THE SECOND-CENTURY ŠĪᶜITE *ĠULĀT*
WERE THEY REALLY GNOSTIC?

Tamima Bayhom-Daou

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This paper questions the suggestion of our sources that gnostic currents had already appeared among Šīᶜites by the early second/eighth century.* It contends that gnosticism did not surface in Šīᶜism until the third/ninth century and that our information on its existence among second-century Šīᶜites is the result of retrospective ascription to groups and individuals who, on account of their (real or alleged) messianic beliefs, had already been identified by moderate Imāmīs as *ġulāt*. That information would have served to distance Imāmism and its imāms from gnostic teachings by associating those teachings with repudiated figures from the past. The paper examines evidence showing that in his work on *firaq* Hišām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 179/795) was not aware of the existence of gnostic ideas in Šīᶜism. Other examined evidence also shows that references to gnostic *ġuluww* are conspicuous by their absence from sources on Šīᶜism that are datable to before the third/ninth century.

Gnosticism is the term given by modern scholarship to a religious and philosophical movement that emerged in the Near East in the first century A.D. within the Judeo-Christian tradition. The movement also spread to the Iranian world, where it came under the influence of Zoroastrianism, the traditional religion, and where it appeared in the form of Manichaeism. In the early Islamic period sizeable communities with roots in ancient gnosticism were present in Iraq and Iran.[1]

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[1] For a general introduction to the subject, see K. Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism,* translation edited by R. M. Wilson (San Francisco, 1987). The following articles in the *Encyclopedia of Religion,* ed. M. Eliade (New York and London, 1987) are also useful: "Gnosticism", "Manda d-Hiia", "Mandaean Religion", "Manichaeism", "Marcionism". See also the *Ency-*

The basic principle of gnosticism is that the material world is evil, created by a demiurge who is subordinate to the supreme God and creator of the spiritual sphere or sphere of light—the pleroma. The human soul originated in that sphere, but subsequently fell into the hostile world of matter and forgot about its origin. Its redemption, envisaged as a return or an ascent, comes through acquiring esoteric or secret knowledge about its origin and destiny. This higher knowledge is reserved for an elite and is acquired not by transmission, observation, or speculative thought, but by revelation from above. Here, the figure of a saviour often plays a key role: it is he who awakens the soul to such knowledge and enables the gnostic to experience revelation.[2] When awakened, the soul goes through stages of spiritual transformation, produced by the visions that a gnostic experiences, and upon death it begins its ascent to its place of origin. Some gnostics believed in metempsychosis, or transmigration of the soul, where the soul comes to inhabit the body of a lesser being or a better believer, depending on one's deeds.[3]

These conceptions are expressed in a number of myths about the origin of the universe and the creation and destiny of the soul. The myths draw upon material from the traditional religions but serve to convey the gnostic experience. Gnostics often resorted to allegorical interpretations of the scriptures and other religious writings in order to extract from them what they perceived as the deeper esoteric truths. [4]

The emphasis on the redemptive power of esoteric knowledge meant that the religious law usually acquired secondary significance or, in some cases, became totally irrelevant. Some schools of gnostics rejected all

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clopaedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. J. Hastings (Edinburgh and New York, 1908–1926), s.vv. "Gnosticism", "Mandaeans", "Manichaeism", "Mazdak", "Marcionism". For a good bibliography see the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,* ed. and rev. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (Oxford, 1974), s.v. "Gnosticism".

[2] This saviour was often Jesus, or rather the high-ranking celestial being who used him as his instrument in order to reveal the hidden knowledge; "Gnosticism", *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics;* "Manda d-Hiia", *Encyclopedia of Religion;* G. Filoramo, *A History of Gnosticism* (Cambridge, Mass., and Oxford, 1990), chap. 7. Other saviours included Seth, Adam, Enoch, and the Light-Bearer (D. Merkur, *Gnosis: An Esoteric Tradition of Mystical Visions and Unions* [Albany, N.Y., 1993]), 125. Some Gnostics adopted the idea of a saving power of pleromatic origin which assumes various forms throughout the history of salvation (Filoramo, *History,* 113).

[3] Filoramo, *History,* 129–30, 136–37.

[4] *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics,* s.vv. "Gnosticism", "Mandaeans".

aspects of conventional worship, including prayer and fasting, as ir-relevant to the attainment of salvation, and it was largely due to this attitude that in the Christian heresiographical tradition gnostics were accused of libertinism.[5]

THE GNOSTIC *ĠULĀT*

Most of the Šīᶜite *ġulāt* (extremists or, literally, exaggerators) of our Muslim sources have concepts and beliefs ascribed to them that have close parallels in the gnosticism of late antiquity.[6]

The resurfacing of gnosticism in Šīᶜism may be explained in terms of the fact that Šīᶜism is based on devotion to a holy family, the Family of the Prophet, and this Family provided figures to whom could be ascribed one or more redemptive roles.[7] Whilst some Šīᶜites looked to their

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[5] Filoramo, *History,* chap. 11.

[6] For the identification of the phenomenon of Šīᶜī *ġuluww* as gnosticism, see H. Halm, *Die islamische Gnosis: Die extreme Schia und die Alawiten* (Zurich and Munich, 1982); id., *Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Ismāᶜīliyya* (Wiesbaden, 1978); id., *Shiism* (Edinburgh, 1991), 156–61. Halm's view that third-century Ismāᶜīlism, a gnostically tinged tradition, did not belong to *ġuluww* because it did not deify ᶜAlī and the imāms and did not have much in common with the wild ideas attributed to the second-century Kūfan *ġulāt* (*Kosmologie,* 142–168) is, however, based on a narrower definition of *ġuluww* than the one attested in our sources. It also assumes the authenticity of the tradition on second-century *ġuluww,* which this paper seeks to call into question.

The question of how much of the beliefs of the *ġulāt,* or those ascribed to them, were rooted in ancient gnosticism will not concern us in this paper. Some of those beliefs and characteristics, which are not clearly or typically gnostic, may reflect the developments in the period before the rise of Islam and after gnosticism moved to Iraq and Iran. Others may reflect the input of Islam itself. Therefore, although my use of the term gnostic when dealing with the *ġulāt* might appear to be rather loose, especially from the point of view of specialists on ancient gnosticism, it is nevertheless justified in view of the fact that a core of gnostic ideas is identifiable in *ġuluww.*

[7] In the present state of our knowledge, the sources of Šīᶜite gnosticism are not possible to identify specifically. The gnosticism that the Muslims encoun-tered would have been represented by the various schools and sects that are known to have existed in Iraq and Iran in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic peri-ods and by other schools that presumably existed but about which little or noth-ing is known (Halm, *Shiism,* 156–57; id., *Kosmologie,* 123–27). On the Man-daeans in early Islamic Iraq and Persia, see the article "Mandaeans" in *En-*

imām/Mahdī as a political redeemer, and Imāmīs regarded him as one of a line of guardians of the law, the gnostic *ġulāt* regarded their imām mainly as a revealer of a higher knowledge. [8]

Evidence suggests that it was Imāmī scholars who first took an interest in and began to write about those gnostic currents.[9] Their aim was to refute them and to distinguish between what they saw as moderate and essentially legalistic Imāmism and the extreme and antinomianist doctrines of the gnostics. According to a common view in modern scholarship, Imāmism emerged as a separate Šīʿite sect largely by defining itself in contradistinction to *ġuluww,* although opinion remains divided as to when this process actually began, what exactly *ġuluww* signified, and how, despite its attacks on *ġuluww,* Imāmism came to be influenced by its doctrines.[10]

Ġulāt of the gnostic type are reported to have existed in the second and third centuries among the followers of ʿAlid and ʿAbbāsid imāms

cyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, 388–90. On Marcionites and Manichaeans in Ḫurāsān, see W. Madelung, "Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq über die Bardesaniten, Marcioniten und Kantäer", in *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Vorderen Orients: Festschrift für Bertold Spuler zum siebzigsten Geburtstag,* ed. H. R. Roemer and A. Noth (Leiden, 1981). On Mazdakites and Manichaeans, see id., "Khurramiyya" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed. (Leiden, 1954–2002) (hereafter *EI²*), id., "Mazdakism and the Khurramiyya" (chap. 1) in *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran* (London, 1988). For a suggestion that some of the nonrabbinical Jewish communities in early Islamic Persia may have been gnostic, see S. Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew* (Princeton, 1995), 41–45.

[8] *EI²,* svv. "al-Mahdī", "Ghulāt"; M. G. S. Hodgson, "How Did the Early Šīʿa Become Sectarian?" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 75 (1955).

[9] Madelung, "Bemerkungen zur imamitischen Firaq-Literatur", *Der Islam* 43 (1967); W. al-Qāḍī, "The Development of the Term *Ghulāt* in Muslim Literature with Special Reference to the Kaysāniyya", *Akten des VII. Kongresses fur Arabistik und Islamwissenschaft,* ed. A. Dietrich (Göttingen, 1976).

[10] Hodgson, "Early Šīʿa"; al-Qāḍī, "The Term *Ghulāt";* Madelung, "Hishām b. al-Ḥakam"; id., *Der Imām al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm* (Berlin, 1965), 46; H. Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shīʿite Islam: Abū Jaʿfar ibn Qiba al-Rāzī and His Contribution to Imāmite Shīʿite Thought* (Princeton, 1993), chap. 2; M. A. Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shiʿism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam,* trans. from French D. Streight (Albany, N.Y., 1994); T. Bayhom-Daou, "Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 179/795) and His Doctrine of the Imām's Knowledge", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 48 (2003): 71–108.

and of ᶜAbdallāh b. Muᶜāwiya, a Ṭālibid, that is, a descendant of ᶜAlī's brother Ǧaᶜfar b. Abī Ṭālib. The doctrines ascribed to them include the existence of a transcendent God, metempsychosis or the transmigration of souls (*tanāsuḫ*), and the denial of the Resurrection. Belief in *tanāsuḫ,* cycles (*dawr/adwār*) of spiritual transformation, and the primordial world of shadows (*aẓilla*) is sometimes mentioned as the hallmark of *ǧuluww.*[11] The *ǧulāt* are also said to have resorted to allegorical interpretation of the Qurʾān in order to support these doctrines. [12]

Regarding the nature of their imām, the *ǧulāt* are said to have believed that he was an incarnation of the divine spirit or light, a prophet, an apostle, or an angelic being. Some said he was a demiurge or a lesser god (*ilāh al-arḍ*) who was responsible for the creation of the world.[13] One of the most recurring themes in descriptions of the *ǧulāt* concerns their (real or supposed) antinomianism and libertinism (*ibāḥa*). Thus, they are said to have preached that acknowledging the imām was the sole means of salvation, or that it renders all religious duties redundant and all prohibitions licit.[14]

Many of the leaders of the *ǧulāt* are said to have claimed to be prophets, apostles, imāms, or angelic beings and to have been venerated by their followers as such. These claims too are said to have been justified on the basis that the divine light or the spirit of a particular prophet or imām had come to rest in them, that is to say, in terms of beliefs concerning the transmission of divine light and the transmigration of souls.[15]

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[11] For example, al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq al-Šīᶜa,* ed. H. Ritter (Istanbul, 1931), 31, 32.

[12] Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 32–42 and passim; Saᶜd b. ᶜAbdallāh al-Qummī, *Kitāb al-maqālāt waʾl-firaq,* ed. M. J. Maškour (Tehran, 1963), 44–65 and passim; pseudo-Nāšiʾ, *Kitāb uṣūl al-niḥal* in J. van Ess, *Frühe muᶜtazilitische Häresiographie: Zwei Werke des Nāšiʾ al-Akbar (gest. 295 H.)* (Beirut, 1971), text, pp. 32–35, 37–42.

[13] Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 40; Saᶜd, *Maqālāt,* 53, and 60–61, pars. 118–20, where the belief in question is identified as *tafwīḍ* and the reference is to the idea that the supreme God has "delegated" to an individual being the task of creation of the world. The merging of the figures of demiurge and saviour is not unknown in classical gnosticism, and in some systems the saviour is the son of the demiurge (A. F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism* [Leiden, 1977], 251–52).

[14] For example, Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 25, 29, 30, 31, 38, 39, 42, and passim; cf. Hodgson, "Ghulāt".

[15] For example, Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 25, 30, 34, 38–41.

MESSIANISM AND THE *ĠULĀT*

In addition to the conception of the imām as a source of esoteric knowledge and ideas about the soul and other beliefs that are clearly rooted in gnosticism, most of the *ġulāt* are credited with messianic doctrines of the more traditional kind. Thus, they are said to have looked to their imām as the Mahdī/Qāʾim, a political saviour who would inaugurate a Golden Era and fill the earth with justice and equity. This Mahdī is a figure whose death was usually denied, and it was expected that he would return (*raǧ ͨa*) from a state of earthly or heavenly occultation (*ġayba*) in order to fulfil this role. Upon his return he would raise the dead and would triumph over the enemies of the Šī ͨa. Some believed that those who had died fighting for his cause would return to life "before the Day of Resurrection", presumably at the time of his reappearance.[16]

At first sight, the existing descriptions of the *ġulāt* seem to suggest that already by the early second century two redemptive roles had become fused in the figure of the Šī ͨite Mahdī: his role as a source of esoteric knowldge, and the other, older, idea of him as an apocalyptic saviour whose task was mainly political.[17] In theory, there is nothing implausible about such a fusion taking place so early in the development of Šī ͨism.[18] The two roles go well together. The apocalyptic saviour who was expected to inaugurate the era of justice could easily be transformed at the hands of his gnosticizing followers into one whose task was also to reveal the divine secrets and to help the souls of the elect attain salvation.

This fusion, however, is not always apparent in the literature on the second-century *ġulāt.* Sometimes within the same work, and this is

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[16] For example, ibid., 19–20 (Sabaʾiyya), 25–29 (Kaysāniyya), 31–32 (Ḥārithiyya), 41–42 (Abū Muslimiyya), 54–55 (Muġīriyya), 57–60 (Nāwūsiyya, Ismāʿīliyya, Mubārakiyya, Ḫaṭṭābiyya, and so on). See also *EI²,* s.vv. "al-Mahdī" (Madelung), "Radj ͨa" (Kohlberg).

[17] The sources indicate that ͨAlī himself was looked upon as an apocalyptic saviour by some of his followers. But this is unlikely to be historical. The belief that the saviour would be one of the *ahl al-bayt* or a descendant of ͨAlī is first attested for ͨAlī's son Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, who was also the first ͨAlid to be given the epithet *al-mahdī* (*EI²,* s.vv. "Kaysāniyya", "al-Mahdī").

[18] In later Šī ͨism the fusion of apocalyptic messianism and gnosticism is attested among the early Ismāʿīlīs of the second half of the third/ninth century (Madelung, "Ismāʿīliyya" in *EI²;* Halm, "The Cosmology of the Pre-Fāṭimid Ismāʿīliyya", in *Mediaeval Ismaʿili History and Thought,* ed. F. Daftary [Cambridge, 1996]).

mostly in the early *firaq* literature, we have two separate portrayals of a *ġuluww* sect. In one the emphasis would be on their esotericism with no mention of their mahdist beliefs, and in the other, on their mahdist doctrine with one or two references to their esoteric *ġuluww*.[19] This might indicate that different groups within a sect looked upon the same imām in different ways, or that the gnostic doctrine was adopted at a later stage in the life of a sect. The sources, on the other hand, do not seem to be at all aware of the existence of such doctrinal alignments within the same sect, or of a distinction between earlier beliefs and later developments.

The aim of this article is to draw attention to evidence that could suggest that gnostic doctrines did not surface in Šīᶜism until the third/ninth century, and that our information on their existence among second-century Šīᶜites has no historical basis. That information would have been the result of retrospective ascription to groups and individuals who in reality had nothing to do with gnosticism but were messianists (or had come to be identified as messianists) and were known to have been active supporters of members of the *ahl al-bayt.* An attempt to account for this tendency to regard second-century Šīᶜite groups as *ġulāt* of the gnostic type will be made at the end.

