

Yazar Bilgileri Author(s)

**Prof. Dr.
İbrahim KUTLUAY**

İzmir Katip Çelebi Üniversitesi
Hadis

i_kutluay@yahoo.com

ORCID: 0000-0003-3149-9556

Künye Bilgisi

George Warner, *The Words of Imams Al-Shaykh al-Sadûq and the Development of Twelver Shiî Hadîth Literature*.

Great Britain: I.B. Tauris, 2022.

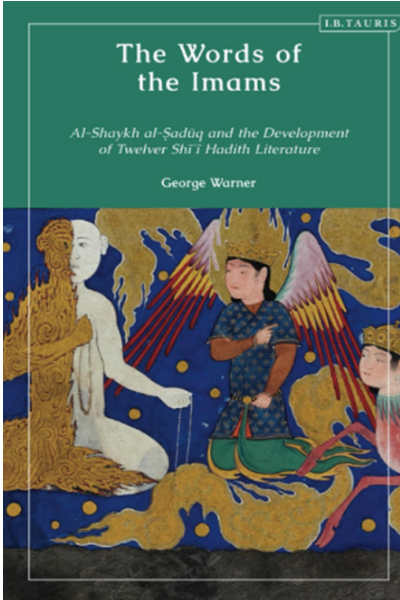
236 sayfa.

ISBN: 99781838605605.

Anahtar Kelimeler / Keywords

Hadis / Hadîth
Oniki İmam Şiîliği / Twelver Shiîsm
Şeyh Sadûk / Al-Shaykh al-Sadûq
Şiî Literatürü / Shiî Literature
İmamların Sözleri / The Words of Imams

Kitap İncelemesi / Book Review



Makale Tarihleri / History of Article

Geliř Tarihi / Received

19/05/2024

Kabul Tarihi / Accepted

20/06/2024

Atıf / Citation

Kutluay, İbrahim. “George Warner, The Words of Imams Al-Shaykh al-Sadûq and the Development of Twelver Shiî Hadîth Literature”. *Kitabiyat İlahiyat Arařtırmaları İnceleme-Eleřtiri Dergisi* 2/1 (Haziran 2024), 53-70.

In our country, as well as in the Arab world and the West, numerous studies in the form of articles, theses, and books have been produced on Shī'a and its branch, the Isnā'ashariyya Imāmiyyah (Twelver Shī'ism), which constitutes the second largest sect following Ahl al-Sunnah. George Warner's work *The Words of Imams Al-Shaykh al-Sadūq and the Development of Twelver Shiī Hadīth Literature* (London, New York, Oxford: I. B. Tauris, 2022) is one of the studies in this field, which was prepared as a PhD thesis.

Shaykh al-Sadūq, known fully as Abū Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Alī b. al-Husayn b. al-Husayn b. Mūsā b. Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 381/991), occupies a prominent position as the author of *Man lā yahduruhu al-faqīh*, one of the canonical works among the four major collections of hadīth in Twelver Shīa known as *al-Kutub al-Arbaa*. He was born in either Qom, situated approximately 125 kilometers southwest of Tehran, or in Khorasan. The exact birthdate of Ibn Bābawayh remains unspecified. He received his early education under the tutelage of his father and local Shiī scholars in Qom, subsequently advancing his studies in Ray, the capital of the Buyid dynasty, after 343/954-5. Al-Sadūq is notably associated with the Akhbārī school of thought prevalent during his era, a perspective evident in his extensive literary contributions. Central to the Akhbārī doctrine is the primacy accorded to hadīth as the principal source of religious authority in matters of faith and practice.

Shaykh al-Sadūq's corpus comprises the following works:

Kitāb Man Lā Yahduruhu al-Faqīh, his most renowned work, primarily focuses on hadīth pertaining to jurisprudence (fiqh) and stands as one of the Four Books of the Shī'a (al-Kutub al-Arbaa).

Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Ni'ma is dedicated to defending the belief in Imam al-Mahdi and elucidates his occultation.

Al-Tawhīd compiles hadīth addressing theological topics such as monotheism (tawhīd), divine attributes, and actions.

Al-Muqni' gathers hadīth related to legal matters.

Ilal al-Sharāi' provides an exploration of the underlying reasons (hikma) behind Islamic legal rulings.

Al-Amāl comprises hadīth dictated by al-Sadūq to his students.

