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Colin P. Mitchell

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<sup>1</sup> In this short article, Vesel explores manifestations of popular Shi'ite belief through the phenomenon of *bāzū band*; these *bāzū bands* are armlets which profile a talismanic hand and are often worn by Shi'ites seeking favour from the Imams. One of the most recognizable icons of popular Shi'ism, the disembodied hand represents the narrative of Abū al-Fadl al-'Abbās, half-brother to Ḥusayn, who lost his arms and hands at Karbalā in 680 after trying to deliver water to the beleaguered Shi'ite camp of women and children. This *bāzū band* is understood at the popular level to confer spiritual protection, and we see its appearance as early as the 12th century in an anonymous text on magic and astronomy (*Yavāqīt al-'ulūm va darārī al-nujūm*). Vesel in turn introduces us to near-contemporary literature on these devices, principally via the writings of Šayḥ Ḥabib ibn Mūsā Najafī. In particular, his *Jāmi‘ al-favā‘id fī asrār al-maqāṣid* constitutes “une véritable encyclopédie” of the Shi'ite occult sciences, and in this sense, is probably not unlike the other source mentioned by the author, Ḥusayn ‘Aqīlī Rustamdārī's *Riyād al-abrār* (ca. 1571).

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**Thèmes :** 7. Islam

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