THE SOURCES AND THE QUESTION OF THEIR AUTHENTICITY

Almost all of our information on the phenomenon of *ġuluww* in Šīᶜism comes from external and hostile sources, both Imāmī and non-Šīᶜite sources. There is, therefore, the possibility of distortion and misrepresentation due to bias and/or lack of understanding. In the heresiographical tradition, where we have some of the most elaborate descriptions of the doctrines of the *ġulāt,* there is in addition a tendency to schematize and to trace the origins of sects and doctrines to much earlier periods.[20]

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[19] The most noticeable and significant differences are in the portrayals of the Ḫaṭṭābiyya and the Ḥārithiyya; see below.

[20] The need for caution in using the *firaq* literature has been voiced by a number of scholars: I. Goldziher in his review of Badr's edition of Baġdādī's *Kitāb al-farq bayn al-firaq,* in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 65 (1911): 349–63, at 350–51; I. Friedlander in "The Heterodoxies of the Shiites in the Presentation of Ibn Hazm", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 28 (1907): 1–80, at 4–9; and, more recently, W. M. Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburgh, 1973), 1–6. For a more serious objection to the uncritical use of this material for reconstructing the history of the early Islamic sects, and a systematic attempt at source criticism, see K. Lewinstein, "The Azāriqa in Islamic heresiography", *Bulletin of the*

There are also indications that the beliefs of the *ġulāt* tended to be exaggerated with time. This was observed by Hodgson, who believed that it was a direct consequence of the process by which some of their ideas became acceptable in mainstream Imāmism.[21]

Modern scholars have in general been of the opinion that although the available sources on the second-century *ġulāt* pose a number of problems, they are fundamentally historical.[22] A main reason for this seems to be that reports on the activities and doctrines of the *ġulāt* are scattered in various genres of literature and in both Šīʿite and non-Šīʿite sources, which gives the impression that they are independent and reasonably reliable testimonies.[23] Another reason is that the two extant works that originate from within *ġuluww* circles appear to corroborate the evidence of the external sources. These two works, the *Umm al-kitāb* and the *Kitāb al-aẓilla,* purport to transmit the esoteric knowledge revealed, respectively, by the imām al-Bāqir (d. between 114/732 and 122/740) to his disciple Ğābir b. Yazīd al-Ǧuʿfī (d. 128/745 or 132/749) and by the imām al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765) to al-Mufaḍḍal b. ʿUmar al-Ǧuʿfī (d. before 179/795).[24] They have been studied by Halm who has shown that many of the ideas expounded in them have close parallels in the doctrines ascribed by the heresiographers to the Kūfan *ġulāt* in the time of al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq. According to Halm, they were probably composed in the third century, but their ideas (or at least layers of them) go back to early second-century Kūfa—a conclusion based on the assessment that the heresiographers and the *ġulāt* texts corroborate each other.[25] To date no one has questioned the overall picture presented by the sources, which is that gnostic doctrines were already being preached in Šīʿism in the early second/eighth century. The evidence examined here suggests that this

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School of Oriental and African Studies 54 (1991): 251–68. See also my "Hishām b. al-Ḥakam".

[21] Hodgson, "Early Shīʿa", 4–6, 12–13.

[22] Halm, *Gnosis,* 27–32, 194, 242 and passim. In most other studies this opinion is usually implicit, rather than stated.

[23] The methodological weaknesses of this approach will become clear later.

[24] On Ğābir and Mufaḍḍal, see Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Kaššī, *Iḫtiyār maʿrifat al-riǧāl,* ed. H. Mostafavi (Mašhad, 1960), 191–98, 321–29; Aḥmad b. ʿAlī (Abū ʾl-ʿAbbās) al-Naǧāšī, *Kitāb al-riǧāl,* ed. Ǧ. D. al-Ǧurawī al-Āmulī (Tehran, n.d.), 99–100, 326.

[25] Halm, *Kosmologie,* 142–68; id., "Das 'Buch der Schatten': Die Mufaḍḍal-Tradition der Ġulāt und die Ursprünge des Nuṣairiertums", I and II, *Der Islam* 55 (1978) and 58 (1981); id., *Shiism,* 156–57.

picture is in need of reappraisal and that gnostic doctrines did not surface in Šīᶜism until the third/ninth century.

This evidence comes mainly from the Imāmī heresiographical tradition. The first work on Muslim sects, most of which was devoted to the description of the divisions in Šīᶜism, was composed by the Imāmī scholar Hišām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 179/795) in the late second/eighth century. The original (*Kitāb iḫtilāf al-nās fī ʾl-imāma*) is no longer extant but it has been preserved in *Firaq al-Šīᶜa* of Nawbaḫtī (d. ca. 310/923) and constitutes the first part of that work—the part that ends with the divisions in Šīᶜism following the death of Ǧaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq (or thereabouts).[26] The work also appears to have been used by the earlier Muᶜtazilī heresiographer pseudo-Nāšiʾ (Ǧaᶜfar b. Ḥarb, d. 236/851),[27] though to a much lesser extent than Nawbaḫtī, who seems to have retained most of it.

My analysis of key sections of the part derived by Nawbaḫtī from Hišām has shown that the latter had expressed ideas about the imāmate and the sources of its knowledge that are distinctly at variance with the ideas found in classical Imāmism. It has also shown that Nawbaḫtī made a number of changes in order to update the descriptions he found in that work and to make them more in line with current Imāmī beliefs and conceptions.[28] The analysis carried out here will reveal that the earliest layer of the heresiographical tradition on second-century *ġulāt* leaders and the sects they allegedly founded, which goes back to Hišām, is not aware of the existence of gnostic ideas among them and perceived them mainly as messianists/apocalyptists.[29] This provides a strong indication that in Hišām's time gnostic doctrines had not yet entered Šīᶜism, for had they already existed Hišām would have known of them and there is no reason to suppose that he would have chosen to remain silent about them. In

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[26] Madelung, "Bemerkungen". On the question of Hišām as a common source for Nawbaḫtī and the other Imāmī *firaq* author Saᶜd al-Qummī (d. 301/914) and the relation between their two works, see below.

[27] van Ess, *Häresiographie,* 26, 39, 54; Madelung, "Frühe muᶜtazilitsche Häresiographie: Das *Kitāb al-Uṣūl* des Ǧaᶜfar b. Ḥarb?", *Der Islam* 57 (1980): 225.

[28] Bayhom-Daou, "Hishām b. al-Ḥakam"; cf. Madelung, "Bemerkungen", 40–41, 44–45, where he suggests that Nawbaḫtī preserves Hišām's text almost intact.

[29] I shall not address here the question of the historical value of Hišām's descriptions, or whether groups such as the Muġīriyya and the Ḥārithiyya were in reality messianists and held the beliefs that Hišām attributed to them.

fact, given his own conception of the imāmate,[30] he would have had every reason to refute any doctrine centred on the idea of the imām as a spiritual saviour.

NAWBAḪTĪ'S SOURCES RECONSIDERED

According to Madelung's analysis of Nawbaḫtī's work, the part which is based on Hišām consists of three main consecutive sections. They will be referred to here as A, G, and B.[31]

Sections A and B are organized chronologically, according to the order of succession of the imāms. There the Imāmiyya are portrayed anachronistically as having come into existence as a separate sect (and distinguished from the Batriyya and the Ǧārūdiyya—the future Zaydīs) soon after the death of the Prophet.[32] The other sects or divisions in Šīʿism appear mainly as deviations from Imāmism, each arising upon the death of an imām.

Section G describes second-century *ġulāt* groups and examines the doctrines of two of them (the Ḫaṭṭābiyya and the Ḥārithiyya) in detail. It comes between A and B and interrupts the mainly chronological organization of the work. With one exception, the Manṣūriyya, all the named groups described in the *ġulāt* section also appear in the chronological sections.[33] The Bayāniyya, who appear in section A, are not dealt with in section G,[34] while the Muġīriyya and the Kaysāniyya receive only brief mention, when their position on the doctrine of *raǧʿa* is reported.[35] The

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[30] In his work on the imāmate Hišām portrays true Šīʿism (i.e., his own Imāmism) as legalist, quietist, anti-messianist, and doctrinally moderate. He insists that the imām's role is simply that of infallible transmitter of the revealed law and that he does not receive any additional knowledge from divine sources. He refutes the juridical doctrine of *ilhām,* which he associates with the Ǧārūdiyya, and the messianic doctrine of the *muḥaddaṯ,* which he associates with the Kaysāniyya (Bayhom-Daou, "Hishām b. al-Ḥakam").

[31] Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 2–32 (section A), 32–41 (section G), 41–60 (section B).

[32] Ibid., 16–19.

[33] Ibid., 34–35.

[34] The Bayāniyya is described in two places in section A: ibid., 25 (where they are identical with the Karbiyya who believed in the mahdiship of Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya) and 30 (where they are believers in the mahdiship of Abū Hāšim, son of Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya).

[35] Ibid., 37; the *raǧʿa* (return from death) in question is here presumed to be a general one and not specifically that of the Mahdī from his *ġayba.*

author concludes his treatment with the statement: "These are the *ġulāt* who declared allegiance to Šīᶜism".

Madelung's view concerning Hišām's authorship of a separate section on the *ġulāt* was based solely on the observation that all the *ġulāt* sects that are mentioned there were active in the second century. Later *ġulāt* groups, such as the Bašīriyya, which supposedly emerged after the death of Mūsā al-Kāẓim (d. 183/799) and are classified accordingly in Nawbaḫtī,[36] but which would have been unknown to Hišām, do not appear in section G.

This argument turns out to be a weak one, and there are a number of reasons for thinking that Hišām did not compose, or include in his work, a separate section on the *ġulāt,* and that Nawbaḫtī derived most of his information in section G from a source (or sources) other (and later) than Hišām. If we compare, for example, Nawbaḫtī's description of the Ḫaṭṭābiyya and its sub-sects in section G with the parallel passages in Ašᶜarī (d. 324/935)[37] and Saᶜd al-Qummī (d. 301/914),[38] both of whom also have separate sections on the *ġulāt,* we find the following: that although not identical with that of Ašᶜarī, Nawbaḫtī's description has several features in common with it;[39] and Saᶜd al-Qummī's parallel sections have supplementary statements that also correspond to Ašᶜarī.[40] It is on the basis of similar parallels with Ašᶜarī that Madelung has argued that the work of the Muᶜtazilite Abū ᶜĪsā al-Warrāq (d. after 250/864 A.H.) was a common source for Ašᶜarī, Nawbaḫtī, and Saᶜd.[41]

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[36] Ibid., 70–71. But cf. pseudo-Nāšiᵓ who identifies them as followers of Ǧaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq (*Uṣūl al-niḥal,* 41).

[37] Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 37–41; Abū ᵓl-Ḥasan ᶜAlī b. Ismāᶜīl al-Ašᶜarī, *Kitāb maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn wa-iḫtilāf al-muṣallīn,* ed. H. Ritter (Wiesbaden, 1963), 10–13.

[38] Saᶜd al-Qummī, *Maqālāt,* 50–54.

[39] The terminology, some of the Qurᵓānic citations, and the names of three of the subsects, are common to both.

[40] Saᶜd al-Qummī, *Maqālāt,* 51, lines 1–2, 4; cf. Ašᶜarī, *Maqālāt,* 10, lines 11–12; 11, line 7; Saᶜd, 54, lines 15–17; cf. Ašᶜarī, 12, lines 3–5. Cf. also the description of the Manṣūriyya in Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 34–35; Saᶜd, *Maqālāt,* 46–48; Ašᶜarī, *Maqālāt,* 9–10, 24–25.

[41] According to Madelung's analysis, the work of Warrāq was a main source for Ašᶜarī, especially in his section on the *ġulāt* and the divisions among the Rāfiḍa, and the likely source of Nawbaḫtī's passages on the sects after al-Ṣādiq and al-Kāẓim and of Saᶜd's supplementary statements and short passages on the

Secondly, in the section of his work which follows a chronological order, as also in the section on the *ġulāt,* Ašʿarī does not include any of the later *ġulāt* groups such as the Bašīriyya and the Namīriyya;[42] the latter are mentioned only briefly at the end of his passage on the much earlier group of al-Šarīʿī.[43] This would suggest that his source, Warrāq, though writing after 250 A.H., did not include the later *ġulāt* in his account, and it would be consistent with the argument made here that Warrāq, rather than Hišām, was (one of) Nawbaḫtī's source(s) for section G. In other words, the question of authorship of Nawbaḫtī's section G (whether Hišām or Warrāq) cannot be determined on the basis of the dates of these authors and the dates of the sects described, since the third-century Warrāq, whom Madelung recognized as the source of Ašʿarī's description of the *ġulāt,* also describes only second-century sects. On the other hand, the proposition that Nawbaḫtī derived (much of) his material for section G from Warrāq is supported by the similarities with Ašʿarī's parallel section; and as will be seen later, it is also supported by evidence indicating that some of the variations were due to Nawbaḫtī making a conscious decision to diverge from the account of Warrāq.[44] Thirdly, and more importantly, a comparison of G with A and

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early *ġulāt.* Also according to Madelung, Saʿd has copied extensively from Nawbaḫtī and added his own observations and material from other sources, mainly Hišām, Yūnus b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān (d. 208/823) and Warrāq. It may be noted, however, that the close similarity between Nawbaḫtī and Saʿd in the passages that originate from Hišām is probably due to Saʿd copying directly from Nawbaḫtī. The minor additions that occur in Saʿd's parallel sections are not necessarily derived by him directly from Hišām; these may be accounted for by Saʿd possessing a more complete copy of Nawbaḫtī than the one on which our present edition is based. Cf. Madelung, "Bemerkungen", esp. 45, 47–52, and the references therein; see also Bayhom Daou, "The Imāmī Shīʿī Conception of the Knowledge of the Imām and the Sources of Religious Doctrine in the Formative Period: from Hishām b. al-Ḥakam to Kulīnī" (Ph.D. diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1996), 65–66, 116, n. 17. On evidence suggesting that some of the variations between Nawbaḫtī and Ašʿarī in their parallel sections on the *ġulāt* are due to a conscious decision by Nawbaḫtī to diverge from the account of Warrāq, see below, the section entitled "The Ḫaṭṭābiyya in Section G", and esp. n. 74.

[42] Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt,* 23–31, 5–16; cf. Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 70–71, 78.

[43] Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt,* 14–15. On al-Šaʿīrī (al-Šarīʿī), see Saʿd, *Maqālāt,* 56, and Kaššī, *Riǧāl,* 398ff.

[44] See notes 41 above and 74 below. The possibility that the *firaq* authors de-

B reveals that in terms of structure, content, ascertainable aim, and conception of *ġuluww,* section G could not have come from the pen of the same author as A and B.

Section G
Section G opens with the statement that "*ġuluww* started with them (the Ḥārithiyya)"[45] and proceeds to give a general description of *ġuluww.* This is then followed by detailed descriptions of the Manṣūriyya, the Ḥārithiyya, and the Ḫaṭṭābiyya and its subsects.[46]

Ġuluww, as it is treated and defined in this section, belongs mainly to the gnostic kind described above.[47] It is defined as belief in *aẓilla* (the world of "shadows"), *tanāsuḫ* (metempsychosis), and *dawr* (cyclical transmigration). Its advocates are said to have denied the Resurrection and the Final Judgement and rejected the law. They believed that the

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rived some of their material on gnostic *ġuluww* from the *radd ʿalā al-ġulāt* works that proliferated in the third century is not considered by Madelung; for a list of those works, see al-Qāḍī, "The Term *Ghulāt*", 316–15. The title of a work by Ibrāhīm b. Abī Ḥafṣ al-Kātib, referred to by Nağāšī (*Riğāl,* 16) as *al-Radd ʿalā al-ġāliya wa-Abī al-Ḫaṭṭāb* (*wa-aṣḥābihi,* according to Ibn Šahrāšūb, *Maʿālim al-ʿulamāʾ,* ed. ʿA. Iqbāl [Tehran, 1353/1934], 3), fits part of Nawbaḫtī's section on the *ġulāt.* Ibn Abī Ḥafṣ was a companion of the eleventh imām, al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (d. 260/873), so his work is likely to have been known to Nawbaḫtī and Saʿd, and it may well have been known to Warrāq. Nawbaḫtī's own interest in the phenomenon of (gnostic) *ġuluww* is evidenced by the titles of two of his works: *al-Radd ʿalā aṣḥāb al-tanāsuḫ* and *al-Radd ʿalā al-ġulāt* (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist,* ed. R. Tağaddud [Tehran, 1971], 225; Nağāšī, *Riğāl,* 50). Saʿd also is reported to have written refutations of the *ġulāt: al-Ḍiyāʾ fī ʾl-radd ʿalā al-muḥammadiyya waʾl-ğaʿfariyya* and *al-Radd ʿalā al-ġulāt* (Nağāšī, *Riğāl,* 134).