Al-I'tiqādāt presents a treatise on Shī'a beliefs.

Ma'āni al-Akhhbār explains deeper meanings of selected hadīth and Qur'anic verses.

'Uyūn Akhhbār al-Ridā compiles hadīth attributed to Imam al-Ridā.

Al-Khisāl categorizes hadīth according to their emphasis on specific virtues.

Thawāb al-A'māl wa 'Iqāb al-A'māl describes the rewards of righteous deeds and the punishments for evil actions.

Al-Hidāya compiles hadīth related to beliefs and jurisprudence (fiqh).

These works collectively demonstrate Shaykh al-Sadūq's comprehensive engagement with hadīth literature and its application across theological, jurisprudential, and ethical dimensions within Twelver Shī'a.

In *The Words of Imams*, George Warner analyses al-Shaykh al-Sadūq and his works within the framework of the Isnāashariyya Imāmiyya hadīth literature. The book is 227 pages in total, but the actual text is only 151 pages. At the beginning of the book, there is a long introduction about 30 pages. The book consists of an introduction, two chapters, conclusion, footnotes parts, bibliography, index and two appendices. In fact, as we mentioned above, Warner's this work is based on his doctoral thesis at SOAS (UK) entitled *The Words of Imams Al-Shaykh al-Sadūq and the Development of Twelver Shiī Hadīth Literature*. Warner states that his reading on Shī'a, seminars he attended, and evening discussions with scholars in the field during his stay in the Sayyida Zaynab neighborhood of Damascus between 2008 and 2009 contributed significantly to the composition of this work. He states that his aim is to “shed light on the development of the Isnāasharī Imāmiyya hadīth literature by analysing al-Sadūq's extensive writings, most of which are hadīth compilations” (p. 1).

In his scholarly investigation, Warner centers on Shaykh al-Sadūq's role as a pivotal figure in the scholarship of hadīth. Al-Sadūq navigates various challenges and objectives throughout his extensive corpus. Warner's primary objective is to illuminate the broader evolution of distinct Imāmī, specifically Twelver Shī'ī hadīth literature. Shortly,

Warner's work presents an intellectual profile of al-Ṣadūq, examining his extensive written legacy and contextual milieu. Warner endeavours to elucidate al-Ṣadūq's scholarly priorities, intellectual projects, and distinguishing characteristics as a thinker. Through his analysis, Warner explores a formative phase in the development of this literature, highlighting its unique features and thematic concerns that differentiate it from other genres of hadīth literature (p. 2).

As for the importance of the study of Warner, as he mentioned in his book "a few books on aspects of Shī'ī hadīth or individual Shī'ī muḥaddithūn are available, but as yet there exists no book-length survey of Shī'ī hadīth literature in a European language" (p. 3). Some of them just is an introduction to Shī'a, but Warner's book gives detailed information about Shiī hadīth corpus, particularly works of Shaikh Sadūq, and evaluated them.

In his scholarly approach, Warner situates Sadūq's works within the broader framework of Shiī literature. Warner conducts comparative analyses, particularly between *Man lā yahduruhu al-Faqīh* and other prominent texts of *al-Kutub al-Arbaa*, delineating their principal characteristics. The primary aim of Shaikh Sadūq, Warner argues, is to address the doctrinal and practical inquiries of Imāmī society, encompassing rulings by scholars and traditions attributed to the Imams. Warner evaluates the incorporation of *al-Tawhīd*, *al-I'tiqādāt*, and *al-Hidāya* in Sadūq's oeuvre. Warner emphasizes that Sadūq's work *al-Tawhīd* should not be misconstrued as a comprehensive theological

compendium or representative of his personal theology. In contrast, works such as *al-I'tiqādāt* and *al-Hidāya* prominently feature of hadīths on theological subjects, serving explicitly as evidential texts supporting specific doctrines for the instruction of the faithful. Readers encounter hadīths employed in divergent contexts within his work *al-Tawhīd*. Warner scrutinizes the contents of *al-Tawhīd*, highlighting that its initial section addresses theological issues such as *tashbīh* (anthropomorphism), *azama* (divine transcendence), and *jabr* (predestination), with *tashbīh* being comparatively more straightforward to navigate among scholars. Warner also assesses the volume of hadīths presented in this context and 'The Reward of Those Who Know and Declare God's Oneness' (pp. 95, 99, 103). Briefly Warner attempted to show conclusively that the hadīths in *al-Tawhīd* cannot be reliably read in isolation.

