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Najam HAIDER, *The Origins of the Shia: Identity, Ritual, and Sacred Space in Eighth-Century Kufa*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011, xvii + 278 p.

This work creatively, cleverly and persuasively reconstructs the legal opinions and ritual practices of 2nd century Kufans to primarily revise the narrative regarding the birth of the Zaydī community. The three well-written, concise, yet comprehensive case studies on the *basmala*, *qunūt* and alcohol provide a rich, comparative analysis of the positions of the four major Sunnī and the two Shīʿī (Imāmī and Zaydī) legal schools. Utilizing a method pioneered and refined by H. Motzki, G. Schoeler and B. Sadeghi, the author sifts through the legal tradition for ḥadīth with transmitters that were geographically associated with Kufa in the 2nd century (أه). Then he proceeds with a “three-tiered comparison of the internal structure of Kufan texts associated with each sectarian community” (p. 38); identifying the legal authority, the composition of chains of transmission, and narrative style. The *isnād-cum-matn* method that Haider utilizes to analyze these Kufan legal traditions provides conclusive evidence of an independent Imāmī community in the early 2nd century by demonstrating the lack of any substantive convergence with other communities in chains of transmission or narrative styles. Conversely, his data clearly indicates the shared history of the Zaydī and proto Sunnī communities. The early Zaydī community was generally a Batrī phenomenon that only turned Jārūdī, when the former group made peace with the Abbasids and assimilated into (what eventually became) the greater Sunnī community (p. 206). He contends Jārūdī Alids, Idrīs and Yaḥyā b. ‘Abd Allah, forged the subsequent Zaydī community. While fuller biographical narratives would have complemented his section on the prominent Alids who led Zaydism in the 2nd century, he does refer the reader to relevant sources for such details. There were only a few places in which I could offer any comment.

Heresiographies generally portray Zaydism to have been two distinct branches (Batrī and Jārūdī orientations) that combined into one movement

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through the rebellion of Zayd b. 'Alī. Second, Zayd is portrayed as an Alid with Batrī tendencies (i.e. defending the honor of Abū Bakr and 'Umar), which leads Imāmī Kufans to turn away from him. The author's case studies convincingly revise the first portrayal and show that the Zaydī Kufan community was primarily Batrī in origin in the early 2nd century. However, this revision leads the author to become partial to accepting Zayd himself to have been Batrī in orientation and give credence to accounts in which he defends the first two caliphs ("and there is no real reason to doubt it . . .," p. 196). In fact, there are a number of reasons to doubt the exchange, (1) Zayd's upbringing, like many of the revolutionary Alids who preceded and succeeded him, was in Medina, not in Kufa. The author states "any discussion of early Zaydism must begin with the revolt of its apparent founder" (p. 193), but starting with the founder's biography and mentioning his relationship to other Alids and scholars would have been more apt. Zayd was raised in the same household of his brother al-Bāqir, who along with al-Šādiq are actively teaching Shī'īs in the early 2nd century. The Shī'ī Imams, their teachings and Rāfiḍī oriented Alids are apparently emanating from Medina. Haider alludes to this point when he states that Alids who revolted and expressed Jārūdī sentiments were influenced by al-Šādiq (p. 210). What evidence, besides the problematic heresiographies and Kufan sources inimical to the Imāmī community, would suggest Zayd was any different from these Alids? (2) One must consider the polemical and parabolic value of an Alid defending Abū Bakr and 'Umar. First, non-Imāmī Muslims were keen to disassociate Alids from Rāfiḍī beliefs in order to legitimize their own beliefs. This sentiment includes pro-Alid Kufans like Abū Mikhnaf, who was contemporaneous with Zayd (see P. Crone, *God's Rule*, pp. 100, 118). Second, the portrayals of Zayd and Ibrahim b. 'Abdallah expressly respecting Sunnī views and practices are utilized to bolster the credentials of proto-Sunnī traditionists who joined their ranks. The narratives rather clarify the non-Imāmī character of the Batrī Kufans who participated in the rebellions for the proto-Sunnīs of Kufa that later narrated from them and saw some ambiguity in their identity. The accounts of Zayd defending the first two caliphs (or Ibrahim b. 'Abdallah praying in a proto-Sunnī fashion) may have been metaphors that succinctly indicated that the Imāmī community did not consider those Alids to be their Imams and proto-Sunnīs once categorized Kufans by their opinion of the first two caliphs. Early Kufan Imāmīs were chiefly distinguished by their antagonism toward Abū Bakr and 'Umar, until there was a shift to assessing people through the manner of their prayer. It was imperative for later Sunnī

biographers of Kufan traditionists to identify Imāmīs as not to narrate from them or mistake Batrīs for them. Finally, the narrative regarding the two caliphs is utilized as an origin myth for the *rāfiḍā*. While Imāmīs allegedly queried Alid claimants to the Imamate and exchanges with Zayd likely occurred, the tendentious nature of this account cannot be ignored.

Revisions to the table of Abbreviations (xv) are in order: FBF for “FBQ,” FS for “FQ.” p. 14: ‘Ābidīn for “‘Abidīn;” p. 14 n. 43 than for “that.” P. 19: how is it Batrīs “condemned (but fell short of excommunicating)” Talha, Zubayr and ‘Ā’isha? I think Haider is referring to the Batrī decision to recognize a sin (*khaṭa*) on their part but not disbelief (*kufī*). However, excommunication may refer to *barā’*, in any case, clarification of the nuances would have been helpful. 36: He states that “Imāmīs do not consider any collection of traditions as ‘canonical’ in a sense analogous to the six Sunnī works cited above.” There are two problems, first, he never explains the Sunnī canonical culture in viewing the ḥadīth corpus (regarding this, the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* are arguably different from others in epistemologies). Second, this statement overlooks the Akhbārī tradition and others who believed in the complete authenticity of the contents of the four canonical Shī’ī works (see al-Faḍlī, *Introduction to Ḥadīth*, 213-5; Gleave, *Inevitable Doubt*, 31-46). Pp. 74-75: he says the minority Zaydī view is in line with Imāmīs but later (p. 82) he switches the Zaydī opinions.

