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# Two Images of Ibn Saba in the Historical and Heresiographical Literature

Dr. Sıddık KORKMAZ<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

It seems that the nascent Shi‘ite movements exerted a deep impact upon Sayf Ibn ‘Umar in his description of the catastrophic events that took place during the caliphate of ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī. His narrations reveal his strong aversion to the idea that the companions of the Prophet Muhammad might have erred in political issues. However, a careful historical investigation and an objective political analysis of the events of that period reveal the irrationality to seek out such a conspirator as ‘Abdullāh Ibn Saba to explain these calamities.

The historians such as Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Athīr, and Ibn Kathīr ground their descriptions of the events in the reports of Sayf, presenting Ibn Saba as a leading actor. Looking at the same figure from the perspective of the Muslim heresiographers, however, we get a quite different picture. In other words, while the historians tend to describe Ibn Saba as a dominantly political character who acted around ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī, the heresiographers incline to picture him as a religious and sectarian personality who masterminded and espoused extreme ideas. These two conflicting tendencies lead one to think that both groups of the scholars portray this fictitious figure as they wish.

**Key words:** Sayf bin ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, the advent (*raj‘ah*) and executorship (*waṣāyah*) of ‘Alī, Extremism, Anachronism.

## Introduction

Every Islamic sect tends to perceive and interpret the *fitnah*<sup>2</sup> events, which took place in the early years of Islam, and their far-reaching consequences in accordance with its own viewpoint. Due to the prevailing conviction that the companions of the Prophet could not have committed sinful acts, such catastrophic events were narrated and accounted as the works of imaginary figures, as in the case of ‘Abdullāh Ibn Saba. Therefore, studies that investigate Ibn Saba and the role he played in Islamic history need to shift the focus from the contradictory nature of the reports about his career to the discovery of a distinctive perception of Islamic history.

In what follows, I will try to analyze the reasons why Sayf bin ‘Umar, being the first narrator of the reports about Ibn Saba, which appear to be in defense of the companions, felt the need for such narrations. Also, an attempt will be made to examine the approach which Muslim historians and heresiographers adopted with respect to the narrations of Sayf bin ‘Umar.

### **Possible Reasons for Sayf bin ‘Umar’s Narration of the Reports About Ibn Saba**

The reports in which Sayf bin ‘Umar speaks of the *fitnah* events differ from what his other contemporary historians tell regarding Ibn Saba’s role. Viewing the events from the perspective of Sayf might seem more relieving to a Muslim who naturally have love and respect for the Prophet as well as for his companions. Nevertheless, the reports of Sayf agree neither with the social and political conditions of the age, nor with the event-doctrine relationship, and nor with the reports of his colleagues. This forces us to seek for the reasons Sayf narrated as he did. So, it will be helpful to begin with examining what is known of the life of Sayf himself.

The sources provide no detailed information on the career of Sayf, who is one of the major sources of Ṭabarī. All we know about him is that he was from Kufa, settled and became famous in Baghdad, and died between the years 170/786 and 200/815, a period which coincides with the caliphate of Hārūn al-Rashīd<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, perhaps the only way to understand him better is to investigate the social, political and religious settings in which he lived.

One can observe that Sayf adopts a strict apologist attitude when narrating the events that took place during the caliphate of ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī, making thereby a great effort to ward off any possible criticism that might be leveled against the dear companions of the Prophet. He might also have thought it safer to interpret such events as the assassination of the Caliph ‘Uthmān, the political conflicts among ‘Aisha, wife of the Prophet, Ṭalḥa, Zubayr, and ‘Alī as a conspiracy of the Jews, who had been notorious for treasons and instigations during the lifetime of the Prophet, instead of

describing them as the consequences of the errors made by such respected companions as Abū Dharr and ‘Ammār bin Yāsir. The fact that Sayf, although not much liked by the hadith scholars<sup>4</sup>, was the only narrator who reported the hadith “May Allah damn those who curse at my companions!” corroborates this claim of ours.<sup>5</sup> I think that one of his goals in narrating these reports was to explain, or more accurately, to justify the political slips of the above-mentioned companions by ascribing the blame to the activities of Ibn Saba.

The fact that Sayf spent most of his life under the Abbasid rule does not necessarily, at least for now, suggest that his socio-cultural milieu had a political impact on his reports. Instead, it seems wiser to focus on his socio-cultural settings. Uncovering this point will reveal another aspect of his reports. His lifespan coincides with a very vivid period of the gestation of the Shi‘ah, covering numerous religious currents. Within this chaotic period of the second century of Islam that covers the collapse of the Umayyads and the rise of the Abbasids, the extreme views of the Shiite groups known by different appellations must have troubled his mind<sup>6</sup>. One can observe that such groups adopted some beliefs that broke away from the mainstream formulation of Islamic creed and were disapproved of by the main body of Muslim community, and that the name of ‘Alī was involved in way or another. Sayf most likely knew a great deal of them. Of these, the views Mughīra bin Sa‘īd and his friends set forth about Abū Bakr and ‘Umar must have raised his hackles.<sup>7</sup> These views, which can be taken as the first manifestation of the practice of cursing at the companions, by nature caused abhorrence among the mainstream Muslim community. For instance, Mughira maintained that Muhammad, who was created by Mughīra’s god, offered the mission of protecting ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālib to ‘Umar and Abū Bakr, exhorting both not to deceive him in this world. To his mind, this trust was like the coming true of the verse “We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains...”<sup>8</sup> He holds that this promise must have been broken so that ‘Umar could say to Abū Bakr, “I would help you against ‘Alī on the condition that you pronounce me as caliph after you,” which Abū Bakr accepted. He also claims that this is the coming true of the Qur’anic verse, “Their allies deceived them, like Satan when he says to man, “Disbelieve”, but when (man) disbelieves, Satan says, “I am free of thee.”<sup>9</sup> This interpretation likens ‘Umar to Satan, putting him along with Abū Bakr among the blameworthy.

Abū Manşūr al-Ijlī (d. 123/741?) and his friends were among those of whose views Sayf were also possibly aware. Pronouncing similar extreme opinions about the companions, Abū Manşūr believed that Paradise and Hell were none other than the human beings. For him, while Paradise stands for the Imam of the age whom the Shi‘ah should serve and support, Hell signifies

the person against whom God commanded the Muslims to show enmity, i.e., the enemy of the Imam. As a ramification of this perception, Abū Maṣṣūr explained the religious injunctions away in a similar way. In other words, the obligatory acts are the name of the Imams whereas the impermissible acts are the name of those whom God forbade to support<sup>10</sup>. Such blasphemous words about the companions of the Prophet must have deeply disturbed Sayf who held the companions of the Prophet in high esteem. These examples are far from drawing an exhaustive picture of the settings he lived in. As a matter of fact, the replacement of the Umayyads by the Abbasids introduced a different character to the cultural domain, setting the stage for the rise of such figures and views.