[45] It might appear that by "them" the author means the Kaysāniyya and its subsects the Ḥārithiyya and the ʿAbbāsiyya. But the ʿAbbāsiyya is not covered in this section and there is only a brief mention of the Kaysāniyya's views on *rağʿa.* Hence, the desire to show that (gnostic) *ġuluww* originated with the Ḥārithiyya in particular is likely to have influenced Nawbaḫtī's organization of his material (Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 32, lines 6–7).

[46] Ibid., 32–41.

[47] The exception again is in the description of the Manṣūriyya, where the beliefs ascribed to them cannot be identified as specifically gnostic (ibid., 34–35). On the Manṣūriyya's belief that prophethood and apostleship passed from ʿAlī to four imāms down to al-Bāqir and were then transferred to Abū Manṣūr and six of his descendants, see below notes 107, 118, 119.

salvation and damnation of the soul (or its transmigration in human or animal form) is dependent upon their acts and degree of obedience to the imāms.[48]

The section comes right after the passages (in A) which describe the splits among the followers of ᶜAbdallāh b. Muᶜāwiya, the Ḥārithiyya, after his death (130/747).[49] The reason for placing it there is to support the contention, made a little earlier towards the end of section A, that (gnostic) *ġuluww* began among them and that it was they who introduced it among some of the disciples of al-Ṣādiq. The passage asserts that *ġuluww* was not preached or introduced by Ǧābir b. Yazīd and Ǧābir b. ᶜAbdallāh al-Anṣārī, who are known in the tradition as trusted disciples of the Imāmī imāms;[50] rather, Ibn al-Ḥārith falsely ascribed (*asnada*) it to them. The polemical purpose is also clear from the opening statement in this section.

Sections A and B and Evidence of "Updating"
By contrast, in the chronological sections *ġuluww* is conceived mainly as messianism or the doctrine of the Mahdī, in which the denial of his death and the belief in his *ġayba* and *raǧᶜa* appear as main elements. Although the term does not occur frequently as a designation of messianism or messianic sects, this is how *ġuluww* is defined (or rather, would have been defined by the original author) near the beginning of the work, where its origin is ascribed to ᶜAbdallāh b. Sabaʔ and where there is no suggestion of it being conceived as esotericism.[51] Moreover, the

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[48] For more details, see above, the section "Gnostic *Ġulāt*".

[49] Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 31–32. The Ḥārithiyya are also identified as one-time followers of Abū Hāšim, and some of them are said to have become followers of the ᶜAbbāsid imām Muḥammad b. ᶜAlī (ibid., 29–30).

[50] Ibid., 31. On these disciples, see Kaššī, *Riǧāl,* 40–43, 191–98. On the significance of these and similar polemics in the formation of the tradition on gnostic *ġuluww* in the second century, see below, the last section entitled "Retrospective Ascription."

[51] Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 19–20. The passage mentions both *ġuluww* and *waqf* as having been introduced by Ibn Sabaʔ. For the argument that the reference to *waqf* came from Nawbaḫtī and not from Hišām, and that according to Hišām the doctrine of *ġayba/raǧᶜa* was *ġuluww,* see Bayhom-Daou, "Hišām b. al-Ḥakam", n. 82. Note also that Ibn Sabaʔ is said by Hišām to have adopted "this belief" about ᶜAlī, which he had held concerning the role of "Joshua after Moses" when he was still a Jew, after the death of the Prophet, when he converted to Islam and took ᶜAlī as his *walī.* In other words, Ibn Sabaʔ is thought to have looked to ᶜAlī as a messianic figure during his lifetime, and not only after

statement with which the author of section A sums up his description of the sects of the Kaysāniyya, including the Ḥārithiyya, shows that what concerned him was to refute their messianism and not any gnosticism of theirs. It reads: ".. and so all the (sects of the) Kaysāniyya have no imām but await the (return of the) dead, except the ᶜAbbāsiyya who affirm the imāmate in the descendants of al-ᶜAbbās and believe that it continues in their line until today". [52]

It is true that, alongside the statements that describe the messianic beliefs of second-century groups, there are in A and B some references to esoteric *ġuluww*. But these tend to be brief and far less prominent than the elaborate treatments in section G, and they often appear to be poorly integrated within the text. Thus, there are only a couple of references to the doctrines of *aẓilla, tanāsuḫ, dawr,* and *ḥulūl;*[53] whereas in section G these appear as the hallmarks of *ġuluww*. One of those references occurs in connection with the already mentioned passage on the Ḥārithiyya, where it serves to show that (gnostic) *ġuluww* originated with them and to establish some correspondence between their description in A and that in G. In A and B there is only one reference to allegorical interpreting of the Qurᵓān, whereas it is pervasive in descriptions of the *ġulāt* in section G.[54] The idea that recognition of an imām renders all legal prohibitions licit occurs in connection with some of the messianic sects in A and B.[55] And some groups are said to have claimed that their (ᶜAlid, ᶜAbbāsid, or Ṭālibid) imām is a god (or God), or an incarnation of the divine spirit or light,[56] and that their non-ᶜAlid founders are imāms, prophets or messengers.[57]

That the statements that ascribe gnostic *ġuluww* to the messianic and other sects in A and B are secondary additions is indicated by various inconsistencies, discontinuity in the narrartion, or awkwardness in passage or sentence structure.[58] A close examination of the relevant

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his death. This implies that from Hišām's point of view messianic belief *per se,* and not just the doctrine of *ġayba/raǧᶜa* or a specific form of it, is *ġuluww*. For more evidence of Hišām's negative attitude to Šīᶜite messianism, see below.

[52] Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 32.

[53] Ibid., 31, lines 7–8, 55, line 6.

[54] Ibid., 30, lines 11–12.

[55] Ibid., 25, 29, 30, 31, 59.

[56] Ibid., 25, 29, 46.

[57] Ibid., 25, 30, 46, 55, 59, 60.

[58] Thus, for example, we are told that after the death of Abū Hāshim (son of

passages reveals that portrayals of sects as messianists have been trans-
formed into portrayals of them as gnostics by means of superimposing
onto earlier texts statements ascribing to those sects one or more of the
following features of gnostic *ġuluww:* deification of an imām, the idea of
a sect's founder as a prophet or visionary, antinomianism, and the belief
in metempsychosis.[59]

Not all the editorial alterations in A and B can be said to have had the
aim of making the description of a messianic sect correspond to other
descriptions of it as gnostic. Some alterations appear to have been ne-
cessitated by the change in the Imāmī attitude to messianism. This is
because whereas for Hišām any form of messianic expectation or
mahdism would have amounted to *ġuluww,* since it involved a belief
in the existence of "prophetic" knowledge in the period after Mu-
ḥammad,[60] the adoption by Imāmism of the doctrine of the twelfth imām
as the Mahdī meant that, for Nawbaḫtī, similar messianic doctrines
could no longer be refuted categorically or designated as *ġuluww.* In

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya) "one group maintained that he (Abū Hāshim) is
the Qāʾim and Mahdī. . . . They are the Bayāniyya. . . . They maintained that
Abū Hāshim had informed Bayān about God, so Bayān is a prophet (*inna abā
hāshim nabbā bayānan ʿani ʾllāh, fa-bayān nabī*). After the death of Abū
Hāshim Bayān claimed prophethood" (Nawbakhtī, *Firaq*, 30). "Ḥamza b.
ʿUmāra al-Barbarī claimed that he is a prophet, that Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya
is God, and that Ḥamza is the imām" (ibid, 25).

[59] For each of these features, there are variations on the theme and various
ways of describing them. Thus, a sect may be said to have regarded its imām as
God, as an incarnation of Divine Light, or as omniscient (ibid., 29, 30, 46, 47);
a leader may be said to have claimed that he is a prophet, that he knows the
ġayb, that he saw God during an ascension to heaven, or that he receives *waḥy;*
he may be said to have claimed that he is the imām or that the imāmate was
transferred to him by his Hāšimite imām (ibid., 30, 34, 46, 55); a sect may be
said to have preached that whoever acknowledges the imām can do what he
likes, or that belief in the imām renders all prohibitions licit, or its leader may be
said to have made his followers turn away from all religious duties (ibid., 25,
29, 30, 31).

[60] It may be said that this anti-messianism influenced Hišām's particular
formulation of the theory of the imāmate. His strict adherence to the idea of
Muḥammad as the last prophet is reflected not only in his critical description
of the messianic sects and, most clearly, of the doctrine of the *muḥaddaṯ*
prophet/imām, but also in his conception of the Imāmī imām's knowledge as
strictly "non-prophetic" and based completely on transmission (Bayhom-Daou,
"Hishām b. al-Ḥakam").

these cases, too, there is evidence of recourse to the usual technique of transforming messianists into gnostics, effected by introducing into Hišām's text one or more of the features of gnostic *ġuluww* mentioned earlier; or, that the problem has been resolved by introducing the idea that the sect exaggerated the status of its non-Hāšimite leader and making it appear as though its *ġuluww* lay in that rather than in its messianic belief concerning its imām.[61]

To illustrate the last point let us consider the passage that describes the doctrines of al-Muġīra. The characterization of his movement as messianic is clear. It is depicted as having split off from Imāmism after the death of Muḥammad al-Bāqir and adopted the belief in the imminent rise of the Mahdī, the Ḥasanid Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh (known as al-Nafs al-Zakiyya; d. 145/762). But we also find statements that describe al-Muġīra and his followers as heretics of another sort—they claim that after al-Bāqir the imāmate passed to al-Muġīra, that the latter will be the imām until the rise of the Mahdī, that he is a messenger-prophet and receives revelations, that he raises the dead, and that he believes in *tanāsuḫ*. The structure and distribution of these statements provide clues that they are secondary: the text moves between the claims of al-Muġīra about al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, the claims he made about himself, and the claims of his followers about him and about al-Nafs al-Zakiyya in a haphazard and confused manner; and the idea that al-Muġīra believed in *tanāsuḫ* occurs at the very end of the passage and bears no clear relationship to any other doctrine mentioned earlier. Moreover, comparison with pseudo-Nāšiʾ, who also relied on Hišām,[62] suggests that the statements in Nawbaḫtī that make al-Muġīra claim to be imām and exaggerate his own abilities are distorted versions of Hišām's text. In pseudo-Nāšiʾ, al-Muġīra exaggerated the status of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, not his own. He claimed that the imāmate passed from al-Bāqir to al-Nafs al-Zakiyya and believed that it was the latter, as the awaited Mahdī, who will raise the dead and receive knowledge of the *ġayb*.[63] Nawbaḫtī's revisions can be explained on the basis that Hišām's text presented him with a problem, since it portrayed al-Muġīra's doctrine of the Mahdī as heretical even though his Mahdī, like the Imāmī one, was a living imām

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[61] The best examples of editorial revisions necessitated by change in the Imāmī attitude to messianism are in the texts on the Kaysāniyya (see previous note for the reference), the Muġīriyya, and the Ḫaṭṭābiyya (on both of which see below).

[62] See above, n. 27.

[63] *Uṣūl al-niḥal,* 41, in van Ess, *Häresiographie.*

(as opposed to one who had died, whether or not his death had been de-nied). In other words, Nawbaḫtī could not be seen to be condemning al-Muġīra's messianic doctrine, since the Imāmīs themselves had come to accept a similar form of messianic belief concerning their "living" twelfth imām. So he introduced those changes that make al-Muġīra appear to be an exaggerator not on account of his messianic belief but on account of claims about his own status and abilities and belief in *tanāsuḫ*.[64]

Of course, not every reference to a sect's leader as a prophet or visionary or to an imām as a divine king or heavenly messiah can be shown to be secondary, although it may well be. Still, sometimes the context or other clues indicate that the sect in question would have been characterized unambiguously as messianic by the original author—its imām as the messiah, its leader as his herald, and the latter's visions or revelations as prognostic and apocalyptic, not gnostic. Take, for example, the passage that describes the ᶜAbbāsid sect of the Rāwandiyya and refers to the events known in the historical sources as *yawm al-rāwandiyya*.[65] In that passage, which probably goes back to Hišām,[66] the caliph al-Manṣūr is said to have been deified by his Rāwandī followers and Abū Muslim to have been regarded by them as a prophet who knew the *ġayb*.[67] They believed that the caliph had knowledge of people's thoughts and absolute power over the fate of mankind, including his own prophets whom he might decide to kill or to spare—which looks like an

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[64] In addition to the messianic beliefs concerning al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, pseudo-Nāšiʾ ascribes to al-Muġīra doctrines which are clearly esoteric. But these cannot have been derived from Hišām. Had they been, Nawbaḫtī would have included them. The likelihood that Nawbaḫtī did not have at his disposal written sources depicting al-Muġīra and his followers as gnosticizers is also enhanced by the fact that all he has to say on the Muġīriyya as *ġulāt* in section G is that they refused to take a position on the question of *raǧᶜa*. And judging by the next passage on the Kaysāniyya, the Muġīriyya's doctrine of *raǧᶜa* is here conceived as return from death and is distinguished from the idea of *raǧᶜa* as *tanāsuḫ* that Nawbaḫtī attributes to the gnostic Ḥārithiyya a few lines earlier (Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 37).

[65] Kohlberg, "Rāwandiyya", *EI*².

[66] Bayhom Daou, "The Imāmī Shīᶜī Conception," 95–103. According to my analysis of the material on the ᶜAbbāsid Šīᶜa in the early *firaq* sources, the other passages in which the ᶜAbbāsid *ġulāt* are classified into three sects are unlikely to have come from Hišām. Cf. Madelung, "Bemerkungen", 41, 43.

[67] Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 46–47.

allusion to a belief (held by, or ascribed to, the Rāwandiyya) that the caliph was able to know that Abū Muslim was plotting against him and that this is why he decided to have him killed. The account shows no awareness of the existence of a gnostic doctrine among the adherents of that group. Moreover, some of the reports in the historical sources envisage the actions of the Rāwandiyya as having been messianically inspired; members of the sect are said to have jumped off cliffs and off the roof of al-Manṣūr's palace, believing that they were angels who could fly.[68] In the light of these reports, Hišām's passage may be interpreted as depicting a messianic cult centred on al-Manṣūr, with Abū Muslim as his herald and his killing at the orders of the caliph as an apocalyptic sign. [69]

TWO DESCRIPTIONS OF THE ḤAṬṬĀBIYYA

In what follows an attempt will be made to support the conclusion that Hišām was not aware of the existence of gnostic forms of *ġuluww* among second-century Šīʿites. To this end, we will take a close look at two descriptions of the doctrines of Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb and the Ḫaṭṭābiyya in Nawbaḫtī. The Ḫaṭṭābiyya has been chosen for detailed analysis because we possess on it ample material for comparison, both in Nawbaḫtī and in

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[68] Muḥammad b. Ǧarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīḫ al-rusul waʾl-mulūk,* ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden 1879–1901), 3:418–19; other references in J. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra: Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam,* 6 vols. (Berlin and New York, 1991–95), 3:10–11. Van Ess is inclined to the view that "jumping off cliffs" was not part of the events of *yawm al-rāwandiyya* (11, n. 2), although some of the dates given in the historical sources would suggest that it was (or that some of the reporters of those events thought so). On "jumping off cliffs" as an expression of the belief in the rise of the messiah and the imminent end of time, see I. Friedlander, "Jewish-Arabic Studies", *Jewish Quarterly Review* 2 (1911–12): 481–516, at 503–7; J. Starr, "Le mouvement messianique au début du VIIIe siècle", *Revue des études juives* 102 (1937): 81–92, at 83; S. Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew* (Princeton, 1995), 48, 54, 58.

