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THE RECOVERY OF THE PAST: IBN BĀBWAYH, BĀQIR AL-MAJLISĪ AND SAFAWID MEDICAL DISCOURSE¹

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Abstract

Although best known in the West for his compilation of the Imams' *aḥādīth*, *Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-faqīh*, Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Qummī (d. 381/991–92), known both as al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq and as Ibn Bābawayh, also compiled a series of other collections of these texts, and these have so far been less well-studied. This paper suggests that knowledge of them and access to them declined after the fall of Baghdad to the Saljuqs in the 447/1055. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1110/1699) was a key figure in the “recovery” of these collections. However, his use of the texts of these works in the section of his *Bihār al-anwār* examined here bespeaks an agenda very different from that of Ibn Bābawayh.

Keywords

Shi'ism; Ibn Bābawayh; Bāqir al-Majlisī; medicine; Safawids

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper considers the fortunes of the lesser known compilations of the Imams' *aḥādīth* assembled by Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Qummī (d. 381/991–92), known as both al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq and Ibn Bābawayh, in his own time through to the latter years of Iran's Safawid period (907–1134/1501–1722).

Ibn Bābawayh is perhaps best-known today as the compiler of *Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-faqīh* (“He Who has no Jurisprudent with Him”, hereafter referred to as *al-Faqīh*), the second of the four early collections of Twelver *aḥādīth* of which three were assembled in the Buyid period (334–447/945–1055). However, Ibn Bābawayh was also responsible for a series of other collections which have attracted very little attention from scholars in Shī'ī studies to date.

This paper will argue that while in the later Buyid period all of his compilations were known to scholars in the community in the centuries following the 447/1055 fall of Baghdad to the Saljuqs, interest in

these texts declined and their general availability was limited. Only in the later years of the eleventh/seventeenth century can there be said to have been a marked rise in both the availability of copies of his works and interest in Ibn Bābawayh's legacy.

Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1110/1699), in his recourse to those collections of Ibn Bābawayh other than *al-Faqīh*, was both representative of and gave further encouragement to the new interest in Ibn Bābawayh's legacy in this period. Close attention to the manner in which al-Majlisī utilised Ibn Bābawayh's collections, in *Bihār's materia medica* in particular, will show that al-Majlisī's interest in their traditions was not somehow random, however. The traditions assembled by Ibn Bābawayh will be seen to have had their own dynamic in his collections. In *Bihār*, al-Majlisī actively but selectively appropriated the texts in these other of Ibn Bābawayh's compilations in the context of his own specific, and very different “agenda”, itself reflective of the spiritual dynamic particular to the later Safawid period.

II. IBN BĀBWAYH AND HIS COMPILATIONS

Ibn Bābawayh, born in Qum c. 305–6/918, passed his seven decades as a member of the first generation of believers who both knew nothing other than the

¹ An early version of this paper was presented at “Islamic Medical Knowledge in Iran and India during the Modern Period” held at Tehran in 2008. My thanks to the organisers of this gathering, Drs Fabrizio Speziale and Farid Ghassem-lou, then of IFRI (the French Institute of Research in Iran) and to the Department of History of Science, Encyclopaedia Islamica Foundation, Tehran, respectively.

Imam's absence but also enjoyed an atmosphere of religious tolerance under the Zaydī Buyids in which to explore the implications of this reality. At the height of their territory, the Buyids' three amirates comprised an area that stretched from west of Baghdad, and included Kufa and Basra to the south, to Zanjan, Qazvin and Rayy in the north, and, south-east, through Fars and along the Persian Gulf and through Kerman to modern-day Baluchistan. Ibn Bābawayh, enjoying good relations with the Buyid court, travelled widely throughout the region. Between 339/949 and 347/957 he is known to have moved to Rayy, and from then Rayy seems to have been his chief residence: it was there to which he seems to have returned between most journeys and it is there he died. But, as to those journeys, he made at least three trips to Khurasan, and is known to have spent time in Nishapur, Tus and Sarakhs as well as, further into the north-east, in Transoxiana, Marv and Balkh. At some point also he visited Ilaq, in southern Uzbekistan, as well as Samarqand and Farghana. To the West, he visited Hamadan, Baghdad and Kufa as well as Mecca and Medina. He is said also to have visited Gurgan and Astarabad.²

Authors of some of the best-known general studies of Muslim *ḥadīth* to date have, in fact, mostly concerned themselves with Sunni *ḥadīth* and have paid scant attention to these compilations of the Imams' traditions, and even less to Ibn Bābawayh.³

It is only scholars of Twelver Shī'ism who have paid any attention to Ibn Bābawayh. Generally, however, they have done so in the context of noting, first, that the two centuries following the occultation of the Twelfth Imam *c.* 260/873–74 produced three "Muḥammads", *sc.* Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941), Ibn Bābawayh and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) and, second, of identifying Ibn Bābawayh solely with reference to *al-Faqīh* which, together with al-Kulaynī's earlier *al-Kāfi* and al-Ṭūsī's later *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām* and *al-Istibṣār*, are said to comprise "the four books" (*al-kutub al-arba'a*) of Twelver *aḥādīth* assembled in these years.⁴

In fact, however, Ibn Bābawayh assembled a number of other important *ḥadīth* compilations during his lifetime. Taken together, these other collections contain slightly more texts than *al-Faqīh*'s approximately 6000 narrations.⁵

Thus his *Ma'ānī al-akhbār*, completed perhaps as early as 331/942–43, contains some 809 texts organised in 419 chapters.⁶ His *Kamāl al-dīn wa-tamām al-ni'ma fī ithbāt al-ghayba wa-kashf al-ḥayra*, dated to *c.* 360/970–71, and perhaps as early as 354/964–65, is arranged in fifty-eight chapters, in two sections, and contains over 580 texts.⁷ This figure does not include the many traditions Ibn Bābwayh cited in his lengthy introduction to the work. His *'Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā* contains about 941 traditions organised into sixty-nine chapters over two volumes. His *al-Amālī*, also known as *al-Majālis*, produced over 367–68/977–79, contains some 1010 texts, divided into ninety-seven *majālis*, most of them dated.⁸ *Al-Tawḥīd* contains some 583 traditions,⁹ *al-Khiṣāl* includes some 1255 texts in twenty-six chapters,¹⁰ and his *'Ilal al-sharā'i'*,

on the faith, see Momen 1985: 173–75; Halm 1991: 43–44, 54–55; Richard 1995: 6–7. See also Amir-Moezzi 1994: 152 n. 86, 155 n. 118, 158 n. 149, 233 n. 694; Stewart 2003: 74; Gleave 2001; 2007: xvii, 71 n. 34. On the first apparent reference by Ja'far b. Ḥasan al-Hillī, al-Muḥaqqiq (d. 676/1277) to these as "the four books", see n. 18 below.

⁵ On the traditions in *al-Faqīh*, see al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 22: 232–33, 17: 245–46, which numbers these as 5998, from 510 narrators. See also Akhtar 1988: 49–50, who gives the total as 5963, and al-Faḍlī 2002: 82, who gives the total as 5998. Amir-Moezzi 1994: 158 n. 143 cites the total as 9044.

⁶ al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 21: 204.

⁷ al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 18:137 identifies this as *Ikmāl al-dīn wa-itmām al-ni'ma* and refers to 2: 283, where he says it is also called *Kamāl al-dīn wa-timām al-ni'ma*, but without the reference to *al-ḥayra*. Dānishpazhūh 1332sh./1953–54: 5: 1507–10, lists it as *Kamāl* with the fuller title. In what is probably the most authoritative verdict, Modarressi 1984: 254 names it as *Kamāl* and includes *al-ḥayra* in its title.

⁸ al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 2: 315, 19: 361, 19: 354, where it is noted that this collection is also known as *al-Majālis*, by which al-Majlisī refers to it in his *Biḥār*, on which see further below. See also Dānishpazhūh 1332sh./1953–54: 5: 1105–7.

⁹ al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 4: 482 (2154). See also on *al-Tawḥīd*, McDermott 1978: 341f. Akhtar 1988: forty-six says it has 583 traditions. On the number of chapters as either sixty-seven or sixty-six, see Akhtar 1988.

¹⁰ al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 7: 162; Dānishpazhūh 1332sh./1953–54 5: 1290–91.

² The introduction to Ibn Bābawayh 1361/1982: 17–18, best dates his whereabouts. See also Newman, forthcoming.

³ See Newman 2000: xxiii–iv, nn. 6–10.

⁴ E.g. Browne actually misidentified "the four books" as "works on Shī'a theology, jurisprudence and Tradition". See Browne 1924: 353–60, esp. 358–59. D.M. Donaldson's extended discussion of "the four books" more than compensated for this error. See Donaldson 1933: 284–90. For more recent discussions of the four in "introductory" works

organised into 647 chapters over two sections, contains 1147 texts.¹¹ Ibn Bābawayh's travels, which afforded him the opportunity to become acquainted with the contemporary scattered pockets of the community, may have been unparalleled in his own time, and these compilations well attest to his understanding of its needs and concerns of that community.

The 1147 traditions of *'Ilal al-sharā'i'* ("The Causes of the Legal Rulings") reflect an effort to lay bases for a distinctive body of theological and legal discourse over and above what material had been collected on these by al-Kulaynī in *al-Kāfi*.

The opening chapters of volume one include traditions on creation, the prophets and messengers, Adam, men and women, Iblīs, the early prophets, humans and their forms and attributes. Subsequent chapters turn to the rise of Islam, the person and role of the Prophet, 'Alī and his having been designated by the Prophet as the latter's successor, Fāṭima, a *hujja*—a reference to the Imam—as always being present, the succession of the various Imams and the occultation. Later chapters contain traditions on ritual cleanliness (*taḥāra*). Volume two contains traditions on prayer, *al-zakāt* and *al-khums*, fasting, the Ḥajj, food, marriage and divorce, the punishments (*al-ḥudūd*), and miscellaneous traditions on such issues as inheritance.