For example, one can mention the surroundings of Ja‘far al-Şādiq (d. 148/765). During that period, a number of people attended Ja‘far’s public teaching sessions, and many of them contributed much to the formation of the Shi‘ah. Of them, one can cite Hishām bin Ḥakam, the author of *Kitāb al-Radd ‘alā al-Mu‘tazila fī Amri Ṭalha wa al-Zubair*<sup>11</sup>, ‘Alī bin Ismā‘īl bin Mīsam al-Tammār, who accused those who fought ‘Alī of infidelity<sup>12</sup>, and Muḥammad bin ‘Alī bin Nu‘mān al-Ahwal, the author of *Kitāb al-Jamal fī Amri Ṭalha wa al-Zubair*<sup>13</sup>. Alas, the writings of these people have not come down to us. Taking into consideration their other views, the titles of their writings, and the implications of the titles, one can estimate that Sayf strove to respond to their claims. He even endeavored to inflict a severe criticism upon them by associating them with Judaism.

Considering the settings and conditions he lived in, it seems that Sayf’s intention is not merely to justify and acquit Abū Bakr and ‘Umar. As a matter of fact, his narrations do not mention any activities of Ibn Saba concerning the terms of their caliphate. The reason for his taking a different attitude from that of his colleagues and narrating different reports must have been the *fitnah* events along with the above-mentioned factors. It is in the course of these events that Muslims, for the first time in the history of Islam clashed with each other and shed each other’s blood. In addition to the aforementioned motivations on the part of Sayf, the movements which interpreted the contemporary issues anachronistically while attributing superhuman features to ‘Alī must also have agitated him. In order to justify and glorify ‘Alī, these sects did not shy away from detracting and condemning all the companions save ‘Alī. Sayf attempted at linking such groups with the speeches Ibn Saba had allegedly delivered in Egypt. In doing so, he aimed to subject the Shi‘ah to a partial criticism on the basis of the early period. In this case, one should take the narrations of Sayf as a response to what has been defined as the extreme groups. The fact that he put such key Shiite terms as the advent (*raj‘ah*) and executorship (*waşāyah*) of ‘Alī on the lips of Ibn Saba reveals his abhorrence for such groups.

These are the probable reasons for the emergence of the reports about Ibn Saba on which Ṭabarī, who was followed by the later Sunnite historians depended when telling of the events of the early period. For the above-mentioned reasons, Sayf tends to think that the companions did not err in political issues and most of the events that took place during this period were the results of political and religious conspiracies. In doing so, he implies that most of the events of the Shiite character that went on around him were hatched up by the Jews.

The Image of Ibn Saba in the Literature of Islamic History

**It is likely that the conditions which we have described above in association with Sayf bin ‘Umar influenced his historiography. We have also pointed out that in his explaining the *fitnah* events on the basis of the reports about Ibn Saba, he was relied upon by the historians who came after him. But the problem one should call attention to is that the historians who found their thesis upon the actions of Ibn Saba present this figure as acting largely around ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī. Though they also describe him as an active figure in the events that took place during the caliphate of ‘Alī, they do not mention the views that heresiographical books attribute to him relying on Sayf bin ‘Umar. Therefore, it is impossible to take the figure of Ibn Saba, about whom the sources talk, as a single personality.**

One notices some chronological contradictions in the claim of such historians as Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Athīr and Ibn Kathīr, who rely on the reports of Sayf regarding Ibn Saba converting to Islam during the caliphate of ‘Uthmān.<sup>14</sup> Allegedly he later traveled to Damascus, Basra, Kufa, and Egypt and made propaganda against ‘Uthmān. Finally, he reportedly went to Madina and took part in the assassination of the Caliph<sup>15</sup>. In this course of activities, the only speeches by Ibn Saba which Sayf claimed had propagated and disseminated the extreme Shiite views are those which he made in Egypt<sup>16</sup>. Except for these views, no other religious or sectarian views are attributed to him.

The concepts of the executorship and advent of ‘Alī, which were included in the propaganda activities of Ibn Saba in Egypt, are of great importance to the Shi‘ah. One should also bear in mind that while the person whose advent Ibn Saba talks of in the heresiographical books is ‘Alī, but the person whose advent he speaks of in Egypt is the Prophet Muhammad. Moreover, these Shiite views arose in the late first century of Islam in the course of the gestation of Shiism. In other words, they were publicized after the year 82/701 when Muḥammad bin al-Ḥanafiyah passed away<sup>17</sup>. The greatest error of Sayf is that he associates these views with the period of the Caliph ‘Uthmān in his reports. Nevertheless, we do not come across any extremist

view of Ibn Saba except what is found the reports about his activities in Egypt. Rather, we have an Ibn Saba character who takes part in political events. This issue is very important and deserves an in-depth discussion because, though Egypt is the best place for Ibn Saba to express the views that are attributed to him in the sources, books on Islamic history remain silent in relation to the role of Ibn Saba.

It is known that Sayf associates the reports on Ibn Saba with the term of ‘Alī’s caliphate in order to shift the blame for the clash between the parties on the Battle of Jamal. According to the historians who tended to overlook this first war that burst out among the Muslims, there was a treaty to be put in effect. However, a skirmish took place. The only narrator who provides a detailed description of why this treaty was not implemented is Sayf, who holds that the actualization of this treaty meant a severe punishment or the capital penalty for Ibn Saba and his followers, who were among the ranks of ‘Alī. In other words, if the treaty was to be put in effect, they would lose. Therefore, they stealthily moved to break the treaty and instigated the war.<sup>18</sup> So they were able to pit the two parties against each other and set them to kill each other though the parties had reached an agreement before the war.<sup>19</sup> It is possible that these reports of Sayf were produced by his apologist mind in order to mislead people into thinking that ‘Alī, who came to power with a legitimate public election, fought to quell the revolts against him by the aforementioned treaty. Although the heresiographers made Ibn Saba say a great deal about ‘Alī, including the claims that ‘Alī is a messenger and even a god, the historians do not make mention of this figure any longer in describing the events after the Battle of Jamal. This very fact suggests that the historians left this figure aside after they were done with him.