81: Table 3.2 (as well as other similar tables in the book) provides large columns of numbers representing the death dates of unnamed authorities. However, it is unclear if the numbers correspond to the earliest authority cited in the tradition (in the *matn* or *isnād*), the first Kufan authority in the chain of transmission, or a later Kufan narrator. A more expansive explanation of Table 3.2 with an example from the table would have been helpful. Perhaps a note in the beginning of the book, or the first table in each chapter, could have replaced the repeated instructions to visit the book’s companion database online. The online references are beautifully organized for navigation and the website provides references for each report. Unfortunately, the site does not provide a mechanism for accessing additional information as they correspond to any of the specific tables in the book.

93: The author states that Zaydīs quote Alids from the Middle of 2nd century but he cites ‘Abd Allah b. Musa (d. 247) as an example. 97: why not qunūt al-witr for “witr qunūt”? P. 105 n. 73 Iraqis for “the Iraqs.”

I am confused on why an investigation of the placement of hands in prayer and the wiping/washing of feet in ablution would have been “strictly sectarian” (p. 251), given that non-Shī’ī authorities allegedly upheld these

opinions. Given the methodology that the author has utilized, one cannot safely characterize the phrase “hurry to the best of works” as “distinctly Shīʿī” (p. 209) either. That phrase in the *adhān* is attributed to non-Shīʿī authorities in Sunnī *ḥadīth* collections, similar to the case of “wiping the feet.” Since the Sunnī legal schools eventually did not uphold those practices, perhaps they would not have made good case studies, however, the presence of those reports in Kufa should not be overlooked (al-Bayhaqī and ‘Abd al-Razzāq include a few reports, ibn Abī Shayba has a section on “hurry to the best of works”; the reports of wiping the feet are in the works of ibn Māja and ibn Abī Shayba, with one even widely reported in Bukhārī and Muslim).

P. 109: Imāmīs recommend/uphold (for) “require the *qunūt* in all obligatory prayers.” The author seems to misrepresent the wellknown pre-modern and modern Imāmī opinion on the matter. If two jurists, Ṣadūq and ibn Abī ‘Aqīl actually believed the *qunūt* to be obligatory, their beliefs would still not warrant such a characterization. Although later Shīʿīs mention those two jurists as requiring the *qunūt* in prayer, there is room to problematize such attributions. Second, the author cites sources (p. 109 n. 97) that clearly contradict his claim. First, he cites *Fiqh al-Riḍā*, but it states “if you are in a prayer, in which there is a *qunūt* . . .” (*Fiqh al-Riḍā*, p. 107) implying there are prayers where this is not the case. Elsewhere (*Fiqh al-Riḍā*, p. 110), the work clearly states “carry out the *qunūt* in four prayers: fajr, maghrib, ‘atma (‘ishā), and the Friday prayer” and excludes *Zuḥr* or ‘Aṣr.

He cites al-Ṣadūq in *Man lā yaḍhuruḥu al-Faqīh (Faqīh)* as upholding this opinion, but Ṣadūq describes the practice as a *sunna wājiba*—possibly meaning *sunna mu’akkada*: i.e. it was the Prophet’s continuous practice but it was not *wājib* (see the gloss of al-Ṭūsī in al-Ṣadūq, *Muqni’*, p. 144 n. 3; where the phrase is understood as *awlā*, ‘more appropriate to do it’; or *mu’akkada*: al-Ṣadūq, *Hidāya*, p. 102 n. 2). When one intentionally refuses to do any *sunna mu’akkada* for an extended period it becomes a sin/blameworthy in jurisprudence on the account of the categorical refusal to follow a “*sunna*” of the Prophet. However, this does not make the *qunūt* an obligatory part of the prayer. Notice he says ‘man tarkahu . . . *fi kulli salat*’—“whoever abstains from it . . . in every prayer” which implies never doing it, so the sin here is (1) the incorrect belief that the act is not part of the prayer, or (2) the *prolonged* avoidance of the practice.

Furthermore, the section of *ḥadīth* in *Faqīh*, to which Haider refers, is on the *qunūt*’s permissibility and method in each of these prayers, not its

obligation. Haider also cites al-Murtaḍā and al-Ṭūsī (109 n. 97), both of whom do not argue for the obligatory nature of the *qunūt* in their texts either. Haider does later mention in a footnote (p. 111 n. 113) that the “dominant view among Imāmī jurists” is that it is recommended, but cites two jurists who allegedly argued for its necessity, according to later Shīʿī jurists. He cites Ṣadūq, whose opinion is somewhat ambiguous, and ibn Abī ‘Aqīl, whose opinion is attributed to him only through secondary sources. His phrase of abstaining from *qunūt* (*tark*) could refer to a continuous ‘*tark*,’ similar to my argument regarding Ṣadūq. Either way, his opinion cannot be taken to be necessarily representative of Imāmīs. Ibn Abī ‘Aqīl along with ibn Junayd are two early jurists well-known for holding independent opinions that did not agree with the rest of their sect.

Notwithstanding these small quibbles, this book is indeed “an important, original, and path-breaking book that marks a significant development in the study of the early Islamic world” as the back cover states. It will become a reference for all specialists in early Shīʿism and Zaydīsm specifically, in addition to those working on the early legal tradition.

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