[69] Like Hišām, the historical sources imply that the Rāwandiyya were massacred by al-Manṣūr because of the heretical beliefs they held about him. There, however, the heretical beliefs ascribed to them include gnostic ones such as *ḥulūl* and *tanāsuḫ*. See, for example, Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīḫ,* 3:129–30; al-Balāḏurī, *Ansāb al-ašrāf,* vol. 3, ed. ʿA. ʿA. al-Dūrī (Beirut and Wiesbaden, 1978), 235. For a suggestion as to how and when the Rāwandiyya came to be associated with gnostic *ġuluww,* see below, last section, on "Retrospective Ascription".

other sources, and a number of good clues indicating where and why Hišām's text has been edited and revised. Its description in the chrono-logical section B will be translated and analysed in detail and compared with the description in section G, which is only summarized here.[70] This will be followed by a discussion of other proposed reasons as to why section G is unlikely to have come from Hišām and, more generally, rea-sons for thinking that gnostic *ġuluww* did not arise among Šīᶜites until after his time. Finally, an attempt will be made to explain how and why gnostic *ġuluww* came to be ascribed to second-century Šīᶜites.

I. The Ḫaṭṭābiyya in Section G

Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb is known in the literature for his uprising and execution in Kūfa during the reign of the ᶜAbbāsid caliph al-Manṣūr (136/753–158/774) and the governorship of ᶜĪsā b. Mūsā (132/749–147/764). He is also associated with the preaching of (gnostic) *ġuluww*. He is said to have been disowned by Ǧaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq, and his followers are said to have split into subsects. Nawbaḫtī tells us that the split occurred when it reached them that al-Ṣādiq had disowned them and their leader. But he is not very clear as to why or when al-Ṣādiq disowned them—whether it was at the time of the uprising and because of it, or previously and on account of their preaching of gnostic *ġuluww*. The following is a sum-mary of the main points in the description of the sect in this section, and some comments that are relevant to the comparison with the passages in section B:

1. The followers of Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb split up into four sects when they heard that Ǧaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq had cursed him and disavowed him and his followers.

2. Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb used to claim that Ǧaᶜfar made him his custodian and the *waṣy* after him and taught him the Greatest Name of God. He then progressively claimed to be a prophet, an apostle, one of the angels, the messenger of God to mankind and the Proof unto them.

3. All the sects of the Ḫaṭṭābiyya are said (or assumed) to have deified Ǧaᶜfar, believed in *tanāsuḫ* and *ḥulūl,* preached antinomianism and lib-ertinism, and practised allegorical interpretation of the Qurᵓān. There is no mention of the idea, found in section B, that they venerated Ismāᶜīl or Muḥammad b. Ismāᶜīl. And no mahdist doctrines of any sort are ascribed to them.

4. They are portrayed as having differed in matters of detail and in

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[70] Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 37–41 (G), 58–60 (B).

their particular formulations of the doctrine of the soul. They also differed concerning the spiritual rankings of their leaders Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb, Bazīġ, al-Sariyy, and Muᶜammar or Maᶜmar: the Muᶜammariyya regarded Muᶜammar as the demiurge (*ilāh al-arḍ*), and the other leaders were venerated by their followers as prophets, messengers, and/or angels.[71]

In these passages there is no mention of the uprising of Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb in Kūfa, which is the main subject of interest in the passage on the Ḫaṭṭābiyya in section B. And, as we shall see, in section B there is no clear reference to al-Ṣādiq's disavowal of Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb or of the doctrines preached by him at the time of the uprising. Hence, the presumption in our passage (G) might seem to be that al-Ṣādiq disavowed Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and his companions on account of their esoteric doctrines and the exaggerated beliefs they held about him, and not on account of that uprising or of the messianic beliefs associated with it. This is also the common view in the secondary literature, where, in addition, it is believed that the rupture with al-Ṣādiq took place *before* Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb's uprising during the caliphate of al-Manṣūr.[72]

There are, however, a number of reasons for thinking, firstly, that, according to an earlier (i.e., Hišām's) version of the passage in section B, al-Ṣādiq was said to have dissociated himself (*barāᵓa*) from Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and that this was on account of the latter's staging of his revolt in the name of the imām; and, secondly, that Nawbaḫtī took the idea of al-Ṣādiq's declaration of *barāᵓa* from the account in section B and introduced it into the account in section G as part of his attempt to link Hišām's characterization of the sect with that of Warrāq. The secondary nature of this link will become clear after our reconstruction of Hišām's text from the relevant passages in section B. Here one could mention two points: (1) the irrelevance of the idea that the Ḫaṭṭābiyya split up as a result of repudiation of their (gnostic) doctrines to the rest of the passage in section G, where there are no significant differences in the doctrines supposedly held by the subsects or between their doctrines and those said

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[71] Ibid., 37–41.

[72] For example, Madelung, "Khaṭṭābiyya", *EI²;* F. Daftary, *The Ismāᶜīlīs: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge, 1990), 88–89; W. Ivanow, *Ibn al-Qaddāḥ,* 2nd rev. ed. (Bombay, 1957), 98. But cf. Halm, *Gnosis,* 199, where he expresses the view that it is not certain whether al-Ṣādiq dissociated himself from Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb on account of his heretical teachings or on account of his uprising.

to have been preached by Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb;[73] and (2) evidence suggesting that in the account of Warrāq, a probable common source on the Ḫaṭṭābiyya for Ašʿarī and Nawbaḫtī, those subsects would have been envisaged as already in existence in the Umayyad period, that is to say, before not after the uprising of Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb. That element of the report (which indicated that the subsects existed in the Umayyad period) would have had to be suppressed by Nawbaḫtī when he decided to link the two reports by making the subsects come into existence after the uprising and as a result of its repudiation by Ǧaʿfar al-Ṣādiq. [74]

II. The Ḫaṭṭābiyya in Section B
The description of the Ḫaṭṭābiyya in this section occurs in the part that deals with six sects that allegedly arose after the death of Ǧaʿfar al-Ṣādiq. The second of these is said to have been the Ismāʿīliyya who denied Ismāʿīl's death during his father's lifetime and continued to expect his return as the Qāʾim. Two passages later, and after the description of the third sect, the Mubārakiyya, the author goes on to identify the Is-māʿīliyya as the Ḫaṭṭābiyya and to report on their activities during the lifetime of al-Ṣādiq.[75] The following are partial translations of the three relevant passages, which are here divided into numbered paragraphs for

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[73] They all venerate Ǧaʿfar as a god and Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb as a messenger-prophet or an angelic being, exaggerate the status of their other leaders, and espouse esoteric doctrines.

[74] See above and n. 41. In the case of two particular variations between the account of Nawbaḫtī and the parallel account of Ašʿarī it is possible to identify a reason why Nawbaḫtī would have wanted to diverge from the account of Warrāq. Unlike Ašʿarī, Nawbaḫtī does not include the Mufaḍḍaliyya and the ʿUmayriyya in his list of Ḫaṭṭābī subsects. This is because, in the case of the first, al-Mufaḍḍal would have been regarded favourably in some Imāmī circles (cf. Kaššī, *Riǧāl,* 321–29, at 327–28 and passim) and, in the case of the ʿUmayriyya, Warrāq's account would have presented Nawbaḫtī with a "chrono-logical" problem. According to Warrāq's account (Ašʿarī, *Maqālāt,* 12–13), the ʿUmayriyya would have already existed in the Umayyad period since ʿUmayr is said to have been killed for his *ġuluww* regarding al-Ṣādiq by the governor Yazīd b. ʿUmar b. Hubayra (gov. 129–31). Thus, when Nawbaḫtī tried to link the two accounts of Hišām and Warrāq and to make the subsects emerge after the uprising of Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb and his repudiation by Ǧaʿfar al-Ṣādiq in the ʿAbbāsid period, he could not include the ʿUmayriyya as one of those subsects. Cf. Madelung, "Khaṭṭābiyya", *EI².*

[75] Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 57–60.

ease of reference.

Bi: The Pure Ismāʿīliyya

1. One group claimed that the imām after Ǧaʿfar was his son Ismāʿīl and denied Ismāʿīl's death in his father's lifetime.

2. They said that this (Ismāʿīl's disappearance) had been a case of deliberately misleading the people on the part of his father because he was afraid [for his safety], so he hid him from them (*ġayyabahu ʿanhum*).

3. They claimed that Ismāʿīl will not die until he rules the earth and assumes the task of governing people (*yaqūm bi-amr al-nās*), and that he is the Qāʾim.

4. . . . this is because his father had designated him as his successor for the imāmate and entrusted them (his followers) with this designation and informed them that he (Ismāʿīl) was his (their?) *ṣāḥib*. And the imām speaks only the truth, so when his (Ismāʿīl's) death was proclaimed, we knew that (Ǧaʿfar) had told the truth and that (Ismāʿīl) was the Qāʾim and had not died. . . .

5. This sect is the Pure Ismāʿīliyya.

Bii: The Mubārakiyya.

A third sect claimed that the imām after Ǧaʿfar is Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl. and said that the appointment (the matter) had pertained to Ismāʿīl during his father's lifetime, so when he died before his father Ǧaʿfar, the latter appointed Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl. . . . The advocates of this teaching are called the Mubārakiyya.

Biii: The Ismāʿīliyya/Ḫaṭṭābiyya.

1. As for the Ismāʿīliyya, they are the Ḫaṭṭābiyya, the companions of Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb Muḥammad b. Abī Zaynab.

2. One group of them entered the group of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl (i.e., the Mubārakiyya) and [like them] acknowledged the death of Ismāʿīl in his father's lifetime.

3. They (the Ḫaṭṭābiyya) were those who revolted during the lifetime of Ǧaʿfar and fought ʿĪsā b. Mūsā, the governor of Kūfa.

4. It reached him about them that they had manifested libertinism and called (the people) to (recognize) the prophethood of (*daʿaw ilā nubuwwat*) Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb, and that they were gathered in the mosque in Kūfa. . . .

5. So he dispatched (a force) to deal with him (them?), but they fought him and resisted him. They were seventy men.

6. He killed them all except one who escaped. (The man) was wounded but was counted among the dead and so was saved. He used to claim that he had died and come back to life.

7. They fought ʿĪsā hard with stones, sticks, and knives. . . . Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb said to them: "Fight them, for your sticks work on them like spears and swords and their spears and swords will not harm you".

8. When about thirty of them had been killed they said to him (Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb): "Do you not see what these people are inflicting upon us and that our

sticks do not affect them?" . . . He said to them: "It is not my fault that God has changed his will (*badāʾ*) concerning you".

9. Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb and a group of them were taken prisoner . . . and burnt, . . . and their heads sent to al-Manṣūr.

10. Some of his companions said that he was not killed nor were any of his companions killed, rather the *qawm* (non-Šīʿite opponents) were confused. [They also said that] they (the rebels) had fought at the orders of Ǧaʿfar; that (when) they left the mosque, no one saw them and none of them was wounded; and that the *qawm* started to kill one another thinking that they were killing the companions of Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb. . . .

11. They were those who taught that Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb was a messenger-prophet sent by Ǧaʿfar and that later, after the occurrence of this matter, he (Ǧaʿfar) made him into one of the angels. . . .

12. Then, after the killing of Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb, those of the people of Kūfa and others who advocated his doctrine went over to (*ḫaraǧū ilā*) Muḥammad b. Is-māʿīl and advocated his imāmate and upheld it.

When Madelung examined these texts he expressed the opinion that it is not certain that the description of the splits after the death of al-Ṣādiq, including that of the Ismāʿīlī sects, is based on Hišām, and that here too Nawbaḫtī may have been following Warrāq who was a common source for him and Ašʿarī.[76] Madelung's view is based on the observation that there is confusion in the names of the Ismāʿīlī sects,[77] which, as he says, could not have come from someone who had played such an important role in the events after al-Ṣādiq's death.[78] However, as Madelung him-self observed, Nawbaḫtī not only inserted a recent report on the move-ment of the Qarāmiṭa, but also attempted to show the dependence of this movement on the Ḫaṭṭābiyya. Hence, any confusion in names is likely to

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[76] Madelung, "Bemerkungen", 46–47, where he points to the similarities be-tween Nawbaḫtī and Ašʿarī in the number and names of the sects after al-Ṣādiq. However, pseudo-Nāšiʾ who often relied on Hišām is also close to Nawbaḫtī in his listing of 6 sects after the death of al-Ṣādiq and, like Nawbaḫtī, he identifies the Ismāʿīliyya with the Ḫaṭṭābiyya (*Uṣūl al-niḥal,* 46–47).

[77] At one point the Ismāʿīliyya are identical with the Ḫaṭṭābiyya and distin-guished from the Mubārakiyya (Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 58–59). In the passage de-scribing the Ḫaṭṭābiyya before the death of Ǧaʿfar, they are said to have gone over to Muḥammad b. Ismāʿil, although they are introduced as identical with the Ismāʿiliyya and advocates of the imāmate of Ismāʿil after the death of Ǧaʿfar (ibid., 58–60). In the next passage the Ḫaṭṭābiyya are identical with the Mubārakiyya (ibid., 61 above).

[78] "Bemerkungen", 46–47.

have been caused by Nawbaḫtī's tampering with the text of his source. As we shall see in the analysis below, when the text is restored to its probable original contents, the discrepancies are resolved and the nature of the link that Hišām had proposed as having existed between the Ḫaṭṭābiyya and the Ismāʿīliyya becomes clear. There is also the fact that this description of the Ḫaṭṭābiyya conforms in method and style to the rest of sections A and B. The narrative components which supplement statements describing the beliefs and loyalties of the sectaries are a re-curring feature in those sections.[79] It is also typical of the method of the author of A and B to introduce information about the founder of a sect and about claims that he made during the lifetime of a particular imām only when he comes to describe the beliefs and allegiances of the foun-der's followers after the death of that imām.[80] For all these reasons, and others that we shall come across later, I take it that Hišām's authorship of the three passages is not in doubt.

In passage Biii the messianic character of the movement led by Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb is unmistakable. Its members fight with stones and wooden weapons and believe that in their hands they are as effective as swords and spears (7). They believe in the *raǧʿa,* or return to life, of Šīʿite martyrs (6). The belief in *badāʾ* (8) is closely associated with Šīʿite messianism.[81] The idea that the participants experienced docetic transfor-mation and a miraculous escape is also meant to convey an apocalyptic setting (10).

The other beliefs ascribed to Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb and his followers serve to show them as *ǧulāt* of the esoteric/gnostic type. These are: *ibāḥa* (4), the divinity of Ǧaʿfar (implied in the idea that he elevated Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb to angelic status) and the prophethoood of Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb, and beliefs con-cerning the ascent or transfer of the soul (11). As we shall see below, the relevant statements are not part of the original text but the product of conscious updating by Nawbaḫtī.

Comparison of Biii with the other two passages (Bi, Bii) reveals a number of discrepancies and clues indicating where Biii has undergone

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[79] Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 19–20, 21–22, 25, 42–45.

[80] Ibid., 19–20, 29, 53–55.

[81] The concept is said to have been adduced by messianic pretenders and groups when the predictions they had made were not fulfilled (I. Goldziher and A. S. Tritton, "Badāʾ", *EI²;* M. Ayoub, "Divine Preordination and Human Hope: A Study of the Concept of *Badāʾ* in Imāmī Shīʿī Tradition", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106 [1986]: 623–32).

revisions and alterations. Firstly, at the beginning of Biii we are told that "one group" of the Ḥaṭṭābiyya/Ismāʿīliyya left the belief in Ismāʿīl and joined (*daḫala fī*) the group of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl (Biii, 2), whereas at the end we find that after the killing of Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb "all the Kūfans and others who advocated his doctrine" went over to (*ḫaraǧū ilā*) Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl (Biii, 12). Secondly, and contrary to what we expect to find, there is nothing in the rest of the passage to suggest that Ismāʿīl occupied a place in the doctrines of Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb or of the Ḥaṭṭābiyya after Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb's death: the aim of the uprising is said to have been "to call to the prophethood of Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb" (Biii, 4); and when we are told that after his death his followers "went over to Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl" the implication is that they abandoned the belief in Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb not in Ismāʿīl. These two statements make nonsense of the idea that the Ḥaṭṭābiyya are identical with the Ismāʿīliyya (Biii, 1). For according to the description of the Ismāʿīliyya in the first passage (Bi), they believed that Ismāʿīl (not Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl) was the next imām after Ǧaʿfar, and after his "disappearance" they expected that he would return as the Mahdī and did not recognize any other imām.