The 583 traditions in *al-Tawḥīd* ("Unity") were an effort to demonstrate the compatibility of some aspects of the faith with broader, "mainstream" Sunni, if not, also, distinctly Mu'tazilī views of the justice and unity of God. In this, for example, he also rejected any anthropomorphist understandings of the Divine. This collection's treatment of determinism shows his ideas to have been akin to the moderate Mu'tazilism of the Baghdadi Mu'tazila.

Nevertheless, at the core of Imami belief was the acceptance of the place and role of the Imams. Having devoted more than half of *al-Tawḥīd*'s chapters to demonstrate the faith's acceptance of Islam's core, if general, belief system, clearly in response to criticism, Ibn Bābawayh embarked on delineating the distinguishing features of the Twelver faith—the bestowal by God of the infallible twelve Imams and the last thereof as the Proof (*al-hujja*), who upholds the command of God (*al-qā'im bi-amr Allāh*), the Lord of the Age (*ṣāhib al-zamān*), the Vicegerent of the Beneficent One (*khalīfat al-Raḥmān*) on His earth

and the one who is present in the earth but invisible (*ghā'ib*).

The 941 traditions of *'Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā* ("The Sources of The Statements on al-Riḍā") were assembled at the request of the Buyid vizier al-Ṣāhib Ibn 'Abbād (d. 385/995). The traditions in the first volume's thirty chapters include texts on the mother of Imam 'Alī al-Riḍā (d. 203/818), the Imam's own birth, his father and his father's death, al-Riḍā as having been clearly appointed by his father the Imam Mūsā (d. 128/799), the seventh Imam, as the latter's successor, various debates held with representatives of other faiths in the presence of the caliph al-Ma'mūn (reg. 198–218/813–33), sessions held between the caliph and the Imam on a variety of issues, and the Imam's views on a variety of subjects, ranging from divine leadership to the marriage of Fāṭima and the characteristics of the Prophet. The bulk of the second volume's traditions deal with the Imam's summons to Khurasan by the caliph; the Imam's appointment as the latter's successor and why the Imam accepted the appointment; those who were displeased with the appointment; the Imam's premonitions of his death and burial; the reasons why the caliph ordered the Imam to be poisoned; and the Imam's designation of his successor.

Al-Amālī's accounts of some ninety-seven sessions (*majālis*), most of them dated, address a wide variety of different subjects.

The 580 traditions in *Kamāl* were assembled in the aftermath of a visit to Khurasan and attest to the still-strong presence of confusion about the Imam's absence that Ibn Bābawayh found within some sections of the community there. The volume's traditions address both the occultations of earlier prophets, proof of the existence of the twelfth Imam, God's promise that the earth would never be devoid of a *hujja* and the rewards to be accorded those who wait patiently for the latter's return. Ibn Bābawayh noticeably included numerous references to, and actual citations, of written communications from the Hidden Imam to named individuals and traditions about signs whose appearance would portend the reappearance of the Imam.

The 1255 traditions of *al-Khiṣāl* ("The Traits of Character") were organised into twenty-six chapters. Unusually for such compilations generally, and those of Ibn Bābawayh in particular, these chapters are organised into citations of characteristics on the basis of, and with reference to, any number that is cited in

¹¹ See al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 15: 313–14; Dānishpazhūh 1332sh./1953–54: 5: 1421–22.

the tradition. Thus, for example, traditions related to the number one all appear together. The themes of the traditions included involve manners, ethics and good, and personal characteristics.

In Ibn Bābawayh's time, the future and continued existence of the faith was as unclear as were key, distinctive doctrinal and practical matters. If *al-Faqīh* attested to the continued need for guidance as to the latter, the community was clearly also still struggling to assert its own distinctive body of doctrine in the face of continued, severe external challenges—*pace al-Tawhīd*, for example. Portions of the community were still beset by doubts as to the continued presence of the Imam, *pace Kamāl*. Distinctly Shī'ī visions of both the earliest days of human existence and aspects of the law were still being formulated—*pace 'Ilāl. 'Uyūn*'s traditions bespeak, at least, Ibn Bābawayh's concern for the community in his own time, in a period of apparent tolerance just as had been “enjoyed” by 'Alī al-Riḍā. The same vizier for whom Ibn Bābawayh compiled this collection, though friendly to the faith, did also have his very distinctly Sunnī and anti-traditionist “moments”.¹²

Altogether, these compilations contain more than 6300 narrations, slightly more than the total number in *al-Faqīh*, with the total number of traditions across all of Ibn Bābawayh's collections still some thousands less than the total number of traditions in al-Kulaynī's *al-Kāfī*. Yet these other collections have still to receive any detailed examination by scholars in the field.¹³

III. IBN BĀBWAYH'S LEGACY FROM THE BUYIDS TO THE SAFAWIDS

Al-Faqīh itself attracted varying attention in the immediately succeeding centuries. In his *rijāl* work Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Najāshī (d. 450/1058–59), when listing Ibn Bābawayh's contributions, named these other collections but did not name *al-Faqīh* as a separate item; instead, he cited its books as separate titles.¹⁴ Al-Najāshī's contemporary al-Ṭūsī—himself the compiler of two of the “four books”—praised Ibn Bābawayh as a pre-eminent scholar of the Imams' *ḥadīth*, noted that many prominent later scholars narrated texts from him, and referred to *al-Faqīh* as well as his other collections. However, he also noted that Ibn Bābawayh's collection *Madīnat al-'ilm*—also mentioned by al-Najāshī but, as per the discussion below, lost by the mid-Safawid period—was “larger (*akbār*)” than *al-Faqīh*.¹⁵

However, between the fall of Baghdad to the Saljuqs in 447/1055 up to the onset of the Safawid period, conventionally dated from Shah Ismā'īl I's 907/1501 entrance into Tabriz, Ibn Bābawayh's various works appear to have attracted declining interest.

The later Twelver *rijāl* scholar Muḥammad b. 'Alī, Ibn Shahrashūb (d. 588/1192), mentioned only *Madīnat al-'ilm*, *al-Tawhīd*, *Ma'āni*, *'Ilāl*, *al-Amālī* and *Kamāl*.¹⁶ According to Kohlberg's study of the library of Raḍī al-Dīn, Ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 664/1266), the latter had access to most of Ibn Bābawayh's better-known compilations as well as *Madīnat al-'ilm*.¹⁷ Ja'far b. Ḥasan al-Ḥillī, al-Muḥaqqiq (d. 676/1277), may have been the earliest Twelver scholar to have

¹² These included the appointment in 367/977 of the Sunnī Mu'tazilī Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1024–25) as chief judge in Rayy. See also Newman, forthcoming.

¹³ See the sources cited in n. 4 above. A notable exception is Amir-Moezzi 1994. On 20–21, he lists these others, and in his bibliography he offers publication information, and their texts feature throughout the course of his discussion. See also n. 15 below.

On *al-Kāfī*, al-Faḍlī (81) cites the total as 16,199, including both the sections on *uṣūl* and on *furū'*. Akhtar (20) gives the total as 14,939, not counting those in *al-Rawḍa*, the eighth and last of the published volumes. See also al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 17: 245, who says approximately 16,000, and Amir-Moezzi 1994: 158 n. 143, who gives the total as 16,100. In all of these instances, however, the number of texts given reflects the numbered texts where often the compiler cited more texts in a chapter than those that are numbered in the printed editions.

¹⁴ al-Najāshī 1407/1986: 389–92; Dānishpazhūh 1332sh./1953–54: 5: 1549.

¹⁵ al-Ṭūsī 1937: 156–57. On *Madīna*, see al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 20: 251–53 and our discussion below. That al-Ṭūsī named *al-Faqīh* is not that surprising given his recourse to it for his own two compilations. See Newman 1986: 265–66. McDermott 1998, lists others of Ibn Bābawayh's compilations but not *Madīna*. See also Fyze 1971.

¹⁶ Ibn Shahrashūb N.D.: 111–12. In *Ma'ālim*, also, *Madīna* was said to be divided into ten sections, but cf. al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 20: 251–53.

¹⁷ Kohlberg 1992: 105, 109, 119–21, 167, 190, 194, 210, 217, 237, 240–41, 246, 285, 368, 372. To be sure, not all of these were available in their entirety. See, for example, 105, 119–21, 167, 268, 287, 302, 317, 378, 379, 391. Of these that can be dated, Ibn Ṭāwūs did have access to a copy of Ibn Bābawayh's *Ma'āni al-akhbār* made in 331/942–43. See Kohlberg 1992: 237–38.

referred to “the four books” of the Imams’ *aḥādīth* as those listed as such above.¹⁸ However, in his short entry on Ibn Bābawayh, Ḥasan b. Yūsuf al-Ḥillī, al-‘Allāma (d. 726/1325), in his own *rijāl* work, repeated al-Ṭūsī’s praise of Ibn Bābawayh verbatim but listed none of his works by name, though he did mention *Madīna* elsewhere.¹⁹

If the number of copies of a given text made is an indicator of that text’s general availability over a given period,²⁰ a preliminary search for manuscript copies of these of Ibn Bābawayh’s compilations—especially in holdings across Iran where, arguably, the largest number of Shī‘ī texts might be found today—suggests that from the end of the Buyid period to 907/1501 copies of most of Ibn Bābawayh’s key compilations were in fact scarce.

Thus, for example, as the accompanying chart notes (Table 1), of the total of eighty-nine copies of *Kamāl* identified, seventy-three (82%) have been dated. Of these, one has been dated to this period, to the early ninth/fifteenth century. Twenty-nine copies of Ibn Bābawayh’s *al-Tawḥīd* have been located; of these twenty-three (79%) can be dated. Only one was completed in this period, in 904/1498. One hundred and fourteen copies of his *‘Uyūn* were located, with eighty (70%) datable. Two were made over this period, one each in the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries. Of forty-six copies of his *al-Khiṣāl*, thirty (65%) can be dated; only one of these was made in this period, in the ninth/fifteenth century. A total of twenty-two copies of his *al-Amālī* have been identified, twelve (54%) can be dated. Two were produced in the period up to the capture of Tabriz, both in the sixth/twelfth century. Forty-four copies of his *‘Ilal* have been identified, of which thirty (68%) have been dated. None were made through the period up to the capture of Tabriz. Forty-six copies of Ibn Bābawayh’s *Ma‘ānī* have been identified, thirty-two (69%) have been dated. None were made in the period to 907/1501.