One of the contexts where Sayf could have something to say in relation to the reports of Ibn Saba is the rivalry between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiyah. Considering the stratagem of Mu‘āwiyah against ‘Alī as in the episode of the ring trick, the Battle of Şıffin is a more fertile field compared to the Battle of Jamal.<sup>20</sup> However, the fact that Sayf’s reports do not include the events of this period and Mu‘āwiyah’s political practices might have stemmed from the fact that he considered them too evident to be covered up. Nevertheless, the conflict between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiyah is outside the scope of this study.

Considering the perspective from which the historical sources look at the reports of Ibn Saba, we can say that they tend to draw the picture of a political character. Though they talk of a series of events he was involved in, they do not ascribe to Ibn Saba, who was alleged to have founded the sect of *Sabaiyya*, the extreme views at issue. It is quite interesting that history books fail to include the allegedly extreme views of the sect which assassinated the Caliph ‘Uthmān and installed ‘Alī in his place. One has great difficulty in

bridging the gap between the figure of Ibn Saba in the history books and the character of Ibn Saba in the heresiographical literature.

### **Associating Ibn Saba with ‘Alī and Extremist Shiite Groups**

The heresiographers’ descriptions of Ibn Saba’s views on ‘Alī associate him with the Shi‘ah. The ascription of ‘Alī with superhuman features on the part of the Shiite and its sub-branches led to the rise of many false claims about ‘Alī. Their glorification of ‘Alī and his descendants set the stage for the later sects to create their own myth of ‘Alī.<sup>21</sup> One can assert that the heresiographers are inclined to endorse the thesis that such beliefs came to the surface in this chaotic period and Ibn Saba played an active part in the formation of the early Shiite doctrines and movements. One also needs to bear in mind that the heresiographical literature no longer mentions the Sayf-originated reports which had been cited in the books of history<sup>22</sup>.

According to the reports narrated by the heresiographers, the version of Ibn Saba, which history books excluded, spoke mostly of ‘Alī. Though the descriptions of the heresiographers sometimes overlap, they often take a different route. In other words, the point is not the existence of such a figure around ‘Alī and ‘Alī’s reactions to him; instead, the question is that the writers who add to the existing reports about Ibn Saba, give vent to their disapproval and dislike for the extremist Shi‘ite groups in their age through this figure. This part of my study shall focus on the aspects of the relationships between ‘Alī and Ibn Saba, which have diversified and transformed over time.<sup>23</sup> These heresiographers’ descriptions of Ibn Saba can be summarized over the next few pages as follows:

Ibn Saba and his supporters claimed that ‘Alī is their god. In response, ‘Alī either burned or sent him into exile<sup>24</sup>, saying that “When I see an evil action, I light a fire and call Qanbar.”<sup>25</sup>

To associate Ibn Saba with the Rafiḍite, the heresiographers alleged that he had said that the current copy of the Qur’ān was one-ninth less than Ali’s copy. Likewise, he responded to the person who conveyed to him the news of ‘Alī’s death by saying: “By God, we do not accept his death even if you bring his brain bundled in seventy wrappers because we do know that he will not die until he drives the Arabs together with his staff.”<sup>26</sup>

The adherents of Ibn Saba believed in the *Imāmah* as a tenet of belief after ‘Alī had passed away.<sup>27</sup> They introduced the notion of dissociation (*tabarrī*) from Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān and other companions, and believed neither in the permissibility nor the lawfulness of the doctrine of dissimulation (*taqiyyah*).<sup>28</sup> Ibn Saba was such an extremist that ‘Alī wanted to kill him but the people held him back.<sup>29</sup>



Ibn Saba befriended ‘Alī and claimed that he was the executor of the Prophet (*waṣī*). In addition to the doctrine of the necessity of *Imamah*, he put forward the notion of dissociation, and declared his enemies to be infidel.<sup>30</sup>

According to the belief of Ibn Saba’s supporters, ‘Alī is in the clouds; thunders are his voice; lightning is his whip. By these views, he contributed to the birth of other sects.<sup>31</sup> He is the first person to have talked of the stop of *imāmah* (*waqf*) and extreme beliefs (*ghuluww*).<sup>32</sup> ‘Alī’s turban was called “cloud” by the Prophet, but the followers of Ibn Saba interpreted this word in a way that would fit into their doctrine.<sup>33</sup>

Ibn Saba and his followers are categorized as the fourteenth branch of the *Ghaliyyah* (Extremist Shi‘ites).<sup>34</sup> They believed that ‘Alī did not die, would return to the world before the Doomsday, and fill the world with justice.<sup>35</sup>

Ibn Saba claimed that ‘Alī is a god and he is ‘Alī’s messenger. In response to this claim, ‘Alī summoned and asked him to repent. When he refused, ‘Alī imprisoned him for three days, burned, or damned him.<sup>36</sup>

In association with Ibn Saba, it is narrated that after the battle that ‘Alī had fought against the people of Basra, he spoke to seventy people of al-Zuṭṭ.<sup>37</sup> who came from India, in their own native language. They greeted and conversed with ‘Alī. He replied to them in their language and said that he was not a superhuman being as they claimed. He called on them to repent, but they refused. Then, ‘Alī got angry with them, ordered wells to be dug and imprisoned them in the wells. Afterwards, he ordered the top of the wells to be covered and set the wells afire, and so they were suffocated to death.<sup>38</sup>

Constituting the first faction of the *Ghulāt*, Ibn Saba and his followers are the founders of the Shiite and the *Rafīdah*, which consists in fifteen factions.<sup>39</sup> For him, ‘Alī partakes of Muhammad’s mission of prophethood and would be superior to the Prophet if he were to survive. After the death of the Prophet, ‘Alī inherited the office of the prophets who had received revelation, and again it was Gabriel who brought him the divine message.<sup>40</sup>

When the dispatch of ‘Alī’s death reached Madain, some of Ibn Saba’s followers did not accept the news. The claim that ‘Alī did not die was criticized with the following reactions: “If so, why have we shared his properties out and married his wives off?” Afterwards, Ibn Saba’s followers were divided into four groups,<sup>41</sup> holding out such doctrines as God’s changing of His opinion (*badā*), the advent (*raj’at*), and the pre-eternity (*qidam*) of ‘Alī.<sup>42</sup>

Ibn Saba objected to ‘Alī’s advice to extend the hands up during the supplication following the ritual prayer by saying, “O commander of the faithful! Is God not everywhere?” In response, ‘Alī recited the Qur’ānic

verses which inform that both maintenance and torment lie in the heavens.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, a descendent of Ibn Saba affiliated himself to the *Mufawwiḍah* which claimed that Muhammad and ‘Alī created the world, distributed maintenance, and killed and resurrected people.<sup>44</sup>

Abdullah Ibn Saba and Abdullah Ibn Sawdā are two different persons.<sup>45</sup> Being originally a Jewish of Hīrah, the latter is a follower of the former and pretended to have converted to Islam to acquire prestige among the people of Kufa. He applied to ‘Alī the Toraic notion that “every prophet has an executor.” For him, while Muhammad is the best of prophets, ‘Alī is the best of executors. Hearing these words, ‘Alī and his followers came to set value on him. However, ‘Alī wanted to kill him upon having heard of Ibn Saba’s extreme words about him. Yet, Ibn ‘Abbās dissuaded ‘Alī from this idea because such an action could create a split among his troops during the war he would wage on the people of Damascus. Thus, ‘Alī banished both Ibn Saba and Ibn Sawdā to Madain.