III. Reconstruction of Hišām's Account

If we make four small amendments we end up with a much more coherent (though not necessarily a historical) description of the Ḥaṭṭābiyya and of how they came to be identified as Ismāʿīliyya, and the intentions of the original author become clearer and make more sense:

   1. Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb and his followers "called the people to recognize Ǧaʿfar", not "to recognize the prophethood of Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb".

   2. Ǧaʿfar reacted by dissociating himself (*barāʾa*) from them. The idea is absent from our present text but, as we shall see, it is likely to have been removed in the course of redaction.

   3. After the execution of Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb, the Kūfan and other Ḥaṭṭābīs "went over to Ismāʿīl", not "to Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl".

   4. The two statements regarding the preaching of antinomianism by Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb and his companions, the Ḥaṭṭābiyya's deification of Ǧaʿfar, and their belief that the latter elevated Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb to the rank of angels are not part of the original text.

   According to this reconstruction, Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb himself would have had nothing to do with Ismāʿīl,[82] and his call to the people to recognize

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   [82] In fact most of the sources do not seem to be aware of a relationship between Abū ʾl-Ḫaṭṭāb and Ismāʿīl and tend to associate the latter with al-

Ǧaᶜfar would have probably signified that he regarded him as the ᶜAlid Mahdī.[83] Ǧaᶜfar would have denied that he was the Mahdī and dissociated himself from Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb. After the death of Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb those who had supported his call to Ǧaᶜfar would have "gone over to Ismāᶜīl", that is to say, they would have abandoned their belief in Ǧaᶜfar as the Mahdi and turned their messianic expectations to Ismāᶜīl. The reason for this switch would have been that when they heard that Ǧaᶜfar had denied he was the Mahdī and dissociated himself from Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and his uprising, they interpreted this as being based on his belief that Ismāᶜīl, and not he himself, was going to be the Mahdī.

This reconstruction of the text of Biii fits in with the events and chronology indicated in the passage on the Ismāᶜīliyya, where it is claimed that Ǧaᶜfar pointed to Ismāᶜīl as *ṣāḥibuhu(m)*, i.e., as the Mahdī,[84] when Ismāᶜīl was still alive (Bi, 4). And when Ismāᶜīl died (during the lifetime of Ǧaᶜfar and presumably after the Kūfan uprising and the killing of Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb), they denied his death and expected his reappearance (Bi, 3). They (or most of them) continued to hold such beliefs, that is, to be Pure Ismāᶜīlīs, after the death of Ǧaᶜfar (Bi, 1, 5), while some of them joined the Mubārakiyya, the *firqa* of Muḥammad b. Ismāᶜīl (Bii; Biii, 2). There is no other way in which the identification of the Ismāᶜīliyya with the Ḫaṭṭābiyya would make sense, or in which the whole passage under consideration could be read as a coherent account.

Other pieces of evidence would seem to support this reconstruction. The idea that at the time of the uprising Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and his party were calling the people to recognize Ǧaᶜfar and that Ǧaᶜfar reacted by disavowing them is found in the parallel passage of *Kitāb al-Zīna* of Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī.[85] Rāzī is often a summary of Nawbaḫtī, but he must have

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Mufaḍḍal b. ᶜUmar (Daftary, *Ismāᶜīlīs,* 98–99, and the references therein).

[83] The idea that at the time of his uprising Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb looked upon Ǧaᶜfar as the Mahdī is reflected in a report in Balāḏurī's *Ansāb,* according to which Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb used to say of Ǧaᶜfar that weapons do not harm him (3:255–56; cf. above, Biii, 7, and next note).

[84] I suggest emending to *ṣāḥibuhum* and that the term denoted a messianic status on the basis of comparison with the previous passage. In that passage the Nāwūsiyya are said to have denied Ǧaᶜfar's death and claimed that he was the Mahdī and that he himself had told them: "for I am *ṣāḥibukum, ṣāḥib al-sayf"* (Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 57).

[85] Abū Ḥātim Aḥmad b. Ḥamdān al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Zīna,* vol. 3, in ᶜA. S. al-Sāmarrāᵓī, *al-Ġuluww waᵓl-firaq al-ġāliya fī ᵓl-ḥaḍāra al-islāmiyya* (Baghdad,

had access to early traditions which preserved the link between the uprising (and the ideology behind it) and "the disavowal". The link is also indirectly reflected in an additional passage in Saᶜd al-Qummī's parallel description of the Ḫaṭṭābiyya.[86] And although the idea of disavowal by Ǧaᶜfar is not in our text Biii, it is nevertheless reflected in the claim (or reaction) of some members of the Ḫaṭṭābiyya that Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and his party "had fought at the orders of Ǧaᶜfar" (Biii, 10).

That the identification of the Ḫaṭṭābiyya as Ismāᶜīliyya had already been made by Hišām (and was not invented by Nawbaḫtī) would seem to be confirmed by the fact that the same identification is found in pseudo-Nāšiᵓ.[87] As for the idea of a link between the Ismāᶜīliyya and the Mubārakiyya, or that "some of the Ismāᶜīliyya later joined the Mubārakiyya", presumably after the death of Ǧaᶜfar (Biii, 2), it is likely that this too was part of Hišām's text. According to Biii, 2, the lapsed Ḫaṭṭābīs/ Ismāᶜīlīs abandoned their messianic doctrine concerning Ismāᶜīl and adopted the "imāmī" doctrine of the Mubārakiyya. This is compatible with the characterization of the Mubārakiyya in Bii as an "imāmī" and non-messianic sect and with that of the Ismāᶜīliyya in Bi as a messianic sect. Moreover, it is possible to identify a motive for Hišām's association of the Mubārakiyya with the Ismāᶜīliyya/Ḫaṭṭābiyya. According to Imāmī reports, Muḥammad b. Ismāᶜīl, the imām of the Mubārakiyya, contested his brother Mūsā's claims and even betrayed him to Hārūn al-Rašīd.[88] If these reports have any basis in fact, this would have provided Hišām—an advocate of Mūsā's imāmate—with a motive to discredit Muḥammad b. Ismāᶜīl and his followers by giving them a Ḫaṭṭābī heritage and

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1972), 247–312, at 289.

[86] Saᶜd, *Maqālat,* 54–55. The Ḫaṭṭābiyya are said to have interpreted a Qurᵓānic statement (18:80) as a reference to Ǧaᶜfar's cursing and disavowal of Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and his companions. They identified the "ship" as Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb, "the poor men who toiled upon the sea" as his companions, and "the king who is behind them" (i.e., the one who, according to the Qurᵓān, "was seizing every ship by brutal force"), as ᶜĪsā b. Mūsā, the ᶜAbbāsid governor who suppressed the uprising and had Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb killed. They claimed that although Ǧaᶜfar cursed them openly, in reality he meant their opponents.

[87] *Uṣūl al-niḥal,* 47.

[88] Muḥammad b. Yaᶜqūb al-Kulīnī, *al-Kāfī,* ed. ᶜA. A. Ġaffārī, 4th ed., 8 vols. (Beirut, 1980), 1:485–86; Kaššī, *Riǧāl,* 263–65. Note that in Kaššī this report is placed in his biography of Hišām, although Hišām himself does not figure in this particular report.

associating them with a discredited heresiarch.

IV. The Purpose of Nawbaḫtī's Editorial Revisions in Biii

The evidence from the analysis of Nawbaḫtī's passages on the Ḫaṭ-ṭābiyya in sections B and G points to an account of a messianic sect by Hišām linked with difficulty to a very different account of the same sect as gnostic by Warrāq. The divergent accounts and the internal contradictions and inconsistencies point to Nawbaḫtī as the editor responsible for introducing changes and linking the two accounts; they also provide us with clues to his purpose in doing so.

As we have seen, the changes in Biii would have resulted in suppressing two ideas: that Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb had called the people to recognize Ǧaᶜfar, presumably as the Mahdī, and that after Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb's death and Ǧaᶜfar's disavowal of the claims he had made on his behalf the Ḫaṭṭābiyya transferred their messianic expectations to Ismāᶜīl. The suppression of these ideas would have been achieved by making the Ḫaṭṭābiyya venerate Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb as a prophet (instead of Ǧaᶜfar as the Mahdī; cf Biii, 4) and Muḥammad b. Ismāᶜīl as the next imām (instead of Ismāᶜīl as the Mahdī; cf. Biii, 12). This suggests that the problem for Nawbaḫtī would have been that his source had appeared to condemn Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and the Ḫaṭṭābiyya for having attached their messianic hopes on living imāms (first Ǧaᶜfar, later Ismāᶜīl). Unlike Hišām, who would have been critical of all forms of messianism, Nawbaḫtī, who was writing in the early post-*ġayba* period, could not be seen to be critical of that particular kind of messianic belief.

As for the statements that portray Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and his followers as gnostics, and that clearly stand out as intrusive in an account occupied with the sect's messianic beliefs, Nawbaḫtī would have introduced them here in order to establish some correspondence between this account (in section B) and the description of the sect in section G. Consider the statement in Biii, 11, that the Ḫaṭṭābiyya were "those who taught that Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb had been a messenger-prophet, sent by Ǧaᶜfar, and that later, after the occurrence of this matter (viz., after his execution), he (Ǧaᶜfar) made him into one of the angels". It is clearly a later addition and reflects an attempt by Nawbaḫtī to link the sect's messianic belief in the *raǧᶜa* of Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and his companions (Biii, 6, 10) to the gnostic doctrine of *ḥulūl/tanāsuḫ* and speculations on the spiritual ranks of their leaders,[89] ascribed to the subsects of the Ḫaṭṭābiyya in section G.[90]

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[89] Nawbaḫtī was familiar with the idea that the gnostic *ġulāt* denied the bod-

The artificial nature of this link is indicated by the fact that in passage B it is still clear that *raǧᶜa* is conceived as return from the dead and in the same body, and not as *tanāsuḫ* or *ḥulūl:* in Biii, 6, *raǧᶜa* is return from "real" death, and the concept of "apparent or docetic" death (such as that of Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and his companions in Biii, 10) always occurs in connection with *raǧᶜa,* not *tanāsuḫ.* The Ḫaṭṭābiyya's deification of al-Ṣādiq, implied in the claim that he dispatched Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb as a *rasūl* and later elevated him to angelic status, is also clearly out of place in Biii and in all probability was suggested to Nawbaḫtī by section G, where it appears as a basic component of the sect's gnostic *ġuluww.*

Finally, the removal from Biii of the idea that Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and his companions were repudiated by Ǧaᶜfar, and its use in the opening statement of the passage on the Ḫaṭṭābiyya in section G, would have helped to create the impression that the repudiation of Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and the Ḫaṭṭābiyya was mainly on account of their preaching of gnosticism. I am not suggesting here that Nawbaḫtī would have had reason to eliminate the idea that Ǧaᶜfar repudiated Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb *at the time of the uprising.* On the contrary, this idea may have been simply obscured by his attempt to make their "repudiation by Ǧaᶜfar" appear to be on account of their teaching of an esoteric doctrine and the cause of the divisions described in G; by moving the "repudiation" statement from B to G his aim would have been to link two completely different descriptions of the sect, which he derived from different sources, and to provide an explanation for the classification of the Ḫaṭṭābiyya in G into a number of sects. The link he sought to establish would have been that the uprising of Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and his companions was motivated by the aim of preaching a (gnostic) *ġuluww* doctrine centered on Ǧaᶜfar and Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb (B), that Ǧaᶜfar reacted by repudiating them (which is implicit in B and clearly stated in G), and that this resulted in divisions and the formation of subsects (G).[91]

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ily resurrection and interpreted the doctrine of *raǧᶜa* as *tanāsuḫ.* It is found in two passages in section G, though not specifically in connection with the Ḫaṭṭābiyya (*Firaq,* 33, line 3; 37, line 6). Hence, he is likely to have had this idea in mind when he introduced the passage in question (Biii, 11) and tried to link the two descriptions in B and G.

[90] Ibid., 38, 39, 41.

[91] I would not rule out completely the possibility that the process of redaction was achieved in two stages, the first stage by an Imāmī redactor earlier than Nawbaḫtī and involving incorporation of the separate (or some of the separate)

To sum up the results of the analysis. Shorn of Nawbaḫtī's additions and alterations, the passage indicates that in Hišām's view the deviance of Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and the Ḫaṭṭābiyya lay mainly in their messianism. This messianism was conceived as having entailed a conviction that ḫurūǧ and shedding blood on behalf of the Mahdī was licit, a belief in badāᵓ, and a belief in the docetic death and return/raǧᶜa of those martyred in the Šīᶜite cause and (later) of the Mahdī Ismāᶜīl himself. The analysis also shows that Hišām identified the messianist Ismāᶜīliyya as Ḫaṭṭābiyya, in the sense of one-time followers of Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and his doctrine of the mahdiship of Ǧaᶜfar, who adopted the belief in the mahdiship of Ismāᶜīl *after* the killing of Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and Ǧaᶜfar's disavowal of the latter. According to Hišām's account, Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb's own messianic doctrine and uprising had nothing to do with Ismāᶜīl. He also identified the "imāmī" Mubārakiyya as consisting partly of former members of the Ismāᶜīliyya. More significantly, the analysis shows that Hišām's account would not have included any references to esoteric doctrines in the circle of Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and his followers, either before or after the latter's death.

OTHER ARGUMENTS AGAINST HIŠĀM
AS THE SOURCE OF SECTION G

From the foregoing it is clear that comparison of this reconstructed description of the Ḫaṭṭābiyya in section B with the description of the sect in section G reveals the existence of pronounced differences between the two and strong evidence of editorial revision in B. Similar conclusions could be reached by analysing the other passages on second-century groups, as we have seen from our brief examination of the passages on the Muġīriyya, the Ḥārithiyya and the Rāwandiyya. The nature of the divergences in the characterizations of each of those sects is such that it

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descriptions of gnostics and the additional statements on gnostic ġuluww in the chronological sections, and the second stage by Nawbaḫtī, involving mainly those changes which would have been necessitated by the adoption of the doctrine of the twelfth imām as the Mahdī. For the sake of simplicity, I have done the analysis on the basis that there was only one stage in the process and one redactor, Nawbaḫtī. "One stage" is in any case preferable since no Šīᶜite *firaq* work, on which Nawbaḫtī could have built, is known to have been composed in the period after Hišām (cf. Madelung, "Bemerkungen", 47–48 and notes 59, 60). For the argument against Hišām as a redactor (or the first redactor) of the separate section on the *ġulāt,* see below.

raises serious doubts about Hišām's authorship of a separate section on the *ġulāt.*

It might be objected that the editorial revisions and the divergent accounts do not in themselves exclude the possibility that section G had formed part of Hišām's work. For, theoretically speaking, it is possible, firstly, that the divergent accounts—the "messianic" and the "gnostic"—represented the beliefs of different groups within second-century Šīᶜite sects or two phases in the development of those sects,[92] and, secondly, that section G was compiled by Hišām from other sources[93] and incorporated into his work at a later stage, in which case he (and not Nawbaḫtī) would be responsible for most of the editorial changes and updating that we have detected in sections A and B.[94] However, the fact remains that our sources are not at all aware of the existence of such phases in the lives of those sects or of any such doctrinal divergences at any one time among members of the same sect. And the second possibility would only be valid on the further (and unlikely) assumption that when Hišām first composed his work gnostic doctrines had already existed among the mahdist sects that he described but he was not yet aware of their existence.