¹⁸ Amir-Moezzi 1994: 20 n. 86, citing al-Ḥillī’s *al-Mu‘tabar* and *Nukat al-nihāya*.

¹⁹ al-Ḥillī 1411/1980: 147; Kohlberg 1992: 240, citing al-‘Allāma’s *Muntahā al-maṭlab*.

²⁰ See, for example, <http://www.enotes.com/bevis-hampton-criticism/bevis-hampton> (accessed 25.1.12); http://www.thenazareneway.com/imitation_of_christ/index_imitation_of_christ.htm (accessed 25.1.12); <http://library.oxfordjournals.org/content/s5-XXX/2/125.extract> (accessed 25.1.12).

As to that work of his that is the best known work today, a total of ninety-eight manuscripts of *al-Faqīh* have been identified, eighty-three (85%) of which have been dated. Only one is dated to this period, to the sixth/twelfth century.

These statistics cannot be taken as absolute, of course. But that so few copies of these texts seem to have been made between the fall of Baghdad and seizure of Tabriz does suggest that very few were in circulation. Scattered across the region as the ‘*ulamā*’ of the community were from 447/1055 to 907/1501, scholars of the faith may not have had access to any more than their own personal copies of any of these, if that. It follows that it cannot be assumed that in these years any of these texts—let alone those few for which copies were made over these years—were widely accessible to all of the various pockets of the faithful dispersed throughout the region.²¹

IV. IBN BĀBĀWAYH AND HIS LEGACY FROM 907/1501 TO 1050/1640

Contemporary with, if not directly inspired and encouraged by, the establishment of the faith in Iran by the Safawids, the tenth/sixteenth century has been said to have witnessed something of a revival of interest in the Imams’ *aḥādīth* and their study.²² Nevertheless, in the early years of the dynasty the

²¹ Titles of any of the early collections of the Imams’ *aḥādīth* are not among those listed by Ja‘fariyān in his discussion of the availability of Twelver Shī‘ī manuscripts in pre-Safawid Iran. The texts brought to Iran in the pre-Safawid period and over the first Safawid century were mainly non-*ḥadīth* works; indeed, works in *fiqh* predominate, with copies of these works and/or the authors of the works themselves dating mainly to the post-Buyid period. See Ja‘fariyān 2003: 351–69.

As will be suggested in Newman, forthcoming, there was a marked dearth of copies of all the early compilations of the Imams’ *ḥadīth* in these centuries, paralleling but also perhaps encouraging a relative scholarly lack of interest in the study of these sources and *rijāl* as well, in favour of such other disciplines as *fiqh*, for example.

²² See the discussion of the interest of the Lebanese-born scholars Zayn al-Dīn b. ‘Alī, al-Shāhīd al-Thānī (d. 965/1558), and his student, Ḥusayn b. ‘Abd al-Ṣamad (d. 984/1576)—the father of Bahā‘ al-Dīn Muḥammad, known as Shaykh Bahā‘ī (d. 1030/1621)—in the Imams’ traditions and their contribution and that of Bahā‘ī to the rise of *ḥadīth* criticism (*‘ilm al-dirāya* or *dirāyat al-ḥadīth*) in Stewart 2003: 174–79.

TABLE 1. Manuscript copies of compilations of Ibn Bābawayh.

Title	6th cent.	7th cent.	8th cent.	9th cent.	900– 950	951– 1000	1001– 1050	1051– 1100	1101– 1134	1135– 1200	1201– 1250
	12th cent.	13th cent.	14th cent.	15th cent.	1494– 1543	1544– 1591	1591– 1640	1641– 1688	1689– 1722	1722– 1785	1786– 1834
<i>al-Faqīh</i> post-1251/1835 = 6 undated copies of the text: 15 total number of mss = 98 total that can be dated: 83	1	0	0	0	0	4	9	52	9	2	0
<i>ʿIlal</i> post-1251/1835 = 2 undated copies of the text: 14 total number of mss = 44 total that can be dated: 30	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	18	2	4	0
<i>al-Khiṣāl</i> post-1251/1835 = 0 undated copies of the text: 16 total number of mss = 46 total that can be dated: 30	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	22	1	1	1
<i>Maʿānī</i> post-1251/1835 = 2 undated copies of the text: 14 total number of mss = 46 total that can be dated: 32	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	22	2	2	1
<i>al-Tawḥīd</i> post-1251/1835 = 0 undated copies of the text: 6 total number of mss = 29 total that can be dated: 23	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	17	1	1	0
<i>ʿUyūn</i> post-1251/1835 = 1 undated copies of the text: 34 total number of mss = 114 total that can be dated: 80	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	53	11	10	0
<i>Kamāl</i> post-1251/1835 = 0 undated copies of the text: 16 total number of mss = 89 total that can be dated: 73	0	0	0	0	1	3	6	53	2	5	3
<i>Amālī</i> post-1251/1835 = 0 undated copies of the text: 10 total number of mss = 22 total that can be dated: 12	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	3	1	0

availability of the works of Ibn Bābawayh remained limited.

If al-Muḥaqqiq al-Hillī first referred to “the four books” of the Imams’ *aḥādīth* as those listed as such above, Shaykh Bahā’ī’s father Shaykh Ḥusayn referred to Ibn Bābawayh’s *Madīnat al-‘ilm* as one of the five *uṣūl*. Bahā’ī himself considered *Madīna* a more valuable work than *al-Faqīh* and, according to a later biographer, used it more than *al-Faqīh*.²³ At some point early in the second Safawid century, however, *Madīnat al-‘ilm* was no longer accessible in Iran.²⁴

As to Ibn Bābawayh’s other works, as the accompanying chart (Table 1) shows, in the period from 907/1501 to 1000/1591, at least four copies of *al-Faqīh* and three of *Kamāl* were produced, all after 951/1544. Two copies of *Ma‘ānī* were produced, both also after 951/1544. The same obtains for *al-Khiṣāl*, *‘Ilal* and *‘Uyūn*. One copy of *al-Tawḥīd* was produced, but also later in the period. No copies of *al-Amālī* can be dated to this period.

Over the early decades of the next century, the availability of copies of some of his other compilations improved, but only slightly. In the years 1001/1591 to 1050/1640, preliminary research has identified nine copies of *al-Faqīh* as having been produced, compared with four for the previous one hundred years. Six copies of *Kamāl* have been dated to this fifty-year period, compared to four over the previous century. As to his other collections, but two copies of *‘Ilal* were made, compared with two for the previous century.

²³ On Ḥusayn, see al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 20: 251–53. On the preferences of both Ḥusayn and his son for this text, see also Dānishpazhūh 1332sh./1953–54: 5: 1550–51, citing Bāqir al-Majlisī’s father Muḥammad Taqī (d. 1070/1659). Bāqir al-Majlisī’s student Mīrzā ‘Abdallāh Afandī (d. c. 1130/1717) 1401/1980: 5: 119–21 suggested that Bahā’ī may not have seen the work except in his travels with his father.

²⁴ On the disappearance of the book in this period, see al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 20: 251–53; Dānishpazhūh 1332sh./1953–54: 5: 1550–51; Kohlberg 1992: 240–41. Afandī 1401/1980: 5: 120–21, says that his teacher Bāqir al-Majlisī saw a copy of the work in the Jabal ‘Āmil region of Lebanon and that Afandī himself saw texts from the collection in a book in Mazanderan written in the hand of a student of Shaykh Bahā’ī, or of a student of a student. Al-Majlisī is said to have tried to locate the volume. See al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 2: 252; Kohlberg 1990. For the present study, it may go without saying that that no copies of *Madīna* have been identified. Kohlberg 1992: 119–21 notes another work of Ibn Bābawayh that went missing after Ibn Tāwūs’ time.

Two copies of *al-Khiṣāl* can be dated to this period, as compared, also, with two for the earlier period. The same can be said for his *al-Tawḥīd* and *‘Uyūn*. One copy of *Ma‘ānī* has been dated to this fifty-year period, compared with two over the previous century. No copies of *al-Amālī* have been identified as produced in this period.

To be sure, the Safawid period also witnessed the flourishing of commentaries and marginal notes, *shurūḥ* and *ḥawāshī*, respectively.²⁵ But, paralleling the fact that few copies of Ibn Bābawayh’s collections seem to have been made in this period, few scholars seem to have made these particular collections the subject of such commentaries. For the period up to 1050/1640, al-Tihirānī records three *shurūḥ* on *al-Faqīh*, one each by Shaykh Bahā’ī, by Shaykh Muḥammad b. Ḥasan b. al-Shahīd al-Thānī (d. 1030/1621) and by Murād Tafīrīshī (d. 1051/1641), and five *ḥawāshī*, one each by the same three scholars, another by Qādī Nūrallāh al-Shūshtarī (d. 1019/1611) and the fifth by Mīr Dāmād (d. 1040/1630–31).²⁶ But he records no *shurūḥ* as having been written on *al-Tawḥīd*, *al-Khiṣāl*, *‘Uyūn*, *Kamāl*, *‘Ilal*, *al-Amālī* or *Ma‘ānī*.

Ḥusayn al-Karakī (d. 1001/1591–92), cousin to ‘Alī al-Karakī (d. 940/1534), who served Shahs Ismā‘īl I and Ṭahmāsp I, is listed as having composed a *ḥāshiya* on *‘Uyūn*. There are no *ḥawāshī* listed for *al-Tawḥīd*, *al-Khiṣāl*, *Kamāl*, *‘Ilal*, *al-Amālī* or *Ma‘ānī* as having been composed by scholars working in this period.²⁷

No commentaries at all, of either genre, have been identified for Ibn Bābawayh’s *Madīnat al-‘ilm*.