As for content of Warner's work, after long introduction, he gives brief information about *the works of al-Sadūq* between pages 22-26. The surviving books listed here are only a fraction of the total number of works those early bibliographies attribute to al-Sadūq. Al-Tūsī states that he wrote around 300 works (p. 26-27). Later he specifically introduces *Al-Tawhīd* in which regards theology and its limits and *Kamāl al-dīn wa tamām al-ni'ma* in details (pp. 91-148). Between pages 152-159, there is a long bibliography (as primary sources and secondary sources). Pages 154-156 under the title of first appendix the table of contents of al-Shaikh al-Sadūq's book *al-Tawhīd* takes place, and the

second appendix (pp. 157-159) lists the table of contents of *Kamāl al-Dīn and Tamām al-Ni'ma* which include some events in early Islamic history that may constitute evidence for the occultation (gayba) of some prophets such as Hadrat Idris, Noah, Sālih, Abraham, Yūsuf, and Moses (p.b.u.t); and the opinions of the scholars on this issue. Following the appendices, the footnotes take place collectively (pp. 160-209), because those are not mentioned at the bottom of the pages of the original text.

Basically, the book consists of two main chapters: *Placing al-Sadūq* (in Hadīth and Fiqh) and *Reading al-Sadūq*. Besides there are three subheadings in the first chapter and two subheadings in the second. At the end of each chapter, there is a conclusion part. In the *Introduction* part (pp. 22-28), Warner gives a summary of survived 19 works.

The first chapter (pp. 31-64), entitled *The Placing of al-Sadūq* (in Hadīth and Fiqh), includes subheadings such as *Imamite Thought in the Time of al-Shaykh al-Sadūq/Ibn Bābawayh and Shi'ite Life in the Imam's Ghaybāt; Legal Theory and the Living Imam: Al-Sadūq as a Hadīth Scholar; Hadīth Literature: Al-Sadūq, Adab, and Hadīth Science in Imāmiyya in the Buwayhī court*. In this section, the position of Shaikh al-Sadūq in the context of the political and religious factors affecting the Imāmiyya Isnāashariyya in the earlier of 4th and 5th centuries is discussed. The formation of the doctrine of *ghaybah* (occultation) and Sunnite sects among the Imāmiyya, the politics of the al-Buwayhids, and the formation of the Imāmiyya as an independent sect in this context are analysed.

Warner points out that al-Sadūq identified himself as a jurist/*faqīh* and that most of his books dealt with judicial (fiqh) issues, while a few dealt with theological issues. Accordingly, al-Sadūq's works are usually analysed in the context of legal and theological thought (p. 31). However, according to Warner, this distinction is not absolute, because Imāmī legal thought in this period remained closely tied to ideas about the twelfth imam (al-Mahdī al-Muhtazar) and his *gayba*/occultation.

The first chapter, therefore, provides an overview of this intellectual context and al-Sadūq's place in it. Although Warner explores his writings on these topics in more detail in the second chapter, the first chapter focuses primarily on the questions surrounding hadīth, textual-critical methodology and epistemology, and the ways in which al-Sadūq and scholars like him sought to resolve their relationship to the Infallible Imams (ma'sum) during this crucial period in Imāmī thought. Al-Shaikh al-Sadūq's nineteen works are those that have survived from what once numbered in the hundreds. Some of the lost works are mixed in with others, such as treatises on individual legal issues that should have been largely repeated in *Man lā yahduruh al-faqīh* (p. 32). If, for example, one of his lost works, *Madīnah al-'ilm*, had survived, it would have been possible to better understand al-Sadūq as a thinker (p. 32-33).

The early hadīth collections thus continued to be of great potential value to later generations of Imāmīs. Indeed, Warner argues that Andrew Newman's *The Recovery of the*

Past (pp. 112-117) demonstrates that the publication of al-Sadūq's own manuscripts in the Safavid period (1501-1736) marked a renaissance in early modern Iran, which was accompanied by a renewal of a broader interest in hadīth.