We could, alternatively, start from the assumption that gnostic *ġuluww* had already fused with messianic ideas and that all this information had been available to Hišām all along. But if this were the case, he would have had no reason to resort to this dual treatment of those sects. From the introductory passage of his work it is clear that Hišām intended to follow a certain organizing pattern, namely, the order of succession of the imāms. His stated aim was to record the divergent views of the sects of the community on the question of the imāmate, the views that arose "in every age and in the time of each imām, after his death and during his lifetime".[95] He would occasionally digress in order to elaborate on one

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[92] Ivanow has made such a suggestion concerning the Ḫaṭṭābī doctrines in Nawbaḫtī, but he has not identified, or distinguished between, a messianic phase and a gnostic phase (*Ibn al-Qaddāḥ,* 105ff).

[93] In this case the assumption would be that if such sources existed they would have been oral not written. As a heresiographer of Islam, Hišām had no predecessors (cf. Madelung, "Häresiographie", in *Grundriss der arabischen Philologie,* ed. H. Gätje [Wiesbaden, 1987], 374–78, at 374), and as we shall see below, no *radd* works, from which he could have derived his material, had yet come into existence.

[94] I say "most" because the changes necessitated by the adoption of a messianic element could have only come from Nawbaḫtī.

[95] Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 2.

of the groups he treated earlier, or to discuss further divisions, but he would soon go back to where he left off. Had all this material on gnostic *ġuluww* been available to him, and as part of the tradition on the second-century messianic sects, we would expect to find it incorporated in the appropriate chronological passages and not in a separate section. And we would not expect to find the sort of revisions that exist in our present text (A and B). In short, the usual dating for the emergence of Šīᶜite gnosticism and the suggestion that section G comes from Hišām fail to account for the structural and other features of Nawbaḫtī's work—for the divergent treatments of sects, for the disjointed sections, and especially for the editorial changes in A and B; whereas a later dating for its emergence and for the literature describing it would.

A notable fact in this respect is that it was only in the third/ninth century, i.e., after Hišām's time, that there began to appear works by Imāmī scholars, devoted to refuting the doctrines of the *ġulāt* (*al-radd ᶜalā al-ġulāt*). The list compiled by al-Qāḍī of seventeen Šīᶜite authors named in Imāmī sources as having written such works points to the first half of the third century as the period of such activity.[96] This provides an indication that the incorporation in *firaq* works of separate sections on the *ġulāt* is unlikely to have occurred earlier;[97] both would have been a response to the same phenomenon, namely, the spread of gnostic *ġuluww*. Moreover, the likelihood that Hišām did not compose a separate section on gnostic *ġuluww* (and was not aware of its existence among Šīᶜites) would seem to be indirectly confirmed by the fact that there are

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[96] W. al-Qāḍī, "The Term *Ghulāt*" 316–17.

[97] Like Nawbaḫtī, pseudo-Nāšiʾ (*Uṣūl al-niḥal*) has dual treatments of second-century Šīᶜite sects (e.g., the Muġīriyya, 41 and 46, and the Ḫaṭṭābiyya, 41 and 47) and separate sections on their gnostic *ġuluww* (32–33, 37–41). There are some parallels between him and Nawbaḫtī in their descriptions of gnostic *ġuluww,* and these are mainly in their passages on *ġuluww* in general and on the Ḥārithiyya/Ḥarbiyya. These may be accounted for on the grounds that they are derived ultimately from the same 3rd century *radd* works and not necessarily from Hišām (cf. Madelung, "Häresiographie", 225; van Ess, *Häresiographie,* 26, 39–40, 54). Moreover, some of the differences between pseudo-Nāšiʾ and Nawbaḫtī would be difficult to account for if we assume that Hišām was the common source. Compare, for example, pseudo-Nāšiʾ's descriptions of the Manṣūriyya, Bayāniyya, and Muġīriyya (40–41) with Nawbaḫtī's (34–35, 25, 30–31, 37, 52, 54–55). See also n. 64 above regarding the gnostic material on al-Muġīra in pseudo-Nāšiʾ, which Nawbaḫtī does not appear to have had knowledge of.

virtually no references to him as having been involved in polemics against its Šī⁽ite adherents. He is nowhere said to have written a *radd ⁽alā al-ġulāt* and, as far as I know, none of the traditions and biographical reports in which he figures shows him as having disputed with Šī⁽ite gnostics or refuted their doctrines.[98] The tradition, on the other hand, does have some recollection of him as an anti-messianist. A report in Kaššī refers to him as someone who would have dismissed Šī⁽ite apocalypticism as mere fables.[99]

OTHER EARLY SOURCES ON ŠĪ⁽ISM

It must be significant in the present context that none of the early (i.e., pre-third century) sources on Šī⁽ism seems to be aware of the existence of gnostic beliefs among its adherents. In the doctrinal epistles such as the *Kitāb al-irǧā⁾,* the sermon of Abū Ḥamza al-Ḫāriǧī, and *Sīrat Sālim,* which have been dated to the second half of the second century at the latest,[100] and sections of which engage in polemics against the Šī⁽a, there are a number of references to Šī⁽ite messianism but none to specifically gnostic beliefs.[101]

In the Šī⁽ite poetry of Kuthayyir (d. 105/723), Abū ⁾l-Ṭufayl (d. be-

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[98] Contrary to Ivanow's view, the frequently cited reports of Hišām's encounters with Abū Šākir al-Dayṣānī do not shed any light on the state of affairs inside Šī⁽ism or whether Šī⁽ism was already coming under the influence of gnosticism (cf. Ivanow, *Ibn al-Qaddāḥ,* 85). In these reports Hišām appears as a defender of Islamic monotheism against a non-Muslim dualist/gnostic (Kulīnī, *al-Kāfī,* 1:79–80).

[99] Kaššī, *Riǧāl,* 258–63 at 263. That there is not much on his anti-messianism is also understandable. Given that Imāmism later came to adopt a messianic element, there would have been a reluctance to depict him in the light of an anti-messianist.

[100] van Ess, "Untersuchungen zu einigen ibāditischen Handschriften", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 126 (1976); id., "Das *Kitāb al-irǧā⁾* des Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya", *Arabica* 21 (1974); id., *Anfänge muslimischer Theologie* (Beirut, 1977); M. Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma* (Cambridge, 1981), esp. pt. 3; N. Calder, review of Cook, *Dogma,* in *Journal of Semitic Studies* 28 (1983): 180–87; Crone and Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Sālim ibn Ḏakwān* (Oxford, 2001), chap. 7.

[101] The Šī⁽a/Saba⁾iyya are followers of *kuhhān* (soothsayers); they claim to have secret knowledge or knowledge of the *ġayb;* they hope for and believe in a *dawla* (revolution) and the raising of the dead before the Day of Resurrection (van Ess, "Das *Kitāb al-irǧā⁾*"; Cook, *Dogma,* chap. 2).

fore 110/728), al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī (d. 173/789),[102] and al-Kumayt al-Asadī (d. 126/744),[103] we encounter messianic concepts and imagery,[104] but there is no hint of an esoteric doctrine in the thoughts or sentiments that they express or in the beliefs of Šīʿite opponents whom they attack.[105] In the lines of Maʿdān al-Šumayṭī (d. after 169/786),[106] who attacks Šīʿite opponents including groups and individuals identified elsewhere as *ġulāt*,[107] there are references to their murderous practices and advocacy of activist politics but hardly anything which may be interpreted as evidence of esoteric beliefs among them. Maʿdān also speaks of his own imām Muḥammad b. Ǧaʿfar al-Ṣādiq in terms that are clearly messianist.[108]

Thus, when al-Ǧāḥiẓ (d. 255/869) speaks of al-Kumayt as a *Šīʿī min*

[102] On these three poets and the evidence concerning their Kaysānī inclinations, see al-Qāḍī, *al-Kaysāniyya fī ʾl-tārīḫ waʾl-adab* (Beirut, 1974), chap. 6 and the references therein; Kuthayyir ʿAzza, *Dīwān,* ed. I. ʿAbbās (Beirut, 1971); al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, *Dīwān,* ed. Šākir Hādī Šakar (Beirut, 1966).

[103] J. Horovitz, *Die Hāšimijjāt des Kumait* (Leiden, 1904); Ch. Pellat, "Kumayt", *EI²;* Madelung, "The *Hāšimiyyāt* of al-Kumayt and Hāšimī Shīʿism", *Studia Islamica* 70 (1989).

[104] For example, the *ġayba* of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya in the mountains of Raḍwā, his *taḥdīṯ* by angels and assemblies of noble spirits, the events that will accompany his *raǧʿa,* etc.

[105] The only possible exception is in the lines ascribed to al-Sayyid in pseudo-Nāšiʾ, *Uṣūl al-niḥal,* 37–38, which satirize Šīʿites who deified ʿAlī. But these may be spurious, their ascription to a prominent Šīʿite designed to undermine nascent Šīʿite gnosticism in the third century. Pseudo-Nāšiʾ cites them as evidence that al-Sayyid was critical of this kind of (gnostic) *ġuluww* "despite his own *ġuluww* and excessive *tašayyuʿ*". The only other source I know of that cites these same lines is Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-ʿIqd al-farīd,* ed. A. Amin et al. (Cairo, 1940–65), 2:405. The lines do not appear in Šīʿite sources that cite al-Sayyid, often extensively.

[106] Ch. Pellat, "Essai de reconstitution d'un poème de Maʿdān aš-Šumayṭī", *Oriens* 16 (1963): 99–109.

[107] These include Abū Manṣūr, Kumayl, the Sabaʾiyya, the Ḥarbiyya, and al-Muġīra. The epithet *al-kisf al-sāqiṭ* (the fallen patch of sky), given to Abū Manṣūr in this and other sources (Pellat, "Maʿdān", 100, 102), does not necessarily have esoteric connotations. It is associated with his "ascension and descent" and his claim to be the "anointed one", viz., with his messianic claims. See also below and notes 118, 119, on the Manṣūriyya as messianists.

[108] See lines 12–21 in Pellat, "Maʿdān", 101.

al-ġāliya, he probably has in mind his (supposed) belief in the *ġayba* and *raǧ°a* of Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya.[109] The same would apply to Kuthayyir, who is described as *ġālī fī ᵓl-tašayyuᶜ ᶜalā maḏhab al-kaysāniyya* and as a believer in *raǧ°a* and *tanāsuḫ.*[110] The reference would be to his messianic beliefs, which are well attested in his poetry.[111] As for his alleged belief in *tanāsuḫ,* this is probably a later ascription. We have seen above that the gnostic *ġulāt* were said to have interpreted the doctrine of *raǧ°a* as *tanāsuḫ.*[112] So it is not difficult to see how Kuthayyir's messianic doctrine of *raǧ°a* could have come to be reported in later sources as a belief not only in *raǧ°a* but also in *tanāsuḫ.*

Some of the datable early material, such as brief references to Šī°ite beliefs and concepts in poetry and in titles of works no longer extant, might be, and in some cases has been, interpreted as evidence of the ex-

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[109] Ǧāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān waᵓl-tabyīn,* ed. M. ᶜA. S. Hārūn, 2nd ed. (Cairo and Baghdad, 1960), 1:46. Pseudo-Nāšiᵓ identifies al-Kumayt as a Kaysānī poet (*Uṣūl al-niḥal,* 26), so it is not unlikely that the latter was similarly regarded by Ǧāḥiẓ. Ǧāḥiẓ also refers to al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī's messianic beliefs as *ġuluww wa-iġrāq fī al-tašayyuᶜ* (*Bayān,* 1:37, line 23f). On Ǧāḥiẓ's view of the *ġayba* doctrine as *ġuluww,* see al-Qāḍī, "The Term *Ghulāt*", 310.

In one of his poems al-Kumayt uses the term *tanāsuḫ* when referring to the transmission of the "noble substance" to Muḥammad through his ancestors (Goldziher, "Neuplatonische und gnostische Elemente im Ḥadīṯ", *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 22 (1909): 107–34, at 125–26). This idea is not the same as the doctrine of metempsychosis (also known as *tanāsuḫ*) that our sources associate with Šī°ite *ġulāt,* who believed it to be characteristic of mankind in general and some of whom used the term to describe the transmission of the divine spirit or light from one imam (or prophet) to another (see, for example, Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 35–36, 41). Hence, contrary to Goldziher's suggestion, this reference by al-Kumayt cannot be taken as evidence of the existence of gnosticizing tendencies in early Šī°ism. Cf. U. Rubin, "Pre-Existence and Light: Aspects of the Concept of Nūr Muḥammad", *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975): 62–117, at 71–73, and n. 27, where he distinguishes between two ideas of Muḥammadan prophetology and points out that Goldziher has wrongly interpreted a tradition dealing with the wandering of Muḥammad's primordial substance through his pure ancestors (a tradition that basically serves to establish his superiority over other prophets) as dealing with the gnostic idea of the transmission of the divine spirit through a series of universal prophets.

[110] Abū ᵓl-Faraǧ al-Iṣfāhānī, *Kitāb al-aġānī* (Cairo, 1345/1927–1394/1974), 9:4.

[111] Saᶜd, *Maqālāt,* 28–29.

[112] Above and n. 89.

istence of gnostic tendencies among second-century Šīᶜites. However, upon closer examination this material turns out to be either too unspecific to be of any value or open to other interpretations. Thus, when Hārūn b. Saᶜd al-ᶜIǧlī, reputed to have been a Zaydī and an active supporter of the uprising of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, attacks in his poetry Rāfiḍītes, "some of whom believe that Ǧaᶜfar is an imām and others that he is an impeccable prophet", and refers to their claim that they have the *ǧafr,*[113] the reference is probably to those who looked to Ǧaᶜfar as a messianic figure (a priest- or a prophet-messiah) and believed that he had knowledge of an apocalyptic nature, not gnosis.[114]

Also of debatable significance in this regard is the report that Ḍirār b. ᶜAmr (d. 194/809), a contemporary of Hišām b. al-Ḥakam, composed a work against the Muġīriyya and the Manṣūriyya criticizing their belief that "the earth will never be devoid of a *nabī"*[115] References to this be-

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[113] Ibn Qutayba, *ᶜUyūn al-aḫbār* (Cairo, 1925), 2:145. The authenticity of this poem has been defended by van Ess (*Theologie und Gesellschaft,* 1:252–53). The reference and the problem that these lines might pose to my argument have been brought to my attention by Patricia Crone.

[114] As we have seen, the idea that Ǧaᶜfar was widely regarded in Kūfa as the ᶜAlid Mahdī during his lifetime is attested in the work of Hišām (in his description of the Ḫaṭṭābiyya). As for the *ǧafr,* there are various views about its contents and some overlap with *muṣḥaf Fāṭima* and *ṣaḥīfat ᶜAlī* (Abū Ǧaᶜfar Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Kitāb Baṣāʾir al-daraǧāt al-kubrā fī faḍāʾil Āl Muḥammad,* ed. M. M. Kūtchebāǧī [Tabriz, 1380/1960], 150–61; Kulīnī, *al-Kāfī,* 1:238–42). Yet there is reason to believe that originally its significance was mainly apocalyptic (cf. T. Fahd, "Djafr", *EI²*). Some traditions seem to preserve its association with apocalypticism in the time of Ǧaᶜfar and al-Nafs al-Zakiyya. Thus, according to one tradition, Ǧaᶜfar said that he had in his possession the "red *ǧafr",* which contained the Prophet's armour and which would be opened by the Master of the Sword (i.e., the Qāʾim/Mahdī). He also said that the descendants of al-Ḥasan knew about this but chose to ignore it. This is an allusion to the rebellion of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya and his brother Ibrāhīm and the belief in Muḥammad as the Mahdī. The brothers are criticized for having staged their rebellion even though they knew that it was the descendants of al-Ḥusayn who had the *ǧafr* and, hence, that the Mahdī will be from them (*al-Kāfī,* 1:240 below). According to other traditions, Ǧaᶜfar commented on those events by saying that he had "two books" (or *kitāb Fāṭima*) which proved that none of the descendants of al-Ḥasan would ever "rule the earth", viz., be the Mahdī (ibid., 242, nos. 7, 8). On the uprising of Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad, see F. Buhl, "Muḥammad b. ᶜAbd Allāh", *EI².*

[115] Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist,* 215.

lief in connection with gnostic *ġuluww* are very rare but they do exist.[116] Nevertheless, on its own the statement does not tell us anything specific about Ḍirār's conception of the system of ideas that those groups adhered to or how they perceived the role of a prophet.[117] In the reports on Abū Manṣūr and the Manṣūriyya and al-Muġīra and the Muġīriyya there are many inconsistent statements on their conceptions of the imāmate, none of which can be said to correspond closely to the idea that "the earth will never be devoid of a prophet".[118] What early characterizations of them have in common are references to their messianism and the corollary that "prophecy does not come to an end" or, as Abū Manṣūr is alleged to have put it, that "God's messengers never come to an end".[119] This is not necessarily the same thing as "continuous uninterrupted

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[116] The only example I know of is in one of Kaššī's reports on al-Faḍl b. Šāḏān. The text, which may well be based on a work by al-Faḍl, credits *ġulāt* disciples of the 11th imam with a belief in perpetual prophecy (Bayhom-Daou, "The Imam's Knowledge and the Quran according to al-Faḍl b. Shādhān al-Nīsābūrī", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 64 [2001]: 198–205, and n. 80). The expression used there to descibe that belief is *al-waḥy lā yanqatiᶜ*.