V. IBN BĀBWAYH AND HIS LEGACY FROM 1051/1641 TO 1100/1688

In contrast to all the previous centuries since 447/1055, in the second half of the eleventh Hijri century, that is from 1051/1641 to 1100/1688, preliminary research into numbers of manuscripts recorded as copied as well as the commentaries and marginal notes com-

²⁵ On commentaries on philosophical treatises in the tenth/sixteenth century, see Pourjavady 2011.

²⁶ al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 14: 93–94. A *ḥāshiya* on *al-Faqīh* composed by a scholar who died in 1000/1591 is listed (6: 223–24). As the dates of composition of these texts are not always clear, these are listed herein by the death date of the scholar in question.

²⁷ al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 6: 151–52.

posed suggests that interest in Ibn Bābawayh's collections expanded exponentially.²⁸

As the accompanying chart (Table 1) notes, some fifty-two copies of *al-Faqīh* can be dated to this period, whereas eight were produced in the previous fifty years. These fifty-two represent some 54% of the total of ninety-eight copies of *al-Faqīh* identified and 63% of the eighty-three copies of the text that can be dated.

As to Ibn Bābawayh's other collections, fifty-three copies of *Kamāl* were produced from 1051/1641 to 1100/1688, where six were made in the previous half-century. This is equivalent to 59% of the total of eighty-nine copies identified and 73% of the seventy-three that have been dated. Fifty-three copies of *'Uyūn* were copied in this period; two had been produced in the previous half-century. This represents 46% of the total of 114 copies of the text identified, and 66% of the total of eighty datable copies. Twenty-two copies of *al-Khiṣāl* were produced in this half-century whereas two were produced in the period 1001/1591 to 1050/1640. This represents 48% of the total of forty-six copies located, and 73% of the total of thirty copies that have been dated. Twenty-two copies of *Ma'ānī* were made in the period, where only one copy has been dated to the previous half-century. This is 48% of the total of forty-six copies, and 69% of the thirty-two datable copies. Eighteen copies of *'Ilal* have been dated to this period, where two were produced over the previous half-century. This represents 41% of the total of forty-four copies identified, and 60% of the total of thirty copies that have been dated. Seventeen copies of *al-Tawḥīd* were produced from 1051/1641 to 1100/1688, where two were produced in the previous fifty years. This is 59% of the total of twenty-nine copies of the text identified and 74% of the twenty-three dated copies. Of Ibn Bābawayh's *al-Amālī*, six copies have been dated to this period, where none were produced in the previous period. This is 27% of the total of twenty-two copies identified, and 50% of the twelve of these that have been dated.

As for *shurūḥ* and *ḥawāshī* on these compilations produced by scholars in the later years of the second Safawid century, these were limited but still reflected a growth in interest in Ibn Bābawayh's legacy. Al-Tihirānī identified three *shurūḥ* as having been com-

posed on *al-Faqīh* by scholars alive from 1051/1641 to 1100/1688. Two, one each in Arabic and Persian, were in fact produced by Bāqir al-Majlisī's father Muḥammad Taqī (d. 1070/1659). Two were done on *al-Tawḥīd*, one by Muḥammad Bāqir al-Sabzawārī (d. 1090/1679) and a second by the theologian/philosopher Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī (d. 1103/1691–92). There are no *shurūḥ* recorded in this period for *al-Khiṣāl*, *'Uyūn*, *Kamāl*, *'Ilal*, *al-Amālī*, *Ma'ānī* or, for that matter, *Madīna*.²⁹

Four *ḥawāshī* on *al-Faqīh* were composed by scholars alive in this period. Two were composed by members of the al-Majlisī family: one by a son-in-law of Taqī al-Majlisī and another by the latter's eldest son 'Azīzallāh (d. 1074/1663). The other two were composed by Sayyid Aḥmad al-'Alawī (d. between 1054/1644 and 1060/1650), student and son-in-law of Mīr Dāmād, and Sayyid Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad, known as Khalifa Ṣultān (d. 1064/1654), vizier to both Shahs 'Abbās I and 'Abbās II. There are no *ḥawāshī* by scholars who died in this period recorded for *al-Tawḥīd*, *al-Khiṣāl*, *'Uyūn*, *Kamāl*, *'Ilal*, *al-Amālī* or *Ma'ānī*.³⁰

This was a period, also, when translations of earlier texts were undertaken. It was not widely done in respect of Ibn Bābawayh's compilations, but one scholar, a contemporary of Mīrzā 'Abdallāh 'Afandī, did undertake translations of *al-Amālī*, *al-Khiṣāl*, *Kamāl* and *'Uyūn*. There are a further two translations of *'Uyūn*, one dated to c. 1065/1654 and the second to 1075/1664. The others are not known to have been translated.³¹

Overall, even if the Safawid-period data are not absolute, it does suggest that the general awareness of and direct experience with Ibn Bābawayh's collections may have been greater over the half-century to 1100/1688 than in all the years from the fall of Baghdad to the Saljuqs to 1051/1641.

²⁸ Comparisons between these works of Ibn Bābawayh and other "core" texts of the faith completed before 447/1055 are drawn in Newman, forthcoming. Preliminary research generally suggests the same trending for many of these other works.

²⁹ al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 14: 94–95. On the two by Taqī al-Majlisī, see al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 11: 302–3 (citing *Rawḍat al-muttaqīn*, in Arabic, completed in 1063/1652), and 18: 369–70 (on his Persian-language "version" of *Rawḍa*, entitled *al-Lawāmi'*, part of which was completed in 1066/1655). The latter was completed at the request of Shah 'Abbās II (reg. 1052–77/1642–66) after Taqī al-Majlisī had presented him with the Arabic commentary.

³⁰ al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 6: 223–25; 13: 153f; 13: 375; 14: 72; 6: 151; 6: 25.

³¹ al-Tihirānī 1353–98/1934–77: 4: 81; 4: 99; 4: 80; 4: 120–21; 3: 87.

Such was the extent of the renewed interest in these works in these later years of the Safawid period that both Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī (d. 1104/1693) and Bāqir al-Majlisī’s own student Afandī, in their respective biographical dictionaries, praised Ibn Bābawayh and recorded those of his works then extant as including all of his works listed above, except, as noted, *Madīnat al-‘ilm*.³²

VI. BĀQIR AL-MAJLISĪ, BIḤĀR AND THE LATE SAFAWID PERIOD SPIRITUAL DYNAMIC

Paralleling the rising scholarly interest in the Imams’ *aḥādīth*, and support for the study thereof, it was also in the later Safawid period that the community produced the equivalents to the pre-447/1055 “three Muḥammads” who had compiled “the four books”. This period of Safawid history is also known for its “three Muḥammads”, sc. Muḥammad b. Murtaḍā Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d. 1091/1680), Bāqir al-Majlisī and Muḥammad b. Ḥasan, al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī, each of whom produced a compilation of these traditions. Al-Kāshānī completed his *al-Wāfi*, still largely unexplored by scholars in the field, by 1068/1658; al-Ḥurr completed his *Wasā’il al-Shī’a* by 1088/1677; and by 1081/1670 al-Majlisī had finished some volumes of his *Biḥār al-anwār*.³³

Among the many charges levelled against al-Majlisī since the early years of the last century,³⁴ in the 1980s and more recently, is that he falsified traditions.³⁵

³² al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī 1385/1966: 2: 283–84; Afandī 1401/1980: 5: 119–22. Al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī completed his dictionary in 1097/1685. Al-Majlisī completed the portions of his *Biḥār* discussed herein, from volume 14, c. 1105/1693 (Kohlberg 1990). Afandī commenced his *Riyāḍ* c. 1107/1695 and was working on it until his death c. 1130/1717 (al-Tihrānī 1353–98/1934–77: 11: 331).

³³ al-Tihrānī 1353–98/1934–77: 25: 13–14; 4: 352–54. On *Biḥār*, see Kohlberg 1990.

³⁴ See Browne 1924: 120, 403. See also Browne 1924: 194–95, 366, 404; Lockhart 1958: 32–33, 70, 71 n. 1, the latter citing Browne 1924: 120.

³⁵ See Katouzian 1981: 70 n. 10; Sachedina 1981: 63. More recently, see Turner’s undocumented reference to “certain obvious fabrications” in *Biḥār* in Turner 2000: 171–72, and his more recent statement that al-Majlisī “wittingly or otherwise, incorporated into his work a number of narratives (emphasis added) of highly dubious provenance” in Turner 2006: 191. See also Gleave 2007: 264–65. As long ago as 1910, Goldziher, citing Sunni sources, claimed the Shī’a fabricated traditions. See Goldziher 1981: 201 n. 98, 211,

This charge was not borne out by an earlier examination of his work on medical theory and practice on offer in volume fourteen, *Kitāb al-Samā’ wa ’l-‘Ālam*, on cosmology and natural history,³⁶ a volume completed by Majlisī c. 1105/1693.³⁷

At the same time, however, al-Majlisī’s *Biḥār* was not without its own purpose. In the later seventeenth century Safawid Iran, al-Majlisī faced a spiritual dynamic which had already challenged and defeated several prominent clerics on the scene, despite their close connections to the court.

In the decades commencing in 1043/1633–34 some twenty essays appeared attacking a resurgence of veneration for Abū Muslim (d. 136/754), the Iranian ‘Alid agent of the ‘Abbasid movement in Khurasan, attacking urban-based story-tellers for promoting the tradition, singling out Bāqir al-Majlisī’s father and defending the Tajik sayyid Mīr Lawḥī (d. after 1081/1670–71). The latter had attacked Taqī al-Majlisī in the latter years of the reign of Shah ‘Abbās’ I (*reg.* 985–1038/1587–1629) for his alleged public association with the Abū Muslim tradition and claimed to have been physically assaulted in the streets by al-Majlisī’s supporters. This anti-Abū Muslim diatribe evolved into a broader polemic directed against a rising interest in Sufi messianism among lower and middle-ranking urban elements, the latter only encouraged over the succeeding decades by several sets of economic crises and natural disasters.