Warner emphasizes that the post-Buwayhid tradition of Imāmī jurisprudence and theology in Iraq and Iran (320/932-454/1062) is rooted in the leading Imāmī scholars of Baghdad during the period of the Buwayhid, such as Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Shaikh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022), ‘Ali b. al-Husayn al-Sharīf al-Murtazā (d. 436/1044), and Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Tūsī (d. 460/1067). According to Warner, 3rd/9th-century Shi‘ites produced elaborate, cosmological visions of the Infallible imams (ma‘sum) and their shī‘as/adherents. These visions were little intelligible to the larger group and their knowledge systems, whether Mu‘tazilite theology or Shāfi‘ite legal theory.

As Warner points out, the Isnāasharī scholars in the third century claim that the Infallible imams possess extraordinary powers, such as knowledge of the unseen/gayb or flight. It is also claimed that the souls of the Imams and their shī‘as/followers were created from the same light at the dawn of creation. Accordingly, other human beings are separated from the non-Imams (the twelve Imams), even on a cosmogonic level. This belief represents an intellectual break with the mainstream (Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah). Moreover, doctrines acceptable to other groups are used as evidence to incite enmity against non-Shi‘ites. In fact, the Shi‘ite scholars spread disparaging

narrations about highly esteemed Companions of the Khulafā al-rāshidīn, such as Abū Bakr and 'Umar, within the Shi'ite community to make them appear intolerable (p. 35).

However, the al-Buwayhid Imāmites largely abandoned the theologies of their ancestors, such as the "falsified text of the Qur'ān" and Imams who travelled back in time, which were no longer palatable or acceptable. Shi'ite scholars such as Shaikh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022), the leading theologian, jurist and hadīth scholar of the Imāmiyya Shī'a, and his disciple Sharīf al-Murtazā (d. 436/1044) declared some of the attitudes that the Shī'a used as evidence, such as the claim that the Qur'ān had been tampered with and the hatred of the Companions, as misguided excesses (p. 35).

One of the most widely recognized features of al-Buwayhī Imāmī thought is its affinity with Mu'tazilite dialectical theology, as many Imāmī scholars of the period were taught by prominent figures of the Mu'tazilite tradition. For example, Sharīf al-Murtazā was influenced by Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbar, who visited Baghdad on his way to Ray (in Iran). The extent to which the Imāmīs adopted certain Mu'tazilite doctrines during this period is debatable, but what is not disputed is that they were articulated in a robust Imāmī theological literature and that Imāmī positions were discussed in terms of dialectical theology.

Meanwhile, during the 4th/10th century, jurisprudential sects became more established among Sunnī groups, and Shī'a, which was influenced by Ahl al-Sunnah in many

respects in terms of sectarianization, adopted a structure similar to Ahl al-Sunnah. Therefore, this was accompanied by an expanding literature of Imāmī jurisprudence expressed by the Buwayhī Imāmī scholars in terms and concepts shared by other groups. Indeed, centuries later, some Shī'ite writers would lament the developments of this period as the beginning of the "Sunninization" of the Imāmī tradition (p. 35). In this section, Warner highlights the academic discourse surrounding Imāmī literature on the occultation, emphasizing its distinctive and technical nature. He underscores the intricacies involved in discussions regarding the transmission of the imāmate to an imam, as well as the complexities surrounding the guidance provided by an occulted and child imam to the Imāmī community.

The second subheading of the first chapter, *Legal Theory and the Living Imam: Al-Sadūq as a Hadīth Scholar*, touches upon some of the features of al-Sadūq's *Man la yahduruh al-faqīh*. In the introduction to *al-Faqīh*, al-Sadūq states that his friend Muhammad b. Hasan b. Ishaq, known as Ni'ma in the town of Ilāq in Balkh, asked him to compile a book on fiqh; halal, haram, and the rules of the Shari'ah. Regarding the title of his book, al-Sadūq stated that he was influenced by Abū Bakr Zakariyyā al-Rāzī's medical book, *Man lā yahduruh al-tabīb* (To the One Who Has No Access to a Doctor/Every Man is His Own Doctor). Sadūq states that people asked him to compile a similarly comprehensive "handbook of jurisprudence" and that he prepared this book in response.