Ibn Saba claimed that two springs would gush out of Kufa Mosque, one of them flowing honey and the other flowing butter, and ‘Alī’s followers would feed on these two springs until satiated.<sup>46</sup>

Ibn Saba took up the doctrine of metempsychosis by ascribing divinity to other than God<sup>47</sup>. For Ibn Saba’s followers, the notion that ‘Alī is a god was known even during the age of the companions. For instance, when ‘Umar learned that someone’s eye was gauged, he said, “What can I say of the hand of God who gauged an eye in the precincts of God?”<sup>48</sup> In this case, the person who gauged the eye was said to be ‘Alī. Furthermore, ‘Umar is claimed to refer to ‘Alī by “the hand of God.” So, this description of ‘Alī with divinity was the first time it was put on the lips of ‘Umar.<sup>49</sup>

‘Alī spoke to a skull at a place where he had stopped off while returning from Mada’in, and the people around him witnessed this episode. Based on this episode, Ibn Saba and his followers claimed that ‘Alī was a god who resurrects the dead. Yet ‘Alī called on them to repent. When they refused, he burned some of them and forgave some others.<sup>50</sup>

‘Alī came upon Ibn Saba and his followers eating food in the month of Ramadan, asking them why they did not fast. They replied: “You are You!” ‘Alī noticed that they viewed him as a god and called on them to return to Islam. When they refused, he had them burned. However, he forgave Ibn Saba on the condition that he would leave Kufa, banishing him to Mada’in.<sup>51</sup> Such figures as ‘Abdullah bin Şabrah al-Hamadānī and ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amr bin Ḥarb al-Kindī are among the followers of Ibn Saba in Madain. Ibn Saba comes from a Jewish or Christian ancestry.<sup>52</sup>

Ibn Saba and his adherents believed that Ja'far al-Şādiq possessed all the rational and religious knowledge, imitating him on every issue without seeking any proof.<sup>53</sup>

Ibn Saba claimed that 'Alī was not assassinated by Ibn Muljam, rather by Satan who assumed his form.<sup>54</sup>

Ibn Saba is in fact 'Abdullāh bin Wahb bin Saba. He spoke of 'Alī's executorship and advent, adding the advent of the Prophet. The views set forth about son of Ja'far al-Şādiq by the Ismailites are the same as the belief of the stop of *imāmah*. The belief of the Fatimites in Egypt is the same as the claims of Ibn Saba. The origin of the Ismailites and the Qaramites is the *Sabaiyya*.<sup>55</sup>

These are the reports on Ibn Saba that we have gathered from the Islamic heresiographical literature, which have grown in diversity and contradiction over time. It is meaningful that the reports occurring in these books are included in the Shi'ite sources. Therefore, this subject remains unexhausted and demands more research. Some contemporary Shiite writers have made great efforts to demonstrate that no figure like Ibn Saba lived in the early period of Islam. They believe that the reports on Ibn Saba are aimed at calumniating the Shi'ah which they claimed existed during the lifetime of the Prophet. They endeavor to trace such reports back to the early period through Ibn Saba in order to edify a past for themselves in the early period and find an immaculate past. However, these claims are sheer anachronism since Shiism did not exist at the age of the Prophet and 'Alī, nor can its doctrines be dated as far back as the last quarter of the first century of Islam.

I see the Sunnite reiteration of the narrations involved in the Shiite sources as efforts to defame the Shiite. Some modern Salafi researchers have striven to defend the information extant in the classic sources without an accurate reading of them, endeavoring in vain to censure the Shiite through the first century.<sup>56</sup> Sometimes, the same researchers slipped to supporting what they intended to criticize. Furthermore, I see their studies of this type as no more than collections of narrations.

To sum up, the heresiographers attached almost no importance to the historical part Abdullah Ibn Saba played in the events that took place during the caliphate of 'Uthmān, and instead drew a picture of the figure who lived during the caliphate of 'Alī. Moreover, their descriptions of the personality and identity of Ibn Saba often contradict each other.

### **Conclusion**

It seems that Sayf bin 'Umar in his narrations drew a subjective and unrealistic picture of the events that occurred during the caliphate of 'Uthmān and 'Alī because of his aversion to the idea that the companions

might have erred in political issues. He implied that the Jews who had been notorious for their plots and stratagem had a hand in the catastrophic events that took place during the lifetime of the distinguished companions of the Prophet. In the same manner, he invokes Ibn Saba as a scapegoat, suggesting the Shiites as his possible followers by associating him with the Shiite views. In doing so, he tries to defame the Shiites by placing them on a par with the Jews. Nevertheless, his narrations do not draw the same picture of Ibn Saba who is the source of many later extremist views as portrayed by the later heresiographers.

In conclusion, the personality of Ibn Saba, which figures in the books of history and heresiography, suggests that there are different and more than one Ibn Saba. The figure of Ibn Saba as portrayed in the history books acts mostly around 'Uthmān and 'Alī, taking an active part especially in political events while the personality of Ibn Saba as pictured in the heresiographical literature has no involvement in the events of 'Uthmān's caliphate. In the latter version, he figures as an extremist Shiite who utters and displays outright extreme views and behaviors around 'Alī. Above all, he is depicted as the representative of all the foreign views and thoughts that infiltrated Islam later. It seems that both groups of the writers made use of this character as they wished, ascribing what they perceived of as evil, to this imaginary personality.