Especially during the second vizierate of the Iranian sayyid and noted scholar Khalīfa Ṣultān (1055–64/1645–54), during the reign of Shah ‘Abbās II, the court moved to associate itself with both sides in this discourse. Anti-Sufi elements kept their posts at court, but others were brought forward in an attempt to moderate the tension. The latter included Muḥammad Bāqir al-Sabzawārī, who was first made a teacher at Isfahan’s ‘Abdallāh Shūshtarī School and then, in the early 1060s/1650s, the city’s *Shaykh al-Islām* and *Imām Juma’*, the latter bespeaking his authority over the capital’s Friday prayer. Despite his best efforts, however, the anti-Sufi discourse, and that on such other problematic issues as the legitimacy of Friday prayer during the Imam’s absence and the crises, continued apace.

In these years also ‘Abbās II invited Muḥsin Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d. 1091/1680), son-in-law and student of

n. 123.

³⁶ See Newman 2003.

³⁷ Kohlberg 1990.

Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1640) and noted for his criticism of “popular” Sufism and interest in “high” mystical inquiry, to lead the Friday prayer services in an effort to still the waters of controversy over the Sufi discourse and Friday prayer. Fayḍ quickly found himself also beset on all sides and soon resigned the post. The polemics continued to rage.

In a move signalling the centre’s continued preference for an approach to this spiritual strife which attempted to identify the court with all sides to these polemics and to transcend them and thereby maintain its authority, Bāqir al-Majlisī himself was in 1098/1687 appointed the city’s *Shaykh al-Islām*. His having studied with or taught the major protagonists in the various polemics of the time, and his father’s own experience, meant that Bāqir al-Majlisī was acutely aware of the situation that obtained.³⁸

VII. AL-MAJLISĪ AND IBN BĀBAYH IN BIḤĀR: SHI‘ISM AND HUMAN ANATOMY BETWEEN THE BUYID AND SAFAWID PERIODS

As Kohlberg has noted, *Biḥār* actually began life as an index of texts from ten collections of Twelver *akhbār*. Al-Majlisī completed this index in 1070/1659, the year of his father’s death, and only a few years after his own father’s production of Arabic and Persian commentaries on Ibn Bābawayh’s *al-Faqīh* for ‘Abbās II and at the same time as the other two Muḥammads were working on their compilations.

Of the ten collections utilised by al-Majlisī for this index, six were collections assembled by Ibn Bābawayh: *al-Amālī*, *al-Khiṣāl*, *‘Uyūn*, *‘Ilal*, *Ma‘ānī* and *al-Tawḥīd*.³⁹ Thus al-Majlisī’s interest in and work with these lesser-known collections of Ibn Bābawayh was a cornerstone of the larger *Biḥār* project from the very first and overlapped with, if it was not further encouraged by, both his own father’s involvement with the work of Ibn Bābawayh and also the growing interest in his collections and the traditions generally that is attested for the period from 1051/1641 onwards.

Where the traditions assembled in *al-Wāfi* and *Wasā’il* were organised into chapters along the lines of works of *fiqh*, *Biḥār* emerged as a compendium

of *aḥādīth* on a wide variety of subjects “involving practically the entire corpus of Imamite *ḥadīth*” and comprising many texts and much material believed to have been lost.⁴⁰ As such the project (which remained incomplete at al-Majlisī’s death) attested an effort to strike a middle ground between the contemporary spiritual extremes by firmly privileging the revelation of the Imams themselves and by re-emphasising that revelation as the ultimate sources of knowledge on all matters of doctrine and practice.

By the time of al-Majlisī’s appointment in 1098/1687, *Biḥār* was a project already well advanced. Indeed, c. 1105/1693, within years of his appointment, al-Majlisī had completed important sections of the compilation, including volume fourteen, which addressed issues of cosmology and natural history and which included material on anatomy.

Portions of volume fourteen in particular bespeak an effort to find common ground between potentially conflicting elements of the Galenic, “rationalist”, medical discourse and that on offer in the Imams’ traditions. Suggesting contemporary knowledge of and continued recourse to each, al-Majlisī carefully utilised aspects of each to validate the other. In such an undertaking he was well within the norm of Twelver medical discourse dating at least to the Buyid period.⁴¹

In this process, in three of the most important chapters in volume fourteen, those on issues of human anatomy, al-Majlisī’s debt to Ibn Bābawayh is especially clear. Of the total of forty-seven texts cited in these three chapters, twenty-five (53%) traditions had appeared in earlier collections of Ibn Bābawayh. Of these twenty-five, eighteen (72%) came from *‘Ilal* alone. Indeed, *‘Ilal* provided 38% of the total of forty-seven traditions in these three chapters.

Chapter forty-six, “The faculties (*quwā*) of the soul (*nafs*) and their senses (*mashā’ir*) of the external and internal senses (*al-ḥawāss al-zāhira wa ‘l-bāṭina*) and the rest of the physical faculties”, addresses human anatomy and covers some forty pages in the

³⁸ On these developments see Newman 2006: s.v., esp. 98–99.

³⁹ Kohlberg 1990. Ibn Bābawayh’s *Madīna* is noticeable for its absence.

⁴⁰ Kohlberg 1990. *Malādhdh al-akhyār*, al-Majlisī’s multi-volume collection of the Imams’ statements, organised by *fiqh* chapters, has been published (Qum 1408/1987) but has yet to be critically addressed by the field.

⁴¹ For an overview of the complex nature of Safawid period medical discourse, see the section on medicine in Newman 1995: 782–83. On *Biḥār*, see Newman 2006: 98–99. Kohlberg 1990 notes completion dates for other volumes of *Biḥār*. On Buyid period Twelver medical discourse see, for example, Ispahany 1991, and our preface thereto.

1403/1983 Beirut edition of *Biḥār*. The lengthy discussion included references to eight texts. Of these four had been cited in Ibn Bābawayh's *al-Amālī*, *ʿIlal*, *Kamāl al-dīn*, *al-Tawḥīd* and *al-Khiṣāl* and two were cited by al-Majlisī as having come from *ʿIlal*.

Al-Majlisī opened the chapter with references to several verses from the Qurʾān and the comments of the Shīʿī *mufasssīr* al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Qummī al-Nīshāpūrī (d. 728/1327–8) on these.⁴² He then cited eight traditions. All are traceable to earlier compilations of the Imams' traditions. Four of them, the first three and five, had been cited by Ibn Bābawayh. The first text appeared in Ibn Bābawayh's *al-Amālī*, *ʿIlal* and *Kamāl*, although al-Majlisī only cited it as from the first.⁴³ The second text came only from *ʿIlal*.⁴⁴

In each of these two traditions, the Sixth Imam, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), compared the role of the heart in relation to the extremities—the senses and faculties (smell, sight, hearing as well as the hands and legs, for example)—with the role of the Imam in relation to the community. In the second one, the Imam noted that even what the nose smelt was channelled to the heart.

As to the first tradition, in Ibn Bābawayh's *al-Amālī* it was the fifteenth of nineteen texts in a *majlis* held in 368/978, on either side of which were traditions attesting to the Imam as *ḥujja*. In *ʿIlal*, the text was the second and last tradition in a similar chapter, on the certainty (*ithbāt*) of the Imams. The first text in this chapter cited Imam Jaʿfar as discussing who was the *ḥujja* after the Prophet and naming the Imams down to himself as such.⁴⁵

The same tradition had also appeared in *Kamāl* as the twenty-third and last text in a chapter on the need for the Imam. Of the other traditions in this chapter of *Kamāl*, in the tenth, for example, the Imam stated that

⁴² These verses are 2: 7, 16: 78, 23: 78 and 30: 22. 23: 78 states, for example, “And it is He who produced for you hearing and vision and hearts; little are you grateful.”

⁴³ al-Majlisī 1403/1983: 58: 248–49; Ibn Bābawayh 1386/1967: 589–91/15; Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 1: 194/2.

⁴⁴ al-Majlisī 1403/1983: 58: 249–50; Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 1: 109–10/8.

⁴⁵ Ibn Bābawayh 1386/1967: 589–91/15; Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 1: 194/2. The tradition had previously been cited by al-Kulaynī in the first two volumes of *al-Kāfī* on theological matters, in a chapter of four traditions in the first chapter of the *Kitāb al-Ḥujja* (“The Book of the Proof”), on the need for the *ḥujja*, that is, the Imam. See al-Kulaynī 1388/1968: 1: 169/3.

even if there were only two individuals left on earth, one would be the Imam. Following the twenty-third tradition, Ibn Bābawayh concluded the chapter with a long comment addressing what this meant for the period of the occultation, and noting finally that just as the heart was not visible to the other parts of the body but was still at their centre, so the Imam, though present, stood in relation to the community.⁴⁶

The second of al-Majlisī's eight texts in chapter forty-six was the eighth of sixteen texts in a chapter of *ʿIlal* on “the natural dispositions (*al-ṭabāʿi*), cravings (*al-shahawāt*) and affections (*al-maḥabbāt*)”. This text was one of seven of the traditions in this chapter of *ʿIlal* that al-Majlisī used in these three chapters; indeed, al-Majlisī would cite this particular tradition again in chapter forty-seven.

The particular text focused on the role of the heart in the management of the various functions of the body and equated the role of the heart with the role of the Imam in the community.⁴⁷ Of the other sixteen texts in this chapter of *ʿIlal*, in the second and sixth, the Imams al-Riḍā and Jaʿfar respectively mentioned “the natural dispositions (*al-ṭabāʿi*)” as four. In the sixth, the Imam named these as the blood, bile, *al-rīḥ* and phlegm (*al-balgham*). In the third, error (*al-ghalaṭa*) was said to reside in the kidneys, life in the lungs (*al-riyya*) and intellect (*al-ʿaql*) in the heart.⁴⁸ In the fourth, it was said that when God created the dust of Adam, he took from each of the four spirits (*al-riyāḥ*) its own temperament. The fourteenth and fifteenth texts cited the Imam as noting the special qualities with which God endowed “our Shīʿa” and their souls (*arwāḥ*) when he created them.⁴⁹

The third tradition in *Biḥār*'s chapter forty-six had appeared in both *al-Khiṣāl* and *al-Tawḥīd*. Here the Imam noted that each believer possessed four eyes: two that allowed sight of his faith and his world and two, in the heart, that allowed sight of what was hidden (*al-ghayb*) and what came after. Al-Majlisī then commented that he had discussed the heart, its health and corruption, in chapters of *Biḥār* “Book of Unbelief and Faith”.

