

A Content Analysis of Traditions in the Chapters of 'Abwab Nader' and Nawādir in Al-Kāfī and Identification of Al-Kulaynī's Criteria in These Chapters''

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Introduction

Like other traditions of hadith compilation, such as Musnad, Amālī, and Arba'in, the compilation of rare or exceptional traditions (Nawādir) was a well-established method among hadith scholars. Ibn Nadim (d. 380 AH) in al-Fihrist identifies 82 compilers of Nawādir across various fields (Ibn Nadim, 1343 AH, entire work), while Najāshī (d. 450 AH) lists 194 (Najashi, 1394 AH, entire work), and Sheikh Agha Buzurg Tehrani (d. 1389 AH) mentions 272 authors (Agha Bozorg Tehrani, 1398 AH, Vol. 24: 318-350). This historical survey reveals that Nawādir-writing was not only prominent in hadith but also in medicine, astronomy, philosophy, literature, and other sciences, and was even common among Sunni scholars. During the second and third centuries AH, independent books titled Kitab al-Nawādir were first compiled. In the following centuries, this tradition evolved, with sections in larger works dedicated to "rare" chapters (Bāb Nādir or Bāb Nawādir). This approach culminated in the Shiite al-Kāfī, where 706 Nawādir traditions are present, while later works like Man Lā Yahḍuruhu al-Faḳīh contain 263 such accounts. The decline in Nawādir-writing became apparent by the fifth century AH, as seen in Shaykh Ṭūsī's Tahdhibayn, which contains only 29 traditions under Bāb al-Nawādir in the chapters on Jihād. This study thus seeks to understand what type of traditions al-Kulaynī selected for Bāb Nādir or Bāb Nawādir in al-Kāfī, providing insight into his intention behind these chapter titles.

Materials and Methods

This article is an extract from the author's doctoral dissertation. To identify the types of traditions included by al-Kulaynī in Bāb Nādir or Bāb Nawādir of al-Kāfī, a multi-method approach was essential. Thus, the methodological section lists all relevant techniques, though not all were applied within this

article, as some were foundational in its writing. This research, through a library-based documentary approach with a descriptive-analytical methodology, offers a content analysis of traditions in the Bāb Nādir and Bāb Nawādir chapters, comparing them within and with traditions in al-Kāfī's foundational, practical, and supplementary sections. Such analysis aids in confirming or refuting early scholarly hypotheses regarding Bāb Nādir or Bāb Nawādir. Furthermore, it uncovered diverse approaches by al-Kulaynī, revealing both jurisprudential and theological concerns in Nawādir chapters that were debated in his time. Due to the limitations of article length in research journals, it was not feasible to include all findings in this article, suggesting the need for further publication.

Another methodology used was to tally and analyze the number of Nādir and Nawādir traditions in al-Kāfī, identifying chapters with dense thematic or numerical concentration. For instance, Furū' al-Kāfī has the highest frequency, with 569 out of 706 traditions, followed by Usūl al-Kāfī, which has 61 traditions under Bāb Nawādir, including Kitāb Faḍl al-Qur'an, Faḍl al-'Ilm, Kitāb al-Tawhīd, and Kitāb al-'Asharah. This statistical overview clarifies the article's methodological approach. Additionally, comparing select traditions in independently titled Kitāb al-Nawādir with traditions in Bāb Nādir or Bāb Nawādir chapters in al-Kāfī, Man Lā Yahduruhu al-Faqīh, and Tahdhib al-Ahkām further provided new leads, highlighting distinctions or similarities among authors' criteria in compiling these traditions. The culmination of these efforts led to the writing of this article.

Results and Findings

The findings of this research on Nawādir have been categorized into two main sections. First, a historical linguistic analysis of the term Nawādir from the perspective of early lexicographers, and second, an exploration of the scholarly views of al-Kulaynī, one of the prominent Shiite hadith scholars, on the terms Nādir or Nawādir, including specific legal examples and typological analysis. This section concludes with a synthesis of the linguistic and hadith scholars' interpretations of the term.

The historical-linguistic analysis of Nādir and Nawādir, and the resulting diversity in meanings, indicates that most lexicographers did not limit themselves to a single definition. Rather, they acknowledged its polysemy, assigning six meanings. Early lexicographers of the first five centuries AH, such as al-Farāhīdī (d. 175 AH), Ibn Duraid (d. 321 AH), Ibn Fāris (d. 329 AH), and al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī (d. 502 AH), often attributed meanings like 'omission or exclusion' to Nawādir. Other meanings include the unusual or rare nature of content, as per Ibn Duraid and Ibn Manzūr (d. 711 AH); the concept of scattered yet collectively gathered items, as noted by Khalīl ibn Ahmad (d. 175 AH); and interpretations requiring clarification or elaboration,

according to al-Rāghib. Additionally, Nawādir was often associated with unique or rare items, a meaning supported by Jawhari (d. 393 AH). Contemporary scholar Azarnūsh further described Nawādir as exceptional traditions, witty anecdotes, or exceptional cases.

The content analysis of traditions in the chapters Bāb Nādir and Bāb Nawādir shows that these chapters contain a significant diversity of tradition types. Al-Kulaynī appeared fully aware of the polysemous meanings of Nawādir and included any tradition in these chapters that was either contradictory to the Qur'an and the teachings of the Imams (as), or contentious between Shiite and Sunni jurisprudential or theological views. He also placed authentic yet less commonly cited traditions in these sections. These often fall under traditions of peculiar and unusual rulings, including unique legal principles like case-based rulings or the rule of drawing lots. Additionally, the sections Bāb Nādir and Bāb Nawādir in al-Kāfī feature supplementary traditions, or *mustadrakat*, omitted or rare items, and traditions that had not gained scholarly consensus. Notably, Bāb Nādir typically includes authentic yet non-consensual traditions that, in some cases, al-Kulaynī himself may not have endorsed, while Bāb Nawādir contains supplementary traditions on diverse topics that generally found practical application.

Conclusion

The analysis of traditions in the Bāb Nādir and Bāb Nawādir chapters in al-Kāfī, as well as comparisons with similar chapters in other sections, indicates that al-Kulaynī was well aware of the term Nawādir's synonymous usage during his era. By incorporating a "combination of various types of traditions"—including *mustadrakāt* and *zīyādāt*, rare and scattered traditions, *shādh* traditions, Exceptions to the rules and also *ṭarā'if* and *gharā'ib* traditions—under Bāb Nādir and Bāb Nawādir, he strategically included accounts that contrasted with Quranic text or the teachings of the Imams (as), were at odds with consensus, or represented diverging views between Shiite and Sunni perspectives. This also encompassed traditions that lacked widespread acceptance or dealt with unique legal principles, such as the rule of drawing lots and case-based rulings, justifying their placement under these chapters. The primary focus of this article is on the jurisprudential examples in al-Kāfī, while the theological traditions in the Bāb Nawādir will be addressed in a separate paper.

Keywords: Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, Bāb Nawādir, Conflict, Diverse jurisprudential principles.