## DİPNOTLAR

- <sup>1</sup> Siddik Korkmaz has a Ph. D. in the History of Islamic Sects and is currently working as a senior lecturer in Theology Faculty in University Konya, Turkey. E-mail: skorkmaz@selcuk.edu.tr.
- <sup>2</sup> Literally meaning seduction and tumult, this Arabic term is used to refer to the series of political and factional events in the early years of Islam during the period of Caliph 'Uthmān and 'Alī.
- <sup>3</sup> Dhahabī, Abū 'Abdillāh bin Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bin 'Uthmān (d. 848/1444), *Mīzān al-Itidāl fī Naqd al-Rijāl*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī, 1382/1963, II/255–56; Ibn Ḥajar, Shihābuddīn Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad bin 'Alī al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1448), *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, Beirut, 1325/1907, IV/295.
- <sup>4</sup> Consult al-Isbahānī, Abū Nu'aym Ahmad bin 'Abdillāh bin Ahmad bin Ishāq (d. 430/1038), *al-Musnad al-Mustakhrij 'alā Sahīhi Imām Muslim*, ed. Muhammad Hassan Ismā'īl al-Shāfi'ī, Beirut, 1996, I/68.
- <sup>5</sup> Al-Tirmidhī, Muhammad bin 'Isā Abū 'Isā (d. 279/909), *Sunan*, ed. Ahmad Muhammad al-Shākir et al., no date, Beirut, V/697; al-Haythamī, 'Alī bin Abī Bakr (d. 807/1404), *Majma' al-Zawā'id*, Cairo, 1407/1986, X/21; al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān*, II/256.
- <sup>6</sup> For the movements referred to with the following titles Sabaiyyah, Kaysāniyya, Bayāniyya, Muḡhīriyya, Mansūriyya, Harbiyya, Khattābiyya, Aftahiyya, Ismā'iliyya, Mūsawīyya, Nāwusiyya, and Shumaitiyya, consult al-Nawbakhtī, Abū Muhammad Hassan bin Mūsā (d. 310/922), *Firaq al-Shī'ah*, ed. Muhammad Sādiq Āli Bahr al-'Ulūm, Najaf, 1355/1936, p. 22 and on; al-Kummī, *Kitāb al-Maqālāt wa al-Firaq*, ed. Muhammad Jawād Mashkūr, Tehran 1963, 19 and on.

- <sup>7</sup> See al-Ash‘arī, Abū al-Hassan, ‘Alī bin Ismā‘il (d. 330/941), *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn wa Ikhtilāf al-Musallīmīn*, ed. Muhammad Muhyiddīn ‘Abdulhamīd, Beirut, 1416/1995, I/72–74; al-Baghdādī al-Isfarāyīnī al-Tamīmī (d. 429/1037), *al-Firaq Bayn al-Firaq*, edited and annotated by Muhammad Muhyiddīn ‘Abdulhamīd, al-Maktab al-‘Aşriyyah, Beirut, 1411/1990, p. 240; al-Shahristānī, Abū al-Fath Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdīlkarīm, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, ed. Ahmad Fahmī Muhammad, no date, Beirut, I/181.
- <sup>8</sup> The Surah Ahzāb, 33/72.
- <sup>9</sup> The Surah Hashr, 59/16.
- <sup>10</sup> Al-Nawbakhtī, *al-Firaq*, pp. 38–39; al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, I/75; *al-Shahristānī*, *al-Milal*, I/181–182.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibn Nadīm, Abū al-Faraj Muḥammad bin Ishāq al-Warrāq (d. 385/995), *al-Fihrist*, ed. Ibrāhīm Ramadān, Beirut, 1417/1997, p. 218; al-Ṭūsī, Abū Ja‘far Muhammad bin Hassan (d. 460/1607), *al-Fihrist*, Beirut, 1983, p. 175.
- <sup>12</sup> al-Khayyāt, Abū al-Husayn ‘Abdurrahīm bin Muhammad bin ‘Uthmān (d. 298/910), *al-Intisār wa al-Radd ‘alā Ibn al-Rāwandī*, ed. A. Nasrī Nādir, Beirut, 1957, p. 75.
- <sup>13</sup> He also has a book entitled *Kitāb al-‘Imāma*. See Ibn Nedim, *al-Fihrist*, p. 219; Ṭūsī, *Fihrist*, p. 136.
- <sup>14</sup> In Tabarī’s reports, Sayf says that Ibn Saba pretended to be a Muslim in Damascus in the year 30/650. On the other hand, he reports that Ibn Saba converted to Islam in the year 35/655. Cf. al-Tabarī, Abū Ja‘far Muhammad bin Jarīr (d. 310/922), *Tā’rīkh al-Tabarī*, ed. Muhammad Abū al-Fadl, no date, Cairo, IV/283. In addition, Nāshī al-Akbar reports that he converted to Islam at the hand of ‘Alī. Cf. Nāshī al-Akbar, *Masāil al-Imāmah (Usūl al-Nihal)*, no date, Lebanon, p. 22. For detailed information, consult Sıddık Korkmaz, *Tarihîñ Tahrifî Ibn Sebe Meselesi (The Distortion of History: The Issue of Ibn Saba)*, Ankara, 2005, p. 24 and on.
- <sup>15</sup> Sayf bin ‘Umar (d. 180–200/796–815), *al-Fitnah wa waq‘at al-Jamal*, compiled and arranged by Ahmad Rātīb Armūsh, Beirut, 1406/1986 pp. 11, 34 and on; al-Tabarī, *Tā’rīkh*, IV/340 and on; Ibn al-Athīr, Abū al-Hassan ‘Alī bin Abī al-Karam Muhammad bin Muhammad bin ‘Abdīlkarīm bin ‘Abdīlwāhid al-Shaybānī al-Jazarī, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tā’rīkh*, ed. Abū al-Fidā ‘Abdullāh al-Qādī, Beirut, 1407/1987, III/27–28 and on; Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-Fidā Ismā‘il bin ‘Umar al-Qurashī al-Dimashqī (d. 774/1372), *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah fī al-Ta’rīkh*, no date, Egypt, III/46, 47 and on.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibn Sayf claims that Ibn Saba said in Egypt the following: “Though people believe in the advent of Jesus, they fail to believe in the advent of Muhammad. As a matter of fact, Muhammad deserves to come back more than does Jesus... There are one thousand prophets and all of them have an executor. ‘Alī is the executor of Muhammad. ‘Uthmān usurped caliphate unjustly, which is against the testament of the Messenger of Allah. So, o people! Get up and move, and condemn your rulers!” Cf. Sayf, *al-Fitnah*, p. 48–50; al-Tabarī, *Tā’rīkh*, IV/340–341.
- <sup>17</sup> See Al-Nawbakhtī, *al-Firaq*, pp. 23, 29, 34; al-Qummī, pp. 32–33; al-Malatī, Abū al-Husayn Muhammad bin Ahmad bin ‘Abdurrahmān, *al-Tanbīh wa al-Radd ‘alā Ahl al-Ahvā’ wa al-Bid‘ah*, ed. Muhammad Zāhid bin al-Hassan al-Kawtharī, Baghdad, 1388/1968, p. 19; cf. Friedleander, “Abdallah bin Saba, der Begründer der Si’a, und sein Jüdischer Ursprung, I-II”, *Zeitschrift für Assriologie*, 24, Strassburg, 1909, 1910, 2, p. 14–15; W. M. Watt, “İlk Dönemde Hilafet”, Turkish translation by A. Bülent Ünal, *İslam Mezheplerine Dair Bazı Kavramlar*, İzmir, 1997, p. 54.
- <sup>18</sup> We disregard the term “*Sabaiyya*” used to refer to the rebels who revolted during the election of caliph. Consult Sayf, *al-Fitnah*, pp. 96–97; al-Tabarī, *Tā’rīkh*, IV/436–437 and on; cf. Ella Landau-Tasserion, “Sayf Ibn ‘Umar in Medieval and Modern Scholarship”, *Der Islam*, 67/1990, p. 2.
- <sup>19</sup> Sayf, *al-Fitnah*, pp. 48–50; al-Tabarī, *Tā’rīkh*, IV/340–341, 494 and on; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, III/126 and on.