In *al-Khiṣāl*, this text was the sole tradition in a chapter on the “four eyes”. In *al-Tawḥīd*, it was the fourth of thirty-six traditions in a chapter on judgment

⁴⁶ Ibn Bābawayh 1363/1405/1984: 1: 207–9/23, 10.

⁴⁷ Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 1: 109–10/8.

⁴⁸ On the latter text, see n. 61 below.

⁴⁹ Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 104–17.

(*al-qaḍā'*) and fate (*al-qadar*). In the first of these, God was said to have created these and in another He was said to have created destinies (*maqāḍīr*) 5000 years before He created the heavens and the earth.⁵⁰

The fifth of the eight traditions in al-Majlisī's chapter forty-six, the last of the eight texts in this chapter cited from Ibn Bābawayh, had been part of a longer text in *al-Tawḥīd*.⁵¹ In this text the Imam Ja'far discussed the process of vision. Sight was said by a questioner to be the smallest (*aṣghar*) of the five senses, as small as lentils (*al-'adasa*) or smaller. The Imam then asked the questioner to look behind himself and above himself and to say what he saw. "I see sky, earth, far and near, dust and mountains and rivers", to which the Imam replied that what allowed this was something the questioner had said was small as lentils or smaller. This text, al-Majlisī then commented, did not contradict the proposition that sight takes place owing to the emanation of rays (*al-shu'ā'*) from the object being viewed.

In *al-Tawḥīd* this was the first half of a longer text that was the first of seventeen texts on the omnipotence (*al-quḍra*) of God. Of the other texts herein, in the eighth, narrated via al-Mufaḍḍal b. 'Umar, the Imam Ja'far compared God to light in which there was no darkness, truth in which there was no falsehood and justness in which there was no tyranny (*jawr*).⁵²

Bihār's chapter forty-seven was a further chapter on anatomy (*tashrīḥ*), on the parts of the body. Of the thirty-six texts in the chapter, eighteen came from *'Ilal*, *al-Khiṣāl* and *'Uyūn*, and thirteen of the eighteen came from *'Ilal* alone. The first ten traditions came from these three, and of these six were drawn from *'Ilal*.⁵³

The long first text was the ninth of sixteen traditions in *'Ilal*'s chapter on "the natural dispositions (*al-ṭabā'i*), cravings (*al-shahawāt*) and affections (*al-maḥabbāt*)", a text that seems not to have appeared in any of the well-known earlier collections of the

Imams' traditions. Chapter forty-six's second text had come from this chapter in *'Ilal*; others of this chapter's traditions have been discussed above.

This ninth text in this chapter of *'Ilal* both described the four things (*ashyā'*) of which the body was created, named them as the terms yellow and black bile, blood and phlegm, discussed the physician (*al-ṭabīb*), and his knowledge of the relationships between the four, and their associated qualities of cold, damp, dryness and heat, illness (*al-saqam*) as resulting from an excess or deficiency thereof and what medicaments would restore the balance.⁵⁴

These four "things" in fact corresponded to the four humours (*akhlāṭ*) of the Galenic tradition, just as the idea of balance/imbalance in these was basic to the Galenic understanding of illness and wellness. Indeed, following this text, al-Majlisī offered a lengthy discussion interpreting the terms appearing in this tradition as equivalent to that anatomical vocabulary on offer in the Arabic-language Galenic medical tradition, in the process frequently citing *al-Qāmūs* of the Shiraz-born scholar al-Fayrūzābādī (d. 817/1414). Al-Majlisī also noted variations to the text in another copy of *'Ilal*.

The second and third traditions were drawn from *al-Khiṣāl*, where they also had apparently first appeared. After each, al-Majlisī offered a comment. The second was the sole tradition in a section of *al-Khiṣāl* entitled "The building of the body on four things (*ashyā'*)". In this, the Imam Ja'far identified the four as the pneuma (*al-rūḥ*), the intellect (*al-'aql*), blood and the soul (*al-naḥs*). If the spirit leaves (*kharaja*), he said, the intellect will follow it. If the spirit sees something, the intellect records it, and the blood and the soul will remain. Al-Majlisī then commented that *al-naḥs* referred to the animal pneuma (*al-rūḥ al-ḥayawānī*) and *al-rūḥ* to the speaking faculty (*al-naḥs al-nāṭiqā*), the anatomical terminology employed in the Galenic medical tradition.

The third text in *Bihār*'s chapter forty-seven was the sole tradition in the immediately following section in *al-Khiṣāl* on the four faculties and the four fires (*nīrān*). Herein, the Imam Ja'far described the body as composed of fire (*al-nār*), light (*al-nūr*), *al-rīḥ*—often synonymous with *al-rūḥ*—and water. The first, said the Imam, allows man to eat and drink; with the second he sees and thinks; with the third he hears and smells; and the last allows him to taste what he eats and drinks. Each of the four fires, each of which was

⁵⁰ Al-Majlisī 1403/1983: 250; Ibn Bābawayh 1362/1403/1983: 1: 240; Ibn Bābawayh N.D.: 366–67/4, 1, 7.

⁵¹ Al-Majlisī 1403/1983: 58: 252–53/5.

⁵² Ibn Bābawayh N.D.: 122–23/1, 8. The first of these, that cited by al-Majlisī, is also cited in al-Kulaynī 1388/1968 1: 79/4, as one of six traditions on the creation in the first chapter in *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* in *al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfi*, although this was not apparently noted by al-Majlisī.

⁵³ al-Majlisī 1403/1983: 58: 286–331. The texts are in fact misnumbered in the Beirut edition, such that there are, in fact, thirty-six. Cf. the numbering in Newman 2003.

⁵⁴ Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 110–11/9.

named, affected individual eating and drinking processes.⁵⁵

Al-Majlisī then commented on the four fires, explaining, for example, that of these four the fire that “eats and drinks” referred to *al-ḥarāra al-gharīziyya*, i.e. the Arabic anatomical term from Galenic discourse that is translated as “the innate heat”, which he said was born of the fire. He also defined other terms in the text with reference to their Galenic equivalents. The water, he said for example, referred to the saliva. In this reconciliation process al-Majlisī also referred both to *al-Qāmūs* and the dictionary of the Sunni Ismā‘īl b. Hammād al-Jawhārī (d. c. 393/1003).

The fourth and fifth texts in chapter forty-seven came from ‘*Uyūn*, with the fifth also having appeared in ‘*Ilal*. Neither had apparently been cited in any earlier collections of the Imams’ traditions.

The overwhelming majority of ‘*Uyūn*’s 941 traditions involve or otherwise relate to the Eighth Imam ‘Alī al-Riḍā. However, chapters two, four and five, seven to nine and ten contain traditions on, respectively, the Imam al-Riḍā’s mother, the Imam Mūsā’s designation of his son ‘Alī al-Riḍā as the Imam, Mūsā and the ‘Abbasid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (*reg.* 170–93/786–809), and the reasons for the formation of the Wāqifi Shī‘a, who held that the Imamate ended with Imam Mūsā. These chapters contain some sixty-seven traditions, some 7% of the total.

In *Bihār*’s chapter forty-seven, the fourth text is the very short eighth of fourteen texts in ‘*Uyūn*’s seventh chapter on relations between the Imam’s father, Mūsā, and the caliph Hārūn. The third, fourth and fifth texts in this chapter of ‘*Uyūn* detail the 179/795 arrest and release of Mūsā by the caliph. The ninth sees the caliph try to trick the Imam by asking that, if there were two caliphs, were two sets of taxes to be paid? The tenth gave more detail on the process of the arrest. The eleventh portrayed the caliph al-Ma’mūn discussing his father’s behaviour toward the Imam al-Riḍā. The thirteenth noted Imam Mūsā’s fear that the caliph would have him killed. In the last, Hārūn explained he had no choice but to treat the Imam badly.

In the eighth text, that cited in *Bihār*, the caliph asked the Imam Mūsā about the four temperaments (*al-ṭabā‘i ‘al-arba‘a*). The Imam identified these as the wind (*al-rīḥ*) which, he explained, was like a king who treated his people well; the blood, like a servant that could kill its master; the phlegm, like an enemy

that would always find a way; and the gall (*al-mirra*), which was like the earth that causes things on it to grow.⁵⁶

After citing this text, al-Majlisī again commented on the meaning of these terms, in an effort to reconcile these with those in Galenic medical discourse. Thus, for example, he suggested that *al-rīḥ* probably referred to the yellow bile or the animal pneuma, and that *al-mirra* referred to both the yellow and black bile together. In closing, he noted that he had seen discussions like this “in the works of the ancient physicians (*al-aṭibbā‘*) and philosophers (*al-ḥukamā‘*).”

The fifth text in *Bihār*’s chapter forty-seven had appeared in both ‘*Uyūn* and ‘*Ilal*. In ‘*Uyūn*, this was the eleventh of thirty-five traditions on what the Imam al-Riḍā gave as the reasons for a variety of things. Other traditions in this chapter included questions to the Imam on why God sent the flood, on the terms applied to the followers of Jesus, on why the line of the Imam al-Ḥusayn, and not that of his brother al-Ḥasan, was followed, and for how many was the sacrifice of a camel a sufficient offering on the ‘Īd al-Aḍḥā. In this short text, cited by Ibn Bābawayh via his own father, the Imam discussed the “four temperaments” in language very similar to that used by the Imam Mūsā in *Bihār*’s preceding text.