[117] A similar objection would apply to the title of another work by Ḍirār, *"al-Radd ᶜalā muᶜammar fī qawlihi anna muḥammad rabb"* (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist,* 215). The title does not tell us that Muᶜammar was a Šīᶜite or that his belief in the divinity of Muḥammad entailed viewing him as the saviour figure at the centre of a gnostic doctrine.

[118] Abū Manṣūr is associated with the belief that "God's messengers never come to an end", or with the doctrine of "five ᶜAlid and seven ᶜIǧlid prophets, the last of whom will be the Qāʾim". One group of the Manṣūriyya is said to have claimed that the imāmate passed from al-Bāqir to Abū Manṣūr and then to his son al-Ḥusayn, and another group that after Abū Manṣūr the imāmate reverted to the ᶜAlids and that the Qāʾim is Muḥammad b. ᶜAbdallāh (al-Nafs al-Zakiyya) (Ašᶜarī, *Maqālāt,* 9, 24–25; Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 34; Saᶜd, *Maqālāt,* 46–48). Muġīra is said to have claimed that he was a prophet, and the Muġīriyya refused to recognize any imām after him and al-Nafs al-Zakiyya and awaited the return of the latter as the Mahdī; or, according to another report, they recognized Ǧābir al-Ǧuᶜfī and Bakr al-Qattāt as imams after al-Muġīra (Nawbaḫtī, 52, 54–55; Ašᶜarī, 6–7, 8, 23–24; Saᶜd, 43–44, 55, 74, 76–77).

[119] That these two sects were originally portrayed as messianists is still visible behind the later "gnostic" accretions. For the argument concerning the Muġīriyya, see above. As for the Manṣūriyya, its characterization as a messianic sect is reflected in the concepts of the "anointed one" and the Qāʾim (Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 34; Ašᶜarī, *Maqālāt,* 9, 25).

prophecy" or as the *ḥuǧǧa* (divine proof) doctrine, which probably originated as a gnostic doctrine.[120] Nor is it a close parallel to the Clementine doctrine of the "true Prophet" who appears in various ages under different names and forms.[121] It is rather the antithesis of the orthodox doctrine of "the last prophet" and an expression of the belief that God will continue to send prophets (or saviours) to mankind, not that prophets will necessarily succeed one another in an uninterrrupted manner. One can see though that the two slogans could easily have been construed as references to the same doctrine and came to be used interchangeably. This leads one to suspect that the title given by Ibn al-Nadīm may not be the exact original or may be an inaccurate description of the subject matter of the work, and that Ḍirār's polemic was directed against the messianism of those sects.[122] A critical view of messianism, on the grounds that it undermined the doctrine of "the last prophet", would have reflected the attitude of many in scholarly circles, both Šīᶜite and non-Šīᶜite. As we have seen, a similar attitude pervaded the work of Hišām.

RETROSPECTIVE ASCRIPTION AND THE FORMATION OF THE TRADITION ON GNOSTIC *ĠULUWW* IN THE SECOND CENTURY

What remains to be explained is how and why gnostic doctrines came to be ascribed to second-century individuals and groups. A process along

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[120] The use of the term *ḥuǧǧa* to describe the imams and the belief that the earth will never be devoid of a *ḥuǧǧa* are well attested in classical Imāmism. In the early heresiographical tradition, however, the term and the belief are associated with Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and the Ḫaṭṭābiyya, which is indicative of the origins of the doctrine in gnostic *ġuluww* (Ašᶜarī, *Maqālāt,* 10; Saᶜd, *Maqālāt,* 51; Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 38).

[121] Cf. I. Friedlander, "The Heterodoxies of the Shiites in the Presentation of Ibn Ḥazm", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 29 (1908): 85–86, 92.

[122] In the bibliographical literature it is not uncommon to find that the same work is listed under different titles in different sources. This may be due to the fact that an author did not give a title to his work, perhaps because he did not finish it, and different titles were given by different copyists and redactors. Balāḏurī's *Ansāb* is a good example (*Ansāb al-ašrāf,* ed. S. D. F. Goitein [Jerusalem, 1936], introduction, 9–11). In the case of Ḍirār's title, it is possible that it was given by a copyist working in the third century or later, who was familiar with this slogan ("the earth will never be without a prophet") and assumed it to be an appropriate description of the messianic beliefs attacked by Ḍirār.

the following lines would be both plausible and consistent with much of the available evidence. When in the early third century (or possibly slightly earlier) gnostic doctrines began to be preached in Šīᶜite circles there would have been a tendency to ascribe them to al-Bāqir or al-Ṣādiq rather than to a current imām. As we have seen, the extant works which preserve the gnostic traditions of the *ġulāt* themselves, and which, according to Halm, were probably composed in the third century, trace these traditions to al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq and some of their well known disciples.[123] These two imams were widely recognized for their contribution to the Šīᶜī religious tradition, as evidenced by the fact that the bulk of Imāmī *ḥadīṯ* is related on their authority.[124] The later imāms do not appear to have enjoyed the same status or wide recognition,[125] and hence the teaching of gnostic ideas in their name would not have carried the same authority. Moreover, a current imām might publicly dissociate himself from such doctrines and those spreading them.

Those opposed to the gnosticizing tendencies would have reacted by circulating traditions on the authority of these (and later) imāms denying that they (or their predecessors) ever taught or condoned such doctrines. But in circumstances where the beliefs of the gnostic *ġulāt* were catching on, a more effective way of dissociating Imāmism from these teachings would have been to ascribe them to discredited disciples and other Šīᶜites. Figures such as Bayān, Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb, Muġīra, and Ibn al-Ḥārith/Ḥarb would have already come to be regarded by moderate Imāmīs as heretical Šīᶜites or seceders from Imāmism and as having been repudiated by al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq—this being on account of their activism or messianism or on account of their support of other ᶜAlids, as we have seen from our reconstructions of Hišām's work. Hence, they could easily be cast as bearers of all forms of *ġuluww*. In other words, the Imāmī legalists/moderates would have responded to the attempts of

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[123] Halm has argued that these traditions, or rather layers of them, go back to the Kūfan *ġulāt* in the circle of al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq, on the basis of similarities with descriptions of second-century *ġulāt* by the heresiographers. However, the problem with this argument is that it is based on acceptance of the testimonies of the Šīᶜī gnostic tradition and the heresiographical tradition, both of which have a tendency to backdate.

[124] G. Lecomte, "Aspects de la littérature du *ḥadīṯ* chez les imâmites", *Le Shīᶜisme imâmite*, Colloque de Strasbourg, ed. T. Fahd (Paris, 1970), 97–98.

[125] S. A. Arjomand, "The Crisis of the Imāmate and the Institution of Occultation in Twelver Shiᶜism", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28 (1996).

gnosticizers to attach themselves to Imāmism (or to trace their doctrines to an Imāmī imām)[126] by showing that this kind of belief was spread by Šīᶜite heretics and not by the imāms themselves or by their trusted disciples. Thus, for example, where Nawbaḫtī (or his third-century source) assigns a role to the followers of ᶜAbdallāh b. Muᶜāwiya in the origination of (gnostic) *ġuluww* and accuses them of having falsely attributed its teaching to the followers of the Imāmī imāms, this would not be a statement of historical fact but a reflection of the process envisaged here, namely, that third-century polemics between legalists/moderates and gnostics/extremists were projected into the past and that one of the ways in which the moderates sought to dissociate Imāmism from *ġuluww* was to attribute it to early Šīᶜites who were known to have been followers of "non-Imāmī" imāms. By the same token, when a certain Ibrāhīm b. Abī Ḥafṣ al-Kātib, a disciple of the eleventh imām, composed a *Radd ᶜalā al-ġāliya wa-abī al-ḫaṭṭāb wa-aṣḥābihi*[127] almost a hundred years after the death of Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb, the aim would have been to distance Imāmism from gnostic teachings and to discredit them by associating them with a repudiated heretic from the past.[128]

Another factor in the tendency to asccribe gnostic *ġuluww* to past fig-

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[126] The heresiographical tradition tends to portray the heretics among the followers of an Imāmī imām as Wāqifites (i.e., those who "stop" at an imām and refuse to recognize a successor) or as claimers that the imamate has been transferred to their non-ᶜAlid leaders. This is unlikely to be true of all the gnostic *ġulāt* in the third century, but there is no reliable way of ascertaining to what extent those gnostics espoused the principle of a continuous imāmate or the same line of imāms as the moderates.

[127] See above n. 44.

[128] The fact that Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb is revered as an authority in the Nuṣayrī tradition (Halm, *Kosmologie,* 154–55, 162–63) might seem to contradict the suggestion that it was the moderates who would have had reason to associate discredited figures like him with gnostic teachings. In fact there is not necessarily any contradiction here and there is a good explanation as to why some gnostics would have espoused Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb as one of their authorities: once the association between Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and gnostic *ġuluww* had been established in Šīᶜite circles, some gnostics would have found it impossible to disown him and tried instead to rehabilitate him. That something like this happened is indicated in the additional report in Saᶜd al-Qummī, mentioned above, where Ǧaᶜfar's public censure of Abū ᵓl-Ḫaṭṭāb and his companions is said to have been interpreted by the Ḫaṭṭābiyya as a ploy designed to protect his followers and to confuse opponents (Saᶜd, *Maqālāt,* 54–55, and above, n. 86).

ures and groups might have been a reluctance on the part of Imāmī (and perhaps other) polemicists and heresiogrpahers to name the contemporary *ġulāt* and the imām(s) at the center of their speculations and thereby to endanger their lives. Judging by the evidence of the heresiographical tradition, third-century *ġulāt* do not begin to be named or dealt with until later in the century. None of those later groups or figures appears in the accounts of pseudo-Nāšiᵓ or Warrāq (as preserved in Ašᶜarī),[129] both of whom are likely to have relied on Imāmī sources and may have shared their reluctance to name the contemporary *ġulāt*.[130] It is from Nawbaḫtī, who was writing shortly before 286/899,[131] that we first get to hear about the Namīriyya/Nuṣayriyya whose *ġuluww* was allegedly centered on the tenth imām ᶜAlī al-Hādī (220/835–254/868) during his lifetime.[132] The Namīriyya is in fact the only group of *ġulāt* that he mentions as supporters of an Imāmī imām in his description of the divisions that occurred between the death of al-Riḍā and the disappearance of the twelfth imām. But this cannot have been right. An examination of Imāmī biographical sources suggests that there were many more *ġulāt* who professed allegiance to an imām from among the descendants of al-Riḍā.[133] This belated attestation of the identities and allegiances of the gnosticizers of the first half of the third/ninth century would be consistent with the suggestion that contemporary Imāmīs preferred to conduct their war on *ġuluww* in the past.

As for the tradition on gnostic *ġuluww* among the ᶜAbbāsid Šīᶜa in the second century, this too would have been retrospective and the product of similar circumstances, except that here Muᶜtazilite and proto-Sunnī scholars are likely to have played the main role in the formation of the heresiographical tradition, and the circumstances in question would have been that gnostic currents in the Iranian world were beginning to be

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[129] See above, the section entitled "Nawbaḫtī's Sources Reconsidered" and the relevant notes.

[130] A reluctance to name the individual who was recognized as the current Imāmī imām has been noted for pseudo-Nāšiᵓ by van Ess (*Häresiographie,* 29ff.).

[131] Madelung, "Bemerkungen", 38.

[132] Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 78. The Nuṣayrīs themselves trace their doctrines to the eleventh imām al-Ḥasan al-ᶜAskarī and his follower Ibn Nuṣayr (Halm, *Shiism,* 159).

[133] Ṭūsī, *Riǧāl,* ed. M. Ṣ. Āl Baḥr al-ᶜUlūm (Naǧaf, 1961), 400, 410, 411, 413, 414, 418, 420, 421, 423, 426, 436; also, Halm, *Gnosis,* 275–83.

Islamized and their doctrines attributed to a ᶜAbbāsid imām and other revered figures from the past such as Abū Muslim.¹³⁴ In his account of the ᶜAbbāsid Šīᶜa, pseudo-Nāšiᵓ speaks of the Ḫurramiyya (neo-Mazda-kites)¹³⁵ of Ḫurāsān and Ǧibāl in his own time ("today"). These are said to trace their doctrines to the ᶜAbbāsid Muḥammad b. ᶜAlī and the *dāᶜī*s Abū Muslim and Ḫidāš (ᶜAmmār or ᶜUmāra b. Yazīd) and claim that the imāmate had passed to non-Hāšimites. Most of their current imāms are said to be *ᶜaǧam* and the Arabs among them non-Hāšimites. Pseudo-Nāšiᵓ also relates a story which serves to show that Muḥammad b. ᶜAlī himself had nothing to do with *ǧuluww:* it was preached in his name by Ḫidāš whilst acting as his *dāᶜī* in Ḫurāsān, and when Muḥammad learnt of it he cursed and repudiated (*barāᵓa*) the latter.¹³⁶ The pattern he follows is a familiar one: Ḫidāš, who had already been identified as a deviant *dāᶜī* in pro-ᶜAbbāsid accounts, is now said to have been repudiated by the imām for preaching Ḫurramī doctrines.¹³⁷

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¹³⁴ The second-century religious movements in Iran, some of which centered on Abū Muslim and other figures who had been associated with the ᶜAbbāsid revolution, would not count as Islamic. In fact what characterized them was their rejection of Islam (cf. Sadighi, *Les mouvements religieux iraniens* [Paris, 1938]; Madelung, "Khurramiyya", *EI²;* E. L. Daniel; "Iran's Awakening: A Study of Local Rebellions in the Eastern Provinces of the Islamic Empire" [Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1978], chap. 5; id. *The Political and Social History of Khurāsān under Abbasid Rule* [Minneapolis and Chicago, 1979], chap. 4). Although Abū Muslim would have symbolized that Iranian rejection of Islam, this would not have prevented him from later being transformed into a Muslim imam and revealer or transmitter of esoteric knowledge.

¹³⁵ On this group, see Madelung, "Khurramiyya", *EI²*.

¹³⁶ Pseudo-Nāšiᵓ, *Uṣūl al-niḥal,* 32–35; the story is at p. 34. Cf. also Ṭabarī, *Taᵓrīḫ,* 2:1503, 1588–89.