- <sup>20</sup> See Sayf, *al-Fitnah*, pp. 48–50; al-Tabarī, *Tā'rikh*, IV/340–341 and on. Maqrīdī's different description of the events of this period catches attention. However, he also mentions Ibn Saba with different names, depriving us of the possibility to take him as a single personality. When speaking of the sectarian and factional movements in Egypt, he refers to the role of Ibn Saba in the assassination of the Caliph 'Uthmān as the founder of Shi'ah. He describes the course of the assassination relying upon the reports of Sayf as occurred in Tabarī. However, in his quotation of Sayf's reports, he does not mention Ibn Saba's journey to Damascus, nor does he quote the reports on the advent of 'Alī. See al-Maqrīdī, Taqiyyuddīn Abū al-'Abbās Ahmad bin 'Alī (d. 845/1441), *Kitāb al-Mawā'iz wa al-I'tibār bi-Dhikr al-Khitāt wa al-Āthār*, no date, Cairo, IV/146–147.
- <sup>21</sup> These groups turned away from the obligation of following the Sunnah of the Prophet and forged an excuse to justify their extreme actions as well. With the accusation of "being the enemy of 'Alī or the household of the Prophet", they disregarded a great majority of the companions. By doing so, they evaded the responsibility of conforming to the exemplary practices that trace back to the early years of Islam.
- <sup>22</sup> We should note that we take Qummī's reports about Ibn Saba as exception because he was not quoted by the following generations of heresiographers.
- <sup>23</sup> We observe that it is Jāhiz (255/868) who first time narrated the Madain-originated report, which shall be reported by most of the later sources, that 'Alī would not die, in association with Ibn Saba and 'Abdullāh bin Harb. In Jāhiz's reports, Ibn Harb's views are not similar to those of Ibn Saba which Sayf claimed he propagated in Egypt. One can observe that Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/844) provides some information partially similar to those provided by the heresiographers. See Ibn Sa'd, Abū 'Abdillāh al-Basrī al-Zuhrī, *al-Tabaqāt al-Kubrā*, ed. Ihsān 'Abbās, Beirut 1388/1968, III/39, VII/512; al-Jāhiz, Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr bin Bahr, *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn*, Cairo 1948/1367, III/81. For the city of Madain which is located near Baghdad and once hosted the throne of Kisrā, see Firūzābādī, Muhammad bin Ya'qūb (817/1414), *al-Qāmūs al-Muhīt*, no date and place, I/1592. Though Ibn Harb al-Kindī ascribes to Ibn Saba the notion of divinity and reincarnation, Sayf only ascribes to him the advent and executorship of 'Alī and political criticism of the companions. See Sayf, *al-Fitnah*, pp. 48–50; al-Qummī, *el-Maḡālāt*, 21; al-Tabarī, *Tā'rikh*, 4/340–341. However, we should note that Jāhiz's work is not a heresiographical book, nor are Ibn Saba and Ibn Harb the same person.
- <sup>24</sup> Al-Juzjānī, Iṣḥāq Ibrāhīm bin Ya'qūb (d. 259/872), *Aḥwāl al-Rijāl*, ed. al-Sayyid Ṣubḥī al-Badrī al-Samarrāi, Beirut, 1405/1985, pp. 37–38; Ibn Qutaybah, Abū Muḥammad 'Abdullāh bin Muslim (d. 276/889), *al-Ma'ārif*, ed. Tharwah 'Uqqashah, no date, Cairo, p. 622.
- <sup>25</sup> We have limited information on Qanbar who is known as the slave of 'Alī. Consult al-Ya'qūbī, Aḥmad bin Abī Ya'qūb bin Ja'far bin Wahb (d. 292/905), *Tā'rikh al-Ya'qūbī*, no date, Beirut, II/214. Ibn Ḥajar informs that what is known of Qanbar's ancestry is unclear and he reported no ḥadīth. However, he narrates the following report about Qanbar: "'Uthmān bin Wāqid says: When I was sitting with 'Abdullāh bin Abī Sufyān bin al-Hārith, Qanbar came over and greeted us. But he did not reply to him. I said: Is this the way you are treating the slave of the son of your paternal uncle? He answered: He came to Kufa and condemned 'Uthmān whereas I heard 'Alī said: "I hope I sit opposite 'Uthmān in Paradise." Consult *Lisān al-Mizān*, IV/475. I would like to take this report narrated by Ibn Ḥajar as an attempt to reconcile 'Alī and 'Uthmān.
- <sup>26</sup> Nāshī al-Akbar (d. 293/905), *Masāil al-Imāmah wa Uṣul al-Niḥal*, no date, Beirut, p. 22–23; Israel Friedlaender, "The Heterodoxies of the Shiites in the Presentation of Ibn Hazm", *JAOS*, New York City, 1908, 29/43.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibn Saba is identified here as 'Abdullāh bin Wahb al-Rāsibī al-Hamadānī. Consult al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shī'ah*, p. 22–23; al-Qummī, *Maḡālāt*, p. 21.