In ‘*Ilal*, this text was the second of the sixteen in ‘*Ilal*’s chapter on “the natural dispositions (*al-ṭabā‘i*), cravings (*al-shahawāt*) and affections (*al-maḥabbāt*).”⁵⁷

Chapter forty-seven’s sixth text was the fifth of the sixteen traditions in the same chapter of ‘*Ilal*, where it appears to have been cited for the first time. The Imam Ja‘far is cited as discussing the functions of fire (*al-nār*), light (*al-nūr*), *al-rīḥ* (often synonymous with *al-rūḥ*) and water, in terms recalling those in chapter forty-seven’s third text, cited from *al-Khiṣāl*, although this tradition is longer. The Imam identified the functions of these four, stating, for example, that the blood in the body was like water in the earth and that nothing could survive without it. The Imam said that human beings were created out of the matter (*sha‘n*) of this world and the next.⁵⁸

Al-Majlisī, in a lengthy comment, defined the various terms used by the Imam in the tradition, again

⁵⁵ Ibn Bābawayh 1362/1403/1983: 1: 226–27.

⁵⁶ Ibn Bābawayh (b), N.D.: 1: 80–81/8.

⁵⁷ Ibn Bābawayh (b), N.D.: 2: 79/11, 2, 10, 17, 22; Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 106–7/2.

⁵⁸ Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 107/5.

equating these with the Arabic anatomical terminology of the Galenic medical discourse, although he ended with a note that the tradition was certainly not free of confusion (*tashwīsh*) and hidden secrets (*asrār ghaybiyya*).

The long seventh text in this chapter of the *Bihār* was the first of the sixteen traditions in this same chapter of *ʿIlal*. Here the Imam Jaʿfar cited the Imam ʿAlī as discussing the creation process itself. Here also appeared a reference to the four *ṭabāʿi*, named as bile, blood, phlegm and *al-rīḥ*.

Al-Majlisī then, again, explained certain terms in the text as references to the Galenic anatomical terminology: *al-rīḥ*, he suggested, might refer to the yellow bile while the bile in question might refer to the black bile. He referred to the *tafsīr* of ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (d. after 306/919), one of the earliest Twelver Qurʾān commentaries, that there are four *ṭabāʿi*: the two biles, the blood and the phlegm, with the blood being located in the east, the phlegm in the north, the yellow bile in the south and the black in the west.⁵⁹

The eighth text in this chapter of *Bihār* was the sixth of the sixteen traditions in *ʿIlal*. The Imam Jaʿfar referred to the *ṭabāʿi* as the blood, bile, *al-rīḥ* and phlegm, to the four supports (*daʿāʾim*) as *ʿaql*, understanding (*fahm*), memory and *ʿilm* (knowledge), and to the four pillars (*arkān*) as light, fire, *al-rūḥ* and water. The text seems to have appeared in *ʿIlal* for the first time.

The ninth text in this chapter was the eighth of the sixteen texts in the same chapter of *ʿIlal*. Al-Majlisī had cited this text as the second of chapter forty-six’s eight traditions. The text focused on the role of the heart in the management of the various functions of the body and equated that role with the role of the Imam in the community. This tradition also was apparently cited in *ʿIlal* for the first time.⁶⁰

In the chapter’s short tenth tradition, the third of *ʿIlal*’s chapter of sixteen traditions, it was said that error (*al-ghalaṭa*) was resident in the kidney, life in the lungs (*al-riyya*) and *al-ʿaql* in the heart.⁶¹

Chapter forty-seven’s twelfth text was the fourth of the sixteen traditions in this same chapter of *ʿIlal*, and was also apparently cited in *ʿIlal* for the first time.

Here, it was said that when God created the dust of Adam, He commanded the four spirits (*al-riyāḥ*) and took from each its temperament (*ṭabīʿa*).⁶²

Traditions eighteen to twenty-two of this chapter form the second cluster of texts cited from Ibn Bābawayh here.

In the eighteenth tradition, which is said to be in *ʿIlal* but does not appear in the two published editions of the text used for this research, sc. an undated Qum edition and the 1385/1966 Najaf one, the four *ṭabāʿi* are identified as “the two biles”, blood, *al-rīḥ* and phlegm.

The nineteenth tradition was included both in *ʿIlal* and *al-Khiṣāl*. In *ʿIlal*, it was the first and sole long tradition in a chapter on the creation of the organs (*aḍḍāʾ*) and the extremities (*jawāriḥ*). In the presence of the caliph al-Manṣūr (*reg.* 136–58/754–75), the Imam Jaʿfar asked an unidentified Indian why certain anatomical structures had been created as they were. “Why is the nose between the two eyes?” was one such question. “Why is the heart [in the shape of] a pine nut?” was another. To each the Indian replied he did not know. The Imam then offered what today would be considered a teleological, functionalist argument. Thus, for example, the nose was between the eyes to divide the light coming into each into equal portions. The heart is in the shape of a pine nut because it is inverted (*munakkas*) and its head was made fine (*daqīq*) so that it could enter the lungs. Their coolness fans it such that the brain (*dimāgh*) is not scorched by its heat. The Indian was amazed and asked where the Imam had obtained such knowledge. Imam Jaʿfar replied that he had it from his antecedents and they from the Prophet, from Gabriel, from God Himself.

In *al-Khiṣāl* the text was the only tradition in a section entitled “Nineteen questions that al-Ṣādiq posed of the Indian doctor in the presence of al-Manṣūr, and he did not know, and al-Ṣādiq informed him of the answers”. This appeared in the chapter on the number nineteen.⁶³ Al-Majlisī then offered a lengthy commentary that included “lay” explanations of the tradition’s anatomical terms, in the process of which he referred to such sources as the dictionary of the Sunnī Ismāʿīl al-Jawharī.

The twentieth tradition in chapter forty-seven was the sixth and last text in a chapter of *ʿIlal* on

⁵⁹ Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 104–6/1. This text, al-Majlisī noted, had been cited al-Qummī 1404/1983: 1: 36–37, in a section on the creation of Adam.

⁶⁰ Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 109/8, 110–11/9.

⁶¹ Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 107/3.

⁶² Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 107/4.

⁶³ Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 98–101/1; Ibn Bābawayh 1362/1403/1983: 2: 512/3.

“the bitterness (*al-marāra*) in the ears, the sweetness (*al-‘udhūba*) in the lips (*al-shafatayn*), the salinity (*al-mulawwiḥa*) in the eyes and the coldness (*al-burūda*) in the nose”. This was the first time this tradition seems to have been cited in a major collection. As for others of the texts in this chapter of *‘Ilal*, in the second of the six, the Imam asked if the listener knew why God had given these qualities to these parts of the anatomy. When the listener replied that he did not know, the Imam gave distinctively functionalist explanations in each case. Thus, for example, sweetness was put in the lips so that man could discover the pleasure of what he ate and drank. In the third and fourth traditions in this chapter of *‘Ilal*, the first to be cited below, the Imam offered similar explanations.

In the sixth and last of these traditions in the chapter of *‘Ilal*, that cited in *Bihār*, similar questions were raised and similar explanations offered: thus the bitterness in the ears acted as a barrier (*hijāb*) for the brain (*dimāgh*).⁶⁴ Al-Majlisī then noted that he had cited many similar texts elsewhere.

The twenty-first tradition in this chapter of *Bihār* was the sole text in a chapter in *‘Ilal* on why hair did not grow in the palm of the hand but did grow on the back of the hand. The text seems to have been cited for the first time in *‘Ilal*. Here, the Imam first explained that the palm was like land on which there was a great deal of walking; on such land nothing could grow. Second, the palms were doors that encountered things, and there was no hair thereon so that in touching, softness or coarseness could be sensed without the hair acting as a barrier.⁶⁵ Again, al-Majlisī then offered a brief further commentary, offering lay explanations for some of the Imam’s phrases and in the process again citing *al-Qāmūs*.

The twenty-second text, the last in this second cluster of Ibn Bābawayh’s traditions in *Bihār*’s chapter forty-seven, was the third of the six traditions in the same chapter in *‘Ilal* on bitterness, sweetness, salinity and coldness, discussed above.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 91–92/6.

⁶⁵ Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 101.

⁶⁶ Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 87/3. The first half of this text had appeared in *al-Kāfī* as the twentieth tradition in a chapter of the *Kitāb Faḍl al-‘ilm* (“The Book on the Virtue of Knowledge”) which contained twenty-two texts in a chapter entitled *al-Bida’ wa ‘l-ra’y wa ‘l-maqāyis* (“Innovation, Independent Judgement and Comparisons”). See al-Kulaynī 1388/1968: 1: 58/20.

Only two more texts from works of Ibn Bābawayh appear among the remaining traditions of the total of thirty-six in this chapter.

The twenty-sixth text is said to appear in *‘Ilal*, though it does not appear in the two editions consulted. In this text, it was said that the reason women have more ribs than men is related to the place of the embryo (*janīn*), such that a woman’s cavity (*jawf*) can expand for the child.

An unnumbered text from *‘Ilal* appearing after the twenty-eighth text is said to be “similar” to the twenty-eighth one. In the latter tradition itself, which had appeared in *al-Kāfī*, the Imam Ja‘far quoted the Prophet as saying that man has 360 blood vessels (*‘urūq*, sing. *‘irq*), of which 180 are “moving” and 180 are “silent”, and that if the “moving” vessels are silent one cannot sleep and that if the “silent” vessels move also, one cannot sleep and that the Prophet praised God 360 times each morning and evening. The unnumbered text from *‘Ilal*, noted herein as “similar” to *al-Kāfī*’s text, had appeared as the sole text in a chapter on the Prophet’s praising of God 360 times. In fact, the text (*matn*) of each of these two traditions is nearly identical although the chain of transmitters for each does feature some different names.⁶⁷

With the Galenic and tradition-based medical discourses on anatomy now reconciled, in chapter forty-eight, “On what *al-ḥukamā’* and *al-aṭibbā’* say on the anatomy of the body and its parts”, al-Majlisī related in detail, without comment or criticism, and minus any citations from the Qur’ān or the Imams’ traditions, the entire corpus of anatomical terminology on offer in the writings of Muslim scholars in the Galenic medical tradition.⁶⁸

Chapter forty-nine, with three traditions, addressed the differences in the appearances (*ṣuwar*) of what had been created (*al-makhlūqāt*), and “the situation of the Blacks (*al-sūdān*), the Turks, and the Slavs (*al-ṣaqāliba*).⁶⁹ All three traditions had appeared in *‘Ilal*, each apparently for the first time.

