Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, Hasan Ansari.
*Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī (m. 328 ou 329/939-40
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- 1 This is a comprehensive introduction to the career and contributions of the compiler of the first of the 'four books', the four great collections of Twelver Shī'ī *ḥadīth* completed before the Saljuk conquest of Baghdad in 1055.
- 2 The article is divided into four sections.
- 3 The authors first review the problems with source materials on al-Kulaynī. Section two first discusses the times in which al-Kulaynī lived, noting the progressive decline of Abbasid power and the rise of numerous semi-autonomous political entities throughout the empire, in the course of which they discuss the state of Shī'ism both in al-Kulaynī's hometown of Rayy, in nearby Qum, where al-Kulaynī lived for a time, and in Baghdad, where he compiled *al-Kāfī*. They note that the end of the 3rd/9th and the beginning of the 4th/10th century was a crucial time for Shī'ism and Twelver Shī'ism in particular. They also provide a useful overview of the state of *'ilm al-ḥadīth* (the science of *ḥadīth*) among Sunnis and the Shī'a in Iran and Iraq at this juncture. Section three of the essay first sketches out al-Kulaynī's life in Iran (Rayy and Qum) and Iraq, then lists his

teachers, his students and those who transmitted texts from him. The Shī'ī spiritual scene in the region is then reviewed as is the question of the notable absence of al-Kulaynī's name from accounts of key trends and events of the period. The authors then discuss the views of al-Kulaynī in the works of later Shī'ī scholars.

- 4 Section four of the essay discusses his works, first covering those known to be lost and then *al-Kāfī* itself. They note that *al-Kāfī*, the standard published edition of which comprises eight volumes, comprises three parts, *al-Uṣūl*, *al-Furū'* and *al-Rawḍa*. The second of these, *al-Furū'*, contains some 70% of the some 16 000 texts of the entire compilation. These comprise the Imams' statements on practical legal matters. The third part, in one volume, contains 597 texts on a variety of different subjects ranging from customs, morality, the Imams' letters and rules on daily life and conduct. The first of the three, *al-Uṣūl*, published in two volumes, contains some 3700 texts on matters of theology. This section concludes with a brief description of the eight books in which *al-Uṣūl* is divided.
- 5 The essay ends with a very useful 13-page bibliography of primary and secondary sources.

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