As a result, *Man lā yahduruh al-faqīh* reflects his previous knowledge on the subject (p. 47). In this work, al-Sadūq has omitted the *isnads* and mentioned them collectively at the end of the book under the title of *mashyaha*. For example, he states, "The isnad of all the hadīths I have narrated from 'Ammār b. Mūsā al-Sābātī in this book is 'Ammār < my father < Muhammad b. Hasan < Saīd b. 'Abdillāh < Ahmad b. Hasan 'Ali b. Faddāl < 'Amr b. Sa'id al-Madāinī < Musaddīq b. Sadaqa < 'Ammār b. Mūsā al-Sābātī." He also lists the other isnads collectively. Al-Sadūq stated that instead of including every hadīth in his book, he mentioned the ones he trusted and the hadīths that he relied on in matters of jurisprudence, and ruled on their authenticity (Al-Sadūq, *Faqīh*, 1/12 *Muqaddima*).

In his study, Warner points out three main flaws of *Man lā yahduruh al-faqīh*: The first, in his view, "we are none the wiser as to al-Ṣadūq's deeper standards for a hadīth's authenticity." The second, introduction of this work unfortunately does not provide an epistemological foundation, and any mention of the authority of the scholar, the occulted imam, and his *ghaybah*, a common and often important feature of other legal writings of the period. The third is that the practical relationship between al-Sadūq's own judgments and the *akhbār* he recorded in his book is often unclear (p. 47).

The third subheading of the first chapter is *Hadīth as literature: Al-Sadūq, adab and Imāmī traditionism at the Buwayhid court*. Warner points out that al-Sadūq, as a jurist and compiler of the imams' hadīths, was constantly

concerned with the fundamental question of "how to manage authority" that confronted the Imāmī scholarly community during the imām's period of occultation. What is certain, according to Warner, is that none of these uncertainties prevented scholars like al-Sadūq from continuing to act as jurists, using their scholarly status to guide the Imāmī community in matters of law and theology. Therefore, al-Sadūq's works such as *al-Faḳīh* and *al-I'tikādāt* were constructed as reference works for the Imāmī community to seek answers to their questions regarding belief and practice. For this purpose, the *akhbārs* of the infallible imams and the rulings of the scholars are organized according to their subjects in such works, and the texts that serve as evidence are clearly defined and arranged.

In the third subheading of the first chapter, Warner evaluates the *Adab* literature. He defines *adab* literature as "Works of *adab* literature are books that set out to improve the reader, in terms of their moral character, in terms of their knowledge of history, of literature and of anecdote, in terms of their rhetorical skill and in terms of their mastery of societal and courtly norms" (p. 67) and provides some examples. *Adab* literature's vision of the cultured man included such virtues as piety, generosity and asceticism, virtues that were of just as much interest to legal and theological discourse. Imāmī writers of *adab* literature were equally comfortable writing jurisprudence, while others appear disinterested in and even ignorant of such matters.

Consequently, Warner has pointed out that al-Sadūq's works, largely unlike the surviving works of his contemporaries, illustrate the complex meeting points of new, post-ghayba Imāmī thought. Moreover, he concludes by emphasizing that, in some respects, there are parallels between al-Sadūq's concerns and those of Sunnī muhaddiths of the previous century who sought to preserve the capacity of the hadīth corpus to provide meaningful access to the prophetic message, but that for such Sunnī scholars and authors, from Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) to Imam Shāfi'ī (d. 204/820), it was not a process of avoiding isnād criticism but of demonstrating its efficacy (p. 63). However, Warner sometimes points to problems of transmission, but this is almost always accompanied by a hermeneutic solution, whereby al-Ṣadūq reinterprets the text against its apparent meaning such that it no longer represents a contradiction. Isnād criticism appears here as a tool to be used, but one that seems subservient to other kinds of discernment. Warner occasionally identifies issues pertaining to textual transmission. However, these concerns are consistently addressed through a hermeneutic approach, wherein al-Ṣadūq undertakes a reinterpretation of the text, aligning it with a framework that mitigates perceived contradictions. The criticism of *isnād* emerges as a methodological instrument, albeit one subordinate to broader interpretative methodologies.

As for the second section, *Reading al-Sadūq* (pages 91-152), which is devoted to the evaluation of Shaykh Sadūq, it consists of subheadings such as *Al-Tawhīd: Theology and its*

limits and *Kamāl al-dīn wa tamām al-ni'ma*: Looking for the imam. This chapter concludes: Hadīth Literature and Twelver Shī'ism (Conclusion: Hadīth literature and Twelver Shī'ism).