The first two had appeared in *‘Ilal*’s early chapters on creation. The first of these was the last of thirteen traditions in its ninth chapter on “The creation of crea-

⁶⁷ al-Majlisī 1403/1983: 58: 316–17; Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 353–54. In *al-Kāfī*, the twenty-eighth text was the fourth of seven texts on *al-Tamhīd wa ‘l-tamjīd* (“Praising and Glorification”). See al-Kulaynī 1388/1968: 2: 503/4.

⁶⁸ Newman 2003: 388–89.

⁶⁹ al-Majlisī 1403/1983: 59: 59–61.

tion and the differences in their conditions (*ikhtilāf ahwālihim*).⁷⁰ These thirteen traditions in the main stressed the fact that it was obligatory on those of every age to know their Imam and to give him their obedience. Indeed, after the first tradition, in which the Imam Ja‘far cited the Imam Ḥusayn as so stating to his followers, Ibn Bābawayh himself says: “By this is meant that those of every age know that God is He who did not leave them in any age without an infallible Imam.”

As for others of the thirteen texts in *‘Ilal*, in the second one, the Imam Ja‘far stated that God created his creatures “to manifest His power and to oblige them to render obedience to Him”. In the third, also cited in both Ibn Bābawayh’s *al-Tawḥīd* and *al-Kāfi*,⁷⁰ the Imam al-Riḍā said that God created “what He wished as He wished to demonstrate His wisdom (*ḥikma*) and the truth of his lordship (*ḥaqīqat rubūbiyyatihi*).” In the long fourth of the thirteen texts, the Imam referred to a conversation between Adam and God as to why God had not created everything in the same form. God explained that He had created a myriad of differences between humans to reflect on Himself so that, for example “the rich person would look on the poor person and praise me and thank me”.

That cited by al-Majlisī as the first of three texts in chapter forty-nine was the last of these thirteen, and was a text apparently not cited in earlier collections. The Imam al-Riḍā was asked why God had not created everything as one type (*naw‘ wāḥid*). The Imam replied that this was “so that He could look at His creation and know that He had power over everything.”⁷¹

The second of al-Majlisī’s traditions in this chapter of *Bihār* was the sole text in a different chapter in *‘Ilal* on why there were Blacks (*al-sūdān*), Turks, Slavs (*al-ṣaqāliba*) and Yājūj and Mājūj. In this tradition, Nūḥ was said to have been asleep in his boat when a wind exposed his nakedness. Ḥām saw his father but did not cover him whereas his other sons did see their father and did cover him. Thus God made Ḥām father of the Blacks, and Yāfith father of the Slavs, the Turks, Mājūj and Yājūj, and China. Sām was made the patriarch of “the Whites”. Al-Majlisī offered a brief commentary, explaining terms in the tradition

⁷⁰ This was the third of eight texts in a chapter of al-Kāfi’s *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* denying that God had a body or form. See al-Kulaynī 1388/1968: 1: 105/3. In Ibn Bābawayh’s *al-Tawḥīd* (98/5) it was the fifth of 20 traditions in a chapter rejecting any notion that the Divine had a body or form.

⁷¹ Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 9–14.

and, based on *al-Qāmūs*, identifying the “Slavs” as coming from the Khazar region, between Bulghār and Quṣṭanṭīniyya.⁷²

The last of the three texts in this chapter of the *Bihār* appeared in yet another location in *‘Ilal*, as the thirty-third of thirty-four texts in a chapter of miscellaneous (*nawādir*) traditions. In *‘Ilal*, where it appeared apparently for the first time in a collection of the Imams’ traditions, the full text was quite long and included a long *sanad* back to the Prophet. This version recounts a series of questions addressed to the Prophet and his replies. The questions commenced with why *al-Furqān*, the Meccan sura XXV of the Qur’ān, was named as such. The questioner then asked why the sun and moon did not give off equivalent light, why night (*al-layl*) was so called, why the stars seem to be small and large, why the world (*al-dunyā*) was thus named and why the resurrection (*al-qiyāma*) was thus called. The questioner also asked the Prophet about the first day after creation and why it was called *yawm al-aḥad*, and about each of the successive days, why Adam was called Adam, and whether Adam was created from one lump of clay (*ṭīn wāḥid*) or from all clay (*al-ṭīn kulluhu*). In the original, after this query and reply the questioner tabled additional queries and received replies.

Of all of the questions recorded in the original, only this last question, the one about Adam and the lump of clay, and its reply make up al-Majlisī’s third and last text in chapter forty-nine. To this question, the Prophet replied that Adam was created from all clay and that if he had been created from one clay then people would all be of the same form and unable to tell one from another. Dirt (*al-turāb*), the Prophet continued, can contain whiteness, green, blond-ness (*ashqar*), dust colour (*aghbar*), red and blue. In it also is what is sweet (*‘adhb*), salty, coarse (*khashin*), soft (*layyin*) and brown (*aṣhab*). Therefore these all appear in people, based on the colours of the dirt.

Al-Majlisī ended the chapter with a reference to al-Fayrūzābādī’s discussion of the colours mentioned

⁷² Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 31–32. Yājūj and Mājūj are mentioned in the Qur’ān (18:94; 21:96) and are equated with Gog and Magog in the Bible, in Ezekiel chs. 38 and 39 as well as in Revelation ch. 20: 7–8. See the discussion on these events by Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) in Brinner 1987: 10–11. The sons’ names are rendered herein based on their spelling in this tradition, as is the listing of their progeny. Sām or Shem, as he is also known, is identified by al-Ṭabarī as father of the Arabs.

in the tradition, citing examples from the colours of hair.⁷³

VIII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Of the remaining chapters in this section of *Bihār*, fifty to eighty-eight contain some 498 traditions on different illnesses and their cures. Of these, considerably fewer were drawn from Ibn Bābawayh's collections: forty-four, nearly 9%, had previously been cited by Ibn Bābawayh alone. But, whereas *ʿIlal* had provided the largest number of traditions for three chapters of this volume discussed above, *al-Khiṣāl* provided the largest number of Ibn Bābawayh's traditions cited in these thirty-eight chapters, sc. twenty-two, or 50%; this represented 4% of all the traditions in these chapters. The bulk of *al-Khiṣāl*'s twenty-two traditions, sc. fourteen of them, appeared in a chapter on such "cures" as cupping (*al-ḥijāma*), clysters (*al-ḥuqna*), snuff (*al-su'ūt*) and vomiting (*al-qay'*). Of those on cupping, for example, two came from a chapter in *al-Khiṣāl* on the number seven (which included traditions on the days of the week) and referred to the practice of the Prophet undergoing cupping on Mondays.⁷⁴

By contrast, and despite the recent resurgence of claims that al-Majlisī forged traditions, of those traditions considered in *Bihār*'s chapters forty-six, forty-seven and forty-nine, it was clearly carefully selected traditions from those of Ibn Bābawayh's collections other than *al-Faqīh* that played a key role in al-Majlisī's furthering the very particular elements of *Bihār*'s broader, particular agenda, even as these texts had played markedly different roles in their original settings.

As for the compilations themselves of Ibn Bābawayh, whereas *al-Faqīh* remains the best known of these among Western scholars, in the Buyid period his other collections were at least as well known as *al-Faqīh* among the community's scholars. With the end of the Buyid period, knowledge of and, especially, access to all of Ibn Bābawayh's contributions would seem to have gradually declined.

Only some six centuries later, in the latter years

of the eleventh/seventeenth century in Safawid Iran, did this situation begin to be reversed, although in the intervening years at least two of his works were lost to posterity; one of them, *Madīnat al-'ilm*, was held by those who knew it to have been more significant than *al-Faqīh* itself.⁷⁵

It can be no coincidence that the rising interest in all of Ibn Bābawayh's works, as suggested by the growing numbers of copies made of them, can be dated to those years that also witnessed the growing veneration of Abū Muslim, the concomitant rise in anti-Abū Muslim discourse, the rise of urban-based Sufi messianism and its counter-polemic. The interest in, and the appeal to, the traditions was part and parcel of the period's very dynamic spiritual discourse. Certainly, even if his quest to find *Madīna* failed, al-Majlisī found the collections of Ibn Bābawayh's traditions other than *al-Faqīh* of great importance as he sought to reconcile the period's differing parties by appealing to what distinguished them as Twelver Shī'a—the Imams and their traditions as the source of a distinctive body of both doctrine and practice—and, in this case in particular, to these traditions as part of a broader, inclusive medical discourse. In the process, both *Bihār* and these of Ibn Bābawayh's much earlier collections also stand revealed as sources which can further the understanding of Twelver Shī'i medical discourse.⁷⁶

Equally important, al-Majlisī stands with others of the period, including a legion of unknown copyists, as having played a key role in recovering these of Ibn Bābawayh's compilations for posterity. It can be no coincidence that the manuscripts used for many of the modern editions of these texts were copies produced in the Safawid period and after.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ For the other, see n. 24.

⁷⁶ See, for example, Pormann and Savage-Smith 2007: 72–73, 150.

⁷⁷ Thus five manuscripts were used for the undated Qum edition of *al-Tawḥīd* used here: all were made in the eleventh/seventeenth century. Four of these are dated by year, with the earliest stemming from 1073/1662. The edition of *Kamāl* was produced using seven manuscripts: one is not dated, the earliest is from 960/1552 and the remaining five were made between 1054/1644 and 1090/1679. The second edition of *al-Faqīh* (Qum, 1392), utilised fourteen manuscripts; of the thirteen that can be dated, one was made before 1000/1591 and the remaining twelve were made between 1034/1624 and 1101/1689.

⁷³ Ibn Bābawayh 1385/1966: 470–72/33. Al-Majlisī also cites this text elsewhere in *Bihār*, for example, at 9: 306, 11: 101.

⁷⁴ al-Majlisī 1403/1983: 59: 108/4, 5; Ibn Bābawayh 1362/1403/1983: 2: 384/64, 65. Of the remaining traditions in these chapters, *ʿUyūn* provided eight, *ʿIlal* seven, *Ma'ānī* furnished six and Ibn Bābawayh 1386/1967 one.

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