¹³⁷ In Ṭabarī (*Taᵓrīḫ,* 2:1588–89) Ḫidāš is said to have "changed" from calling people to the imāmate of Muḥammad b. ᶜAlī to calling them to the religion of the Ḫurramiyya (defined as libertinism and the like). In the parallel account in Balāḏurī (*Ansāb,* vol. 3, ed. Durī, 116–18), however, there are no references to the preaching of gnostic or Ḫurramī doctrines by Ḫidāš. He is simply said to have "changed" the *sunan* of the imām and the *sīra* of his predecessor and issued reprehensible rulings (*aḥkām*), which made him unpopular and led to him being murdered by the followers of Muḥammad b. ᶜAlī (or by the governor Asad b. ᶜAbdallāh al-Qasrī, according to another report). It is not made clear what those *sunan* and *aḥkām* were. Sharon seems to think that Ḫidāš was

Examination of pseudo-Nāšiᵓ's description of the Hurayriyya/
Rāwandiyya (followers of Abū Hurayra al-Rāwandī) and the related
group the Rizāmiyya,[138] and comparison with other characterizations of
the sect in some of the early sources, could also shed some light on the
process whereby gnostic *ġuluww* came to be ascribed to second-century
supporters of the ᶜAbbāsids. It is noteworthy that whereas Nawbaḫtī uses
the term Rāwandiyya as the generic name of the ᶜAbbāsid Šīᶜa and as
synonymous with (gnostic) *ġuluww,*[139] pseudo-Nāšiᵓ classifies the
Rāwandiyya (he actually uses the name Hurayriyya) as a subsect of the
ᶜAbbāsiyya and does not label them as *ġulāt,* nor does he ascribe to them
any doctrines that may be identified as gnostic. In his account the
Hurayriyya are said to have advocated the idea of a pure ᶜAbbāsid line of
imāms and the Rizāmiyya among them are credited with a doctrine of the
imām's knowledge that is rather moderate by Šīᶜite standards: they
regarded the ᶜAbbāsid imām as an arbiter whose opinion must be sought

associated with the idea of the reversion of the imamate to the ᶜAlids
("Khidāsh", *EI²;* but see the review of his *Black Banners from the East*
[Jerusalem and Leiden, 1983] by Patricia Crone in *Bulletin of the School of
Oriental and African Studies* 50 [1987]: 134–36). In any case, the main point
here is that one layer of the tradition about Ḫidāš is not aware of his association
with Ḫurramism/gnostic *ġuluww.*

[138] The founder of the Rizāmiyya is said to have been Rizām (b. Sābiq) who
appears only once in the accounts of the Rāwandiyya in the reign of al-Manṣūr.
It is not exactly clear what role he played in the events or what his position was
(Tabarī, *Taᵓrīḫ,* 3:132). The *firaq* works do not shed any light on his identity
either (pseudo-Nāšiᵓ, *Uṣūl al-niḥal,* 35–36; Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 42; Saᶜd,
Maqālāt, 64–65; Ašᶜarī, *Maqālāt,* 21–22).

[139] Nawbaḫtī, *Firaq,* 29–30, 41–42. Note, however, that in the passages
based on Hišām the Rāwandiyya are identified as one of two *ġulāt* sects of the
ᶜAbbāsid Šīᶜa, the other being the Hāšimiyya who are said to have believed that
the imāmate was transferred to the ᶜAbbāsids from Abū Hāšim b. Muḥammad b.
al-Ḥanafiyya; ibid., 46–47. Athough in the passage as it stands the Rāwandiyya
are not identified as advocates of a pure ᶜAbbāsid line, there is reason to believe
that this is due to suppression of the idea by Nawbaḫtī. The latter, unlike Hišām
but like most of the later scholars, used the name Rāwandiyya to designate the
ᶜAbbasid Šīᶜa at the point of its inception and identified the Hurayriyya (follow-
ers of Abū Hurayra al-Rawandī/al-Dimašqī) as the advocates of a pure ᶜAbbāsid
line; Nawbaḫtī could not therefore retain Hišām's identification of the
Rāwandiyya (and their leader Abū ᶜAbdallāh al-Rāwandī) in the time of al-
Manṣūr as the source of the idea of a pure ᶜAbbāsid line. See Bayhom Daou,
"The Imāmī Shīᶜī Conception," 99–101, and the references therein.

in the event of disagreement (*iḫtilāf*) in religious matters, and they believed that his decisions would be infallible by virtue of his receipt of divine inspiration (*ilhām*) of an *ad hoc* nature.[140]

Here, as in his passages on the ᶜAbbāsid *ġulāt* (the Ḫurramiyya), there is a good indication that pseudo-Nāšiᵓ is referrring to doctrines that were current in his time (or, as he would have seen it, that were *still* current in his time).[141] Moreover, there is reason to believe that his concern with the exact definition and nature of the ᶜAbbāsid imām's *ilhām,* as conceived by the Hurayriyya, reflects the existence of current debates on the subject; those debates would have been triggered by al-Maᵓmūn's *miḥna* and his attempts to impose his religious authority on the scholars. Pseudo-Nāšiᵓ, who was probably writing during or shortly after the reign of al-Maᵓmūn and had close relations with the ᶜAbbāsid court,[142] would have been familiar with, and perhaps a participant in, those debates. It is true that al-Maᵓmūn is only very rarely credited with *ilhām,*[143] and we do not hear of scholars who adovcated this particular kind of belief about the role of the caliph (i.e., that of arbiter whose decisions are infallible and divinely inspired).[144] But this does not mean that scholars with such

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[140] *Uṣūl al-niḥal,* 31–32, 35–36.

[141] Ibid., 31, line 16, where he refers to the Hurayriyya as a group that exists "now" and its doctrine as having been formulated during the time of al-Mahdī (r. 158/774–169/785).

[142] Madelung, "Häresiographie", 229, 232–34.

[143] Abū ᵓl-Ḥasan al-Masᶜūdī, *Murūǧ al-ḏahab,* vol. 4, ed. Ch. Pellat (Beirut 1966–79), 316, par. 2728, where Yaḥya b. Aktham says of al-Maᵓmūn that he has been inspired by God with knowledge of the right things to say and do. I owe the reference to Patricia Crone.

[144] *ilhām* as a prerogative of the imām, and for the specific purpose of imposing doctrinal/legal uniformity, is only rarely attested in connection with the ᶜAbbāsid caliphs. It is referred to by Ibn al-Muqaffaᶜ in his epistle to al-Manṣūr; *Ibn al-Muqaffaᶜ, "Conseilleur" du Calife,* ed. Ch. Pellat (Paris, 1976), par. 36. It is not attested again until the account of pseudo-Nāšiᵓ, who ascribes its formulation to the shadowy Rizām: the latter is assumed to have founded the sect named after him and to have formulated the ᶜAbbāsid Šīᶜī doctrine of *ilhām* during the reign of al-Mahdī (*Uṣūl al-niḥal,* 31, par. 47, and 36, par. 54). In the earlier work of Hišām b. al-Ḥakam, written during the reign of al-Rašīd (170/786–193/808), *ilhām* is associated with the Ǧārūdiyya and its function is exegetical/juridical, whereas two sects of the ᶜAbbāsid Šīᶜa (the Hāšimiyya and the Rāwandiyya) are said to have claimed for their imām knowledge of a prophetic and divine nature (Bayhom-Daou, "Hishām b. al-Ḥakam", 95–108;

a view did not exist. Al-Maʾmūn had his supporters among Muʿtazilīs and Ḥanafīs,[145] hence it is not unlikely that some of them would have approved of the role that he envisaged for the caliphate and even adduced the doctrine of *ilhām* in order to justify the caliph's decision to impose his authority.[146] We may also assume that those who opposed al-Maʾmūn's religious policy would have had to deny that he had *ilhām*.

Pseudo-Nāši's account also suggests that those ʿAbbāsid "imāmīs" who advocated *ilhām* tried to distance themselves from any association with the Rāwandiyya, who were known in the tradition as fanatical supporters of al-Manṣūr and his son al-Mahdī and, like themselves, as advocates of the idea of a pure ʿAbbāsid line. The apparent preference for the name "Hurayriyya" and the explanation that they originated in the reign of al-Mahdī (not in that of al-Manṣūr), when Abū Hurayra al-Rāwandī (not ʿAbdallāh al-Rāwandī) put forward his idea of a "pure ʿAbbāsid line" (and, presumably, Rizām his doctrine of the imām's knowledge), seem to reflect an attempt by them to set the record straight and to refute the charge that their doctrine is rooted in *ġuluww*.[147] Moreover, the fact that pseudo-Nāšiʾ does not include Hišām's (or any) report on al-Manṣūr's Rāwandiyya may be explained on the basis that he accepted the assertions of the ʿAbbāsid "imāmīs" of his time that those who advocated the idea of a "pure ʿAbbāsid" imāmate and held a moderate view of the imām's knowledge were not the ideological successors of the Rāwandiyya.[148] These assertions would have been made in response to

eadem, "The Imāmī Shīʿī Conception," 103–8).

[145] M. Hinds, "Miḥna", *EI²;* M. Q. Zaman, *Religion and Politics under the Early ʿAbbāsids* (Leiden, 1997), 109–10; J. Nawas, *Al-Maʾmūn:* Miḥna *and Caliphate* (Nijmegen, 1992), 27–28, 40–43.

[146] In a report in Ṭabarī (*Taʾrīḫ,* 3:1117) al-Maʿmūn comes close to claiming for himself a sort of knowledge that is not accessible to other men and that serves to resolve legal uncertainty (*šakk*).

[147] In the account of Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, the Rāwandiyya and the Hurayriyya are identified as two distinct sects of the ʿAbbāsid Šīʿa, the first as followers of ʿAbdallāh al-Rāwandī and the second as followers of Abū Hurayra al-Dimašqī, and it is Abū Hurayra who is credited with introducing the idea of a pure ʿAbbāsid line (*Zīna,* 298–300). This would tend to confirm my suggestion that the idea of a distinction was familiar to scholars in the third century and that pseudo-Nāšiʾ's account, even though it makes no mention of al-Manṣūr's Rāwandiyya, was aimed at showing that the Hurayriyya (or the moderate ʿAbbāsid "imāmīs") had nothing to do with the former.

[148] The possibility that pseudo-Nāšiʾ himself was an advocate of the idea of

attempts to discredit them by opponents who disliked the idea of an ᶜAbbāsid Šīᶜite imāmate and were opposed to the attempts of al-Maʾmūn and his successors to assert the religious authority of the caliphate[149] and, for that reason, would have been inclined to identify and brand the "imāmīs" as Rāwandīs.

In these polemical exchanges about the validity of ᶜAbbāsid "imāmism" we have a likely context for the emergence of the material on gnostic *ġuluww* among the Rāwandiyya in the time of al-Manṣūr[150] and

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the caliph as arbiter in religious matters, and hence sympathetic to ᶜAbbāsid "imāmism", cannot be ruled out. According to a report in a Muᶜtazilī source, he used to attend debating sessions at the court of the caliph al-Wāthiq, and on one occasion, when it was prayer time and the caliph went forward to lead the prayer, Ǧaᶜfar stepped aside and prayed alone (ᶜAbd al-Ǧabbār, *Ṭabaqāt al-muᶜtazila* in *Faḍl al-iᶜtizāl wa-ṭabaqāt al-muᶜtazila,* ed., F. Sayyid [Tunis, 1974], 282). If the aim of the report was to show that he refused to recognize the caliphs as Šīᶜite imāms, this could be an attempt by the later Muᶜtazilī tradition to exonerate him and to present him as a true Muᶜtazilite. Classical Muᶜtazilism did not recognize the caliphs as divinely inspired imāms and rejected the Imāmī view regarding the necessity of having an imām who is distinguished from his fellows by knowledge. On the views of the Muᶜtazilī ᶜAbd al-Ǧabbār, see M. J. McDermott, *The Theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufīd* (Beirut, 1978), 116–27.

[149] On the opposition to al-Maʾmūn's religious policy, see W. M. Patton, *Aḥmed Ibn Ḥanbal and the Miḥna* (Leiden, 1897); I. M. Lapidus, "The Separation of State and Religion in the Development of Early Islamic Society", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 6 (1975); Nawas, *Al-Maʾmūn,* 65–72.

[150] Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīḫ,* 3:129–33; Balāḏurī, *Ansāb,* 3:235–37. The gnostic material, which consists of brief references to the *tanāsuḫ* doctrine, occurs only at the beginning of both accounts. The parallels between the two accounts suggest that they are based on common sources. Balāḏurī's is attributed to al-Haytham b. ᶜAdī (d. 207/822) "and others", and Ṭabarī's to al-Madāʾinī (d. 228/843). Although both Haytham and Madāʾinī are known to have composed books, it is sometimes clear that our historians had access to this material through later narrators and compilers (e.g., Balāḏurī states that his account is taken from Abū Masᶜūd al-Qattāt, who had it from Haytham and others). Hence, there is always the possibility of "contamination" by later material. And although Balāḏurī does not mention Madāʾinī as one of his sources for this particular report, he may well have been. Madāʾinī was a main authority for him on the ᶜAbbāsids and he cites him extensively in the reports on al-Manṣur (183–275). It is thus quite possible that the gnostic material came from Madāʾinī and not from Haytham. In any case, the death date of Haytham is within the proposed period for the rise of

for the attempts to locate the origins of Rāwandī *ġuluww* in the time of the *daʿwa* in Ḫurāsān.[151] This also would have been the time when the name Rāwandiyya began to be used of the ʿAbbāsid Šīʿa in general. [152]

In short, the material which deals with gnostic *ġuluww* among the ʿAbbāsid Šīʿa at the time of the *daʿwa* in Ḫurāsan and among the Rāwandiyya in the time of al-Manṣur would have originated at about the same time as the Imāmī material on other second-century groups and owed its existence to similar pressures and developments; in this case, the tendency of Iranian gnostics to present their doctrines in Islamic form and to attribute them to earlier Muslim authorities, the attempts of Muʿtazilite and proto-Sunnī scholars to refute this gnosticism by attributing it to disobedient and heretical *dāʿī*s, and the attempts of proto-Sunnīs to discredit ʿAbbāsid "imāmism" by portraying it as rooted in gnostic *ġuluww.*

I would therefore suggest that our information on gnostic *ġuluww* among second-century Šīʿites is not historcial, but is based ultimately on sources composed in the first half of the third century; Imāmī sources such as *radd ʿalā al-ġulāt* works and works on the imāmate, Muʿtazilī

Islamic gnosticism and the emergence of the idea that gnostic *ġuluww* was preached by heretical Šīʿites in the second century.

It is important to recall here the evidence, adduced earlier in this paper, that Hišam's account of the Rāwandiyya shows no awareness of the existence of gnostic ideas among them; above and notes 65–69. The same may be said of the references of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ to the fanatical Ḫurāsāniyya, where he speaks of their excessive reverence for al-Manṣūr as verging on deification (*"Conseilleur" du Calife,* ed. Pellat, 23, 25, pars. 10, 11, 12).

[151] See, for example, the report in Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīḫ,* 3:418–19. The report is from ʿAlī b. Muḥammad, most probably Madāʾinī, who relates it on the authority of his father. It consists of two parts. The first part deals with a *"daʿwa* to the Rāwandiyya" and gnostic beliefs preached by a certain al-Ablaq. The latter and his followers are said to have been killed by Asad b. ʿAbdallāh when he was governor of Ḫurāsān (116/734–119/737), and their beliefs are said to "continue among them (the Rāwandiyya) to the present day". The second part is about the Rāwandiyya in the time of al-Manṣūr and their jumping off to their death from the roof of his palace.

[152] For some of the more usual interpretations of the material on ʿAbbāsid Šīʿism in the second century, which tend to accept the historicity of the reports that associate it with gnostic *ġuluww,* see B. Lewis, "ʿAbbāsids", *EI²;* Daniel, *Political and Social History,* chap. 1; M. Sharon, *Black Banners,* chap. 6, esp. 165ff.; Madelung, "Kaysāniyya", *EI²,* 837b f; Kohlberg, "Rāwandiyya", *EI²;* van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft,* 3:10–19.

heresiographies, and Sunnī reports. The wealth of that information, the differences in detail between one source and another, the contradictory statements, and the numerous inconsistencies would not have been the result of multiple eyewitness accounts having undergone a long process of oral transmission. Rather, this wealth and diversity would have been due to the creative and selective activities of later scholars who drew on material created, circulated and published by Imāmīs and others in the early third century, and who would have had no reason to question the authenticity of ascription to second-century Šīᶜites or the authenticity of the accounts in general.