

Al-Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf*

Al-Zamakhsharī, Muḥammad. *Al-Kashshāf ‘an ḥaqā’iq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl wa-‘uyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-tanzīl*. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Salām Shāhīn, ed. 4 vols. Beirut, 2009.

Zand-Ākāsīh

Zand-Ākāsīh, Iranian or Greater Bundahīšn. B. T. Anklesaria, tr. Mumbai, 1956.

Al-Zayla‘ī, *Takhrīj al-aḥādīth*

Al-Zayla‘ī, ‘Abd Allāh. *Takhrīj al-aḥādīth wa-l-āthār al-wāqī‘a fī tafsīr al-Kashshāf li-l-Zamakhsharī*. 4 vols. Riyād, 1414/1994.

Dalālet (040052)

Ebu Hatim er-Razi, Ahmed b. Hamdan
(050158)

Bid'at (020873)



02 Mart 2023

İMADDE YAYIMLANDIKTAN
SONRA GELEN DOKÜMAN

HOW TO READ MUSLIM HERESIOLOGY?
AN ISMĀ‘İLĪ MAN-OF-LETTERS AND HIS CLASSIFICATION OF
MUSLIM SECTS*

Mushegh Asatryan

University of Calgary

Abstract This article is a case study of how to fruitfully read Muslim heresiology. I take as a case the classification of Muslim sects in the heresiology of Ismā‘īlī author Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 322/933). Through a close reading of the text, and by situating it within the religious and intellectual milieu of the time, I explore how he classified the existing Muslim groups in such a way as to give preference to the Ismā‘īlīs — without appearing to do so. A representative of a minority group writing for an unsympathetic majority, al-Rāzī deploys ambiguity, inverts received categories (such as “Sunni”), and writes between the lines in order to critique established orthodoxy while maintaining plausible deniability. Through study of this work I propose a novel way of reading Muslim heresiologies in general. I contend that to fully understand such texts we must go beyond the sifting of fact from fiction, and to explore the social location of their authors, as well as the position of the groups to which they belonged. For depending on the power dynamics in which authors operated and on their intended audiences, they either chose to write openly, to camouflage their thoughts, or to write between the lines.

Keywords heresiology, heresiography, *firaq*, sectarianism, historiography, Sunnism, Shi‘ism

* I gratefully acknowledge the advice and comments of a number of individuals in the course of my work on this paper: David Hollenberg and the anonymous reviewer of *JSAI* for their careful reading and for a number of valuable suggestions; Aziz Al-Azmeh, Rachel Friedman, Eitan Kohlberg, and Roy Vilozny for suggestions with regard to primary sources and secondary literature; the organizers of the workshop “From Jāhiliyya to Islam” in Jerusalem for inviting me to present, and to the audience for their perceptive questions and comments. My research has been financially supported by the Zahid Ali Fellowship, and I thank the Institute of Ismaili Studies for granting me the fellowship. The title of my paper deliberately echoes the title of Averil Cameron’s widely-known article “How to read heresiology?”, which has been a major inspiration during my work.