- <sup>28</sup> For example, the Ismailite author Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī also reiterates similar information. Consult Aḥmad bin Ḥamdān (d. 324/925), *Kitāb al-Ziyānah fī Kalimāt al-İsmā'īliyyah al-'Arabīyyah*, ed. 'Abdullāh Sallūm al-Samarrāī, *al-Ghuluww wa al-Firaq al-Ghāliyyah*, 1982, London-Baghdad, pp. 305–306. For his view of the companions, cf. Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mīzān*, III/289–290.
- <sup>29</sup> Al-Qummī, *Maqālāt*, p. 20.
- <sup>30</sup> Consult al-Qummī, *Maqālāt*, p. 21; Nawbakhtī, *Firaq*, p. 33.
- <sup>31</sup> Al-Qummī, *al-Maqālāt*, p. 28. The narration that 'Alī is in the clouds was later accounted as the views of the sect *Seḥābiyyah*, too. Consult Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī, Abū Sa'īd Nashwān bin Sa'īd (d. 573/1178), *al-Ḥūr al-'Īn*, ed. Kamāl Muştafā, Egypt, 1948, pp. 154–155. Cf. al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, pp. 223–235; al-Ḥimyarī, *al-Ḥūr al-'Īn*, pp. 154,155. For further information that combines Sayyid Ḥimyarī and later Shiite groups, consult al-Yamanī, Abū Muḥammad (lived around 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century), *'Aqā'id al-Thalāthah wa Sab'īna Firqatan*, ed. Muḥammad bin 'Abdillāh Zarabān al-Ghāmīdī, Madina, 1422/2001, I/472–476
- <sup>32</sup> Al-Qummī, *Maqālāt*, p. 20.
- <sup>33</sup> Cf. al-'Askarī, al-Sayyid Murtadā, *'Abdullāh bin Saba wa Asā'iru Ukhra'*, no date and place, 1992; *'Abdullāh bin Saba wa Dīgar Afsānahā-yi Tā'rīkhī*, Persian translation by Ahmad Fakhri Zanjānī, Muhammad Sādiq Najafī, Hāshim Harīsī, Tehran, 1365/1945, II/323 and on.
- <sup>34</sup> Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, I/86–88.
- <sup>35</sup> Al-Ash'arī establishes a relationship between Sayyid Himyarī and Ibn Saba by quoting the former's poem that reads as "I swear by the day on which people come back to the world before the Day of Judgment." However, any historical relationship between Himyarī (d. 173/789-790) and Ibn Saba who must have lived at the lifetime of 'Alī seems to be impossible. Consult *Maqālāt*, I/86–88. On the other hand, the work entitled *Maqālāt* that is attributed to Imām al-Māturīdī includes no direct reference to Ibn Saba. It talks merely of *Sabbābiyya* as a sub-branch of the *Murjia*. Consult Cairo University, The Section of Manuscripts, no 19495; Sıddık Korkmaz, "İmam Ebū Mansūr el-Māturīdī'nin Hayatı ve Eserleri (The Life and Works of Imām Abū Manşūr al-Māturīdī)", *Dinî Araştırmalar*, 4/10, Ankara, 2001, p. 109–110. Consult al-Māturīdī, Abū Mansūr Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Mahmūd, (d. 333/944), *Kitāb al-Maqālāt* (?), Cairo University Library, mns no.: 19495.fol. 8<sup>a</sup>. Cf. al-Nasafī, Abū Mu'ī' Makhūl bin Fadl (d. 318/930), *Kitāb al-Radd 'alā al-Bida'*, ed. Marie Bernard, *Annales Islamogiqes*, 16 (1980), pp. 39–126; al-Nasafī, *Kitāb al-Radd*, p. 115. The same thought is voiced under the title al-Sāibiyya. Consult Amīn, Sharīf Yahyā, *Mu'jam al-Firaq al-Islāmiyya*, Beirut, 1406/1986, p. 131.
- <sup>36</sup> We can cite al-Kashshī for different definitions in the Shi'ah. His description is in a sense the summary of what Qummī says. He only adds the chains of transmitters most of which were possibly forged later. See Muhammad bin 'Amr (d. around 340/951), *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, Mashhad, 1348/1929, p. 107.
- <sup>37</sup> Consult al-Farāhidī, Abū 'Abdirrahmān al-Khalīl bin Aḥmad (d. 170/786), *Kitāb al-'Ayn*, ed. Mahdī al-Makhzūmī, Ibrāhīm al-Samarrāī, no date and place, VII/347; al-Rāzī, Muḥammad bin Abī Bakr bin 'Abdilqādir (d. 666/1268), *Mukhṭār al-Şiḥāh*, ed. Maḥmūd Khāṭir, Beirut, 1415/1995, p. 280.
- <sup>38</sup> Al-Kashshī, *Rijāl*, p. 109. However, there is no reports which inform that 'Alī knows any language other than Arabic. The claims that 'Alī burned or suffocated these people have no historical accuracy whatsoever.
- <sup>39</sup> Al-Malaṭī, *al-Tanbīh*, pp. 18–19, 156. This means that the Rafidites and the Shiites stemmed from the *Ghulāt*.
- <sup>40</sup> Al-Malaṭī, *al-Tanbīh*, p. 158. Such claims that can be taken as a picture of the claims of some Shiite factions about 'Alī disagree with the historical personality of 'Alī. In addition, the views those were associated with 'Alī through Ibn Saba have more similarity to the

Nusayrite doctrines. Though we have no much information on this sect, it must have formed by the time.

