important motifs in constructing and cementing the authority of the *rijal* in the biographical texts.

Due to the activities of and evaluations on the *rijal* that were provided in their profiles, the biographic texts participated in the process of authority construction of the *rijal*. By being projected as upholding the tenets of the Shi‘i tradition, the *rijal* in the biographical literature became the embodiment of Islamic praxis. It has to be remembered that, in addition to this, the imams also conferred authority to the *rijal* by appointing them as their deputies in the Shi‘i community. This supplemented the authority that the *rijal* had acquired by their epistemic accomplishments.

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- ¹ Examples are the revolts of Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah (Nafs al-Zakiyya) (d. 762), Husayn b. 'Ali (d. 786) and Abu Saraya (d. 815). For a discussion of various 'Alid revolts against the 'Abbasids see Kennedy, Hugh, *The Early 'Abbasid Caliphate: A Political History* (London: Croom Helm, 1981). Huart C., "'Alids" in *SEI*, pp. 32-3.
- ² Kashshi, Muhammad b. 'Umar, *Ikhtiyar Ma'rifa al-Rijal*, ed. Al-Mustafawi (Mashad: Danishgahi Mashad, 1969), pp. 327-8.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- ⁴ Berger Michael, *Rabbinic Authority* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 73-4.
- ⁵ Kashshi, *Ikhtiyar*, pp. 209-210. The view that al-Hakam was a Sunni jurist is challenged by Ibn Qutayba who claims that he was actually a Shi'i. See *Kitab al-Ma'arif* (Hyderabad: 1952), p. 624.
- ⁶ Zurari, Ahmad b. Muhammad, *Risala fi ale al-A'yan*, al-Abtahi, ed. (Qum: Maktab al-'Alam al-Islami, 1990), p. 27.
- ⁷ Kashshi, *Ikhtiyar*, p. 176.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 180.
- ⁹ Al-Mufid, Muhammad b. Muhammad, *al-Ikhtisas* (Qumm: 1982), p. 196.
- ¹⁰ Kashshi, *Ikhtiyar*, p. 178. On the Shi'i concept of a *muhaddath*, see, Kulayni, Muhammad b. Ya'qub, *al-Kafi fi 'Ilm al-Din* (Tehran: Daftar Farhang Ahl al-Bayt, n.d.), 4 vols., vol. 2, p. 13. Al-Hasan al-Saffar a ninth century Shi'i *hadith* collector, cites many traditions in which Humran quotes the imams as stating that they were *muhaddath*. See al-Saffar, Muhammad b. al-Hasan, *Basa'ir al-Darajat fi Fada'il Al Muhammad* (Qum: Maktabat Ayat Allah al-Mar'ashi, 1983), pp 319-322.
- ¹¹ Takim, Liyakatali, "Evolution in the Biographical Profiles of Two *Hadith* Transmitters" in *Shi'ite Heritage: Essays on Classical and Modern Traditions*, Clarke, Lynda ed. (Binghampton: Global, 2001).
- ¹² Mufid, *al-Ikhtisas*, p. 327.
- ¹³ Mufid Muhammad b. Muhammad b. al-Nu'man, *Kitab al-Irshad*, translated Howard I. (London: Balagha & Muhammadi Trust, 1981), p. 421.
- ¹⁴ Kashshi, *Ikhtiyar*, p. 177.
- ¹⁵ For references to these traditions see al-Abtahi, Muhammad 'Ali al-Muwahhidi, *Ta'rikh ale-Zurara* (Isfahan: 1399), pp. 23-4.