According to Warner, although Nu'mānī's *Kitāb al-ghaybā'* (d. 345/956 or 360/971) is earlier, al-Sadūq's *Kamāl al-dīn wa Tamām al-Ni'ma* are the most important surviving works written after the beginning of the great occultation (al-Gayba al-Kubrā). That is to say, *Kamāl al-dīn* is of great historical value as a document of the development of the doctrine of ghaybāt among the Imāmiyya and contains many texts and ideas for which we have no precedent. This work of al-Sadūq, like the Book of *Tawhīd*, provides important information on the status and structure of the *akhbār* of the imams (p. 117).

In the introduction to *Kamāl al-dīn*, al-Sadūq states that a person who has not already accepted the basic premises of the Imāmate has no business with the sub-sections of this book, and that this work was not written with the aim of "answering questions about who the Imam is, or to invite his believers the doctrine of gayba, or to systematically defend the doctrine of the gayba against the polemics of others" (p. 118).

One of al-Sadūq's most widely consulted works, *al-Tawhīd*, "The Book of the Unity of God," is a collection of some 580 hadīths on the essence and attributes of God. Written in a generally encyclopaedic style, it is divided into chapters according to subject matter, such as the divine essence, the creation of the Qur'an, or whether or not God is a "thing".

The book consists of subheadings such as *tashbih*, *azamah*, *jabr*, and *badā*.

On the other hand, Warner's work has some shortcomings. Warner should have emphasized that *al-Kāfi* by al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941) and *Men lā yahduruhu al-faqīh* by al-Shaykh al-Sadūq do not contain narrations that authorize the imams to rule on religious matters, and moreover, the Akhbārī scholars after Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Saffār (d. 290/903) did not attribute value to such narrations. (See Tekin, 248). Also, Warner does not focus on a single work of Al-Shaykh al-Sadūq or on a single issue in his study, but rather introduces al-Sadūq's works and makes evaluations about the Isnā'āshariyya Imāmiyyah, sometimes going into detail. As such, the topics are intertwined and chronological follow-up becomes difficult. Add to this the author's relatively heavy or complicated expressions makes this work difficult and influent text. The shortcomings of Warner's work, some of which we have mentioned above, can be tolerated and found every work. Of course, our findings are also open to criticism. The contribution of this study to the world of scholarship can be summarized as providing the reader with a general framework in the language in which it was written (English) about the place of al-Sadūq and his works in the Isnāsharī literature, and that, when the history is considered in general, the place of hadīth within the Isnāshariyya is not significantly different from its place within Ahl al-Sunna (p. 149). Al-Sadūq's works are important in showing how the Imāmī scholars came to terms with the new state of hadīth scholarship in a

world in which the twelfth Imam (al-Mahdī al-Muntazar) was outwardly absent.

SOURCES

Kutluay, İbrahim. *Şîa'da Hadis Usûlü Ehl-i Sünnet Hadis Usûlü İle Mukayeseli Bir Çalışma*. İstanbul: Rağbet Yayınları, 2020.

Al-Kulaynî, Abû Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub. *al-Kâfî*. Beirut: Manshurat al-Fajr, 1428/2007.

Al-Sadûq, (Ibn Bâbawayh) Abû Ja'far Muhammad b. Ali b. Husain. *Man lâ yahduruh al-faqîh*. Beirut: Muassasa al-A'lemî li'l-Matbûât, 1406/1986.

Al-Sadûq (Ibn Bâbawayh), Abû Ja'far Muhammad b. Ali b. Husain. *al-I'tiqâdât*. Ed. Imâm Hâdî Foundation Editorial Committee. Qum: Mu'assasat al-Imâm al-Hâdî, 1389/1969.

Al-Sadûq (Ibn Bâbawayh), Abû Ja'far Muhammad b. Ali b. Husain. *Kamâl al-dîn wa tamâm al-ni'ma*. Ed. 'Alî Akbar Ghaffârî. Qum: Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islâmî, 1429/2008.

Warner, George. *The Words of Imams Al-Shaykh al-Sadûk and the Development of Twelver Shi'î Hadîth Literature*. London, New York, Oxford: I. B. Tauris, 2022.

Ünügür Tekin, Peyman. "Mütekaddimûn Dönemi İmâmiyye Şî'ası'nda Sünnet Anlayışı: İmâmiyye'ye Göre İmamların Sünnetinden Söz Edilebilir mi?". *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 65/1 (2024), 233-259.