- <sup>41</sup> Al-Malaṭī, *al-Tanbīh*, pp. 18–19. For the source of these reports, consult Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, ed. İḥsān ‘Abbās, Beirut 1388/1968, III/39, VII/512.
- <sup>42</sup> As of these sects, al-Malaṭī says what follows: “These sects all believe in the doctrine of *badā*. The notion of *badā* which I do not like to speak of is that which denotes God’s changing His opinion. These are all the sects of infidelity and ignorance. So long as they fail to profess to the death of Muḥammad and ‘Alī, they should be considered to be the committers of grave sin because they have no proof as to what they claim. As with their doctrine that ‘Alī is a pre-eternal deity, they converge with the Christian view of Jesus. We have already refuted the Naṣṭūrī doctrine that that which has quality and corporeal body cannot be God. Their doctrine of the advent of ‘Alī is the same.” Consult *al-Tanbīh*, p. 19.
- <sup>43</sup> The Surah Zāriyāt, 51/22. Consult al-Qummī, “Shaykh Ṣadūq”, Abū Ja’far Muḥammad bin ‘Alī Ibn Ibn Bābawayh (d. 381/991), *al-Hiṣāl*, Qum, 1403/1982, II/628–629; al-Ḥassan bin Shu’bah al-Ḥarrānī, (lived around 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century), *Tuhaf al-Uqūl*, Qum, 1404/1983, p. 68.
- <sup>44</sup> Consult al-Qummī, “Shaykh Ṣadūq”, Abū Ja’far Muḥammad bin ‘Alī Ibn Bābawayh (d. 381/991), *Risālat al-I’tiqādāt al-Imāmiyyah (Şit’ Imāmiyye’nin İnanç Esasları)*, Turkish translation by Ethem Ruhi Fiğlalı, Ankara, 1978, p. 119. Cf. al-Majlisī, Muḥammad Bāqir (d. 1110/1698), *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Beirut 1404/1698, 25/343.
- <sup>45</sup> Baghdādī (d. 429/1037) holds that Ibn Saba is the source of almost all the non-Islamic doctrines and sects. Choosing the term *Rāfiḍah* to criticize the Shiite in his *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, he reiterates all the narrations occurring in the earlier books by associating all the extremist views with Ibn Saba and ‘Alī. He complements the present factions with the following ones: *Bayāniyya* named after Bayān bin Sam‘ān al-‘Ijlī (d. 119/737), *Mughīriyya* named after Mughīrah bin Sa‘īd al-‘Ijlī (d. 126/743), *Manṣūriyya* named after Abū Manṣūr al-‘Ijlī (d. 123/741), *Khaṭṭābiyya* named after Abū al-Khaṭṭāb al-Asadī (d. 145-147/762-764), the *Hulūliyya* who believe in the divinity of ‘Abdullāh bin Mu‘āwiyah bin ‘Abdillāh bin Ja’far, *Ḥulmāniyya* named after Abū Ḥulmān al-Dimashqī, the *Muqannāiyya* or the ‘*Azāfira* who believe in the divinity of Ibn Abī al-‘Azāfir who was killed in Baghdad, the *Hishāmiyya* named after Hishām bin Ḥakam al-Rāfiḍī, the *Hishāmiyya* named Hishām bin Sālim al-Jawāliqī, the *Yūnusiyya* named after Yūnus bin ‘Abdirrahmān al-Qummī, the *Mushabbihā* founded by Dāwūd al-Jawāribī, the *Ibrāhimiyya* named after Ibrāhīm bin Yahyā al-Aslamī (d. 184/800), the *Ḥabīṭiyya* named after Aḥmad bin Ḥābiṭ or Hāiṭ, and the *Karrāmiyya*. Consult *al-Farq*, pp. 21, 61, 225.
- <sup>46</sup> Al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, pp. 233–235. Isfarāyīnī reiterates his predecessor Baghdādī almost verbatim on the relationship between ‘Alī and Ibn Saba. Consult Abū Muẓaffar (d. 471/1078), *al-Tabṣīr fī al-Dīn wa Tamyīz al-Firqah al-Nājiyyah ‘an al-Firaq al-Hālikīn*, ed. Yūsuf al-Ḥūṭ, Beirut, 1983, pp. 123–124.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibn Ḥazm, Abū Muḥammad ‘Alī bin Aḥmad (d. 456/1063) *al-Faṣl fī al-Milal wa al-Ahwā’ wa al-Niḥal*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Naṣr, ‘Abdurrahmān ‘Umayrah, Beirut, 1395/1975, I/165, V/36.
- <sup>48</sup> Al-Shahrīstānī, *al-Milal*, I/176–177. Cf. al-‘Askarī, *Saba*, II/231.
- <sup>49</sup> Though his reports still hold importance among the classical reference books, they incurred the criticism of the Shiite researchers of the late period. Consult al-‘Askarī, *Saba*, II/186 and on.
- <sup>50</sup> Consult al-Qummī, Shazān bin Jibrīl (d. around 600/1203), *al-Faḍāil*, Qum, 1363/1943, pp. 71–72. Cf. al-Majlisī, *Biḥār*, IV/213–215; al-Ṭabarsī, Muḥammad bin Taqiyyuddīn Nūrī (d. 1319/1901), *Mustadrak al-Wasāil*, no date and place, XVIII/168. Nevertheless, Fakhraddīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), Saksakī (d. 682/1283) and his contemporary ‘Irāqī, and Dhahabī (d. 748/1347) also describe Ibn Saba as an extremist personality who acts around ‘Alī. Consult al-Rāzī, Fakhraddīn Muḥammad bin ‘Umar (d. 606/1209), *I’tiqādāt al-*



- Muslimîn wa al-Mushrikîn*, ed. Muḥammad al-Mu‘taşimillāh al-Baghdādī, Beirut, 1407/1986, p. 71; al-Saksakī, Abū al-Faḍl ‘Abbās bin Manşūr al-Tarīnī (d. 682/1283), *al-Burhān, fī Ma‘rifat ‘Aqāid Ahl al-Adyān*, ed. Bassām ‘Alī Salāme al-Amūsh, Jordan, 1407/1988, p. 85; al-‘Irāqī, Abū Muḥammad ‘Uthmān bin ‘Abdillāh bin al-Ḥassan al-‘Irāqī (after the 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century), *al-Firaq al-Muftariqah bayn al-Ahl Zaygh wa al-Zandaqahah*, ed. Yaşar Kutluay, Ankara, 1961, p. 40–41; al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-‘Itidāl*, IV/1105.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, ‘Abdulḥamīd Hibatullāh bin Muḥammad bin al-Ḥusayn (d. 655/1257), *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Beirut, 1407/1987, V/6 and on.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ*, V/6-7, 52–53.
- <sup>53</sup> Considering the fact that Ja‘far al-Sādiq died in the year 148/765, this narration presupposes that Ibn Saba lived at least two-hundred years, which is impossible. Consult Şafadī, Şalāḥuddīn Khalīl bin Aybak (d. 764/1362), “Tarjuma-yi ‘Abdillāh bin Saba”, Şehid Ali Library (Istanbul), mns no.: 1968, fol. 2. The same information is cited by Birgiwī in his *Tuhfat al-Mustarshidīn*, cf. al-Birgiwī, Muhyiddīn Muhammad bin Pīr ‘Alī al-Hanafī (981/1573), *Tuhfat al-Mustarshidīn fī Bayāni Madhāhibi Firaq al-Muslimīn*, the Fatih Library, mns no.: 5344, fol. 14–15. To prove the accuracy of the information provided by the second manuscript, one needs to examine it. Consult al-Şafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt* ed. Dorotyia Gravuloski, Stutgard, 1411/1991, XVII/189–190.
- <sup>54</sup> Al-Jurjānī, ‘Alī bin Muḥammad (d. 816/1413), *al-Ta‘rifat*, Istanbul, 1300/1882, p. 89.
- <sup>55</sup> al-Maqrīḍī, *al-Ḥiṭāt*, IV/182, 191.
- <sup>56</sup> Consult Hāshimī, Sādī al-Ruwāt, *Alladhīna Tasarrū bi-Ibn Saba*, al-Jamāliyya, 1413/1992; al-‘Udah, Sulaymān bin Ḥāmid, *‘Abdullāh Ibn Saba wa Āthāruhū fī Aḥdāth al-Fitnah fī Şadr al-Islām*, Riyad, 1412/1991, p. 176 and on.

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