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- ¹⁶ Khu'i, Abu'l-Qasim, *Mu'jam Rijal al-Hadith* (Beirut: Dar al-Zahra, 1983), 23 vols., vol 6. p. 260.
- ¹⁷ Al-Bukhari, Muhammad b. Isma'il, *Ta'rikh al-Kabir* (Hyderabad: 1942), 4 vols., vol. 2, sec. 1, p. 75.
- ¹⁸ al-'Uqayli, Muhammad b. 'Amr, *K. al-Du'afa'* (Tehran: 1959), vol. 1, pp. 286-7.
- ¹⁹ Ibn 'Adi, 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad, *al-Kamil fi Du'afa' al-Rijal* (Beirut: 1985), vol. 2, p. 842.
- ²⁰ al-'Uqayli, *K. al-Du'afa'*, vol. 1, p. 286 fn. 600. See also Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1994), 12 vols., vol. 3, p. 25.
- ²¹ Ibn Abi Hatim, *K. al-Jarh Wa'l Ta'dil* (Hyderabad: 1952), vol. 1, sec. 2, p. 265.
- ²² Mizzi, Jamal al-Din, *Tahdhib al-Kamal fi Asma' al-Rijal* (Beirut: 1980), vol. 7, p. 307.
- ²³ al-Nasa'i, Ahmad b. 'Ali, *K. al-Du'afa' wa'l-Matrukin* (Beirut: 1986), p. 167.
- ²⁴ Mizzi, *Tahdhib*, vol. 7, p. 308, fn. 1.
- ²⁵ Ibn Adi, *al-Kamil*, vol. 2, p. 843.
- ²⁶ For a reference to his few prophetic traditions see Mizzi, *Tahdhib*, vol. 7, p. 307.
- ²⁷ Kashshi, *Ikhtiyar*, p. 185.
- ²⁸ Tusi, Muhammad Ja'far, *Kitab al-Fihrist* (Qumm: 1983), p. 132. Ibn al-Nadim, Muhammad b. Ishaq, *Kitab al-Fihrist*, trans. Dodge, B. 2 vols. (Columbia: 1970), vol. 1, p. 438.
- ²⁹ Najashi, Ahmad b. 'Ali, *Kitab al-Rijal* (Qum: Maktaba al-Dawari, 1976), p. 228. Shahrastani, Muhammad 'Abd al-Karim, *Muslim Sects and Divisions*, trans. A. Kazi and J. Flynn (London: Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 161 on this book.
- ³⁰ Najashi, *K. al-Rijal*, 228.
- ³¹ Mamaqani, 'Abd Allah, *Tanqih al-Maqal* (Tehran: n.d.), 3 vols. vol. 1, p. 4.
- ³² Kashshi, *Ikhtiyar*, p. 186. Ibn Nadim, *Takmila al-Fihrist*, p. 8.
- ³³ Al-Khayyat, 'Abd al-Rahim b. Muhammad, *Kitab al-Intisar Wa'l Radd 'ala*

Ibn Rawandiyya al-Mulhid (Beirut: 1957), p. 14, 48.

³⁴ Ibn Hajar, al-Asqalani, *Lisan al-Mizan* (Beirut: 1988), 8 vols., vol. 5, pp. 340-1.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibn Nadim, *Takmila Fihrist*, p. 8. Kashshi, *Ikhtiyar*, p. 187. See also Baghdadi, Khatib, *Ta'rikh al-Baghdad* (Beirut: n.d.), 14 vols., vol. 13, p. 410.

³⁷ Tusi, *Fihrist*, pp. 174-5.

³⁸ Kashshi, *Ikhtiyar*, p. 189.

³⁹ Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 136.

⁴⁰ Madelung Wilfred, "The Shi'ite and Kharijite Contribution to pre-Ash'arite Kalam" in *Islamic Philosophical Theology*. ed., Morewedge Parvez (Albany: SUNY, 1979), p. 122.

⁴¹ Al-Ash'ari, 'Ali b. Isma'il, *Maqalat al-Islamiyyin* (Istanbul: 1930), 2 vols., vol. 1, p. 111, 291.

⁴² Shahrastani, *Milal*, p. 160.

⁴³ Ibn Nadim, *Fihrist*, vol. 1, p. 439.

⁴⁴ Najashi, *Kitab al-Rijal*, pp. 304-5.

⁴⁵ Tusi, *Kitab al-Fihrist*, p. 175.

⁴⁶ Modarresi, Hossein, *Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shi'ite Islam* (Princeton: Darwin, 1993), pp. 30-31.

⁴⁷ Kashshi, *Ikhtiyar*, p. 189.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 180.

⁴⁹ Al-Barqi, Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Khalid, *Kitab al-Mahasin* (Najaf: Matba'a al-Haydariyya, 1964), p. 158.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 213.

⁵¹ For a sample of other traditions that proscribe the use of *ra'y* and *qiyas* see Andrew Newman, *The Formative Period of Twelver Shi'ism: Hadith as Discourse between Qumm and Baghdad* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), pp. 105-6 and Stewart, Devin, *Islamic Legal Orthodox: Twelver Shi'ite Responses to the Sunni Legal System* (Utah: Salt Lake City, 1998), p. 106.

⁵² Kashshi, *Ikhtiyar*, p. 191. Kulayni also records traditions which state that the imams would rebuke their followers for using *qiyas*, See *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 72-4. See also al-Saffar, *Basa'ir al-Darajat*, p. 146.

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- ⁵³ Cox, Patricia, *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1983), p. 15.
- ⁵⁴ Najashi, *Rijal*, p. 228.
- ⁵⁵ Khu'i, Abu'l-Qasim, *Mu'jam Rijal*, vol. 18, p. 245; vol. 17, p. 39.
- ⁵⁶ See *Ibid.*, vol. 18, p. 304.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, vol.17, p. 39.
- ⁵⁸ Mamaqani, *Tanqih*, vol. 1, p. 441.
- ⁵⁹ Takim Liyakatali, "The *Rijal* of the Shi'i Imams as Depicted in Imami Biographical Literature" Ph. D thesis (unpublished) (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1990), chapters three and four.
- ⁶⁰ See for example the tradition cited by al-Fasawi, Ya'qub b. Sufyan, *Kitab al-Ma'rifa wa'l-Ta'rikh*, 3 vols. (Baghdad: 1974), vol. 2, p. 672.