



FORĀT B. EBRĀHĪM

FORĀT B. EBRĀHĪM KŪFĪ, Shi'ite (most probably Imami) Qur'ān commentator and Hadith scholar. The dates of his birth and death are unknown, but the time he flourished can be estimated by the dates of the scholars whom he quoted or who transmitted Hadith on his authority. They include Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Bābawayh (d. 329/940) and his son, Abū Ja'far 'Alī b. Bābawayh (d. 381/991; q.v.), who cites Forāt in his works (Majlesī, I, p. 37; K̄vānsārī, V, p. 339), as well as Ja'far b. Moḥammad Fazārī (d. ca. 300/912) and Ḥosayn b. Sa'īd Kūfī (d. 300/912) whom Forāt quotes extensively (Māmaqānī, no. 9412; K̄vānsārī, V, p. 338; Qomī, p. 349; *A'yān al-šī'a* XLII, pp. 270-71; *al-Darī'a* IV, pp. 298-99). These dates suggest that Forāt flourished in the second half of the 9th century. The date (310/922) suggested by Sezgin (*GAS* I, p. 539) for Forāt's death is possible but by no means certain.

Forāt is not mentioned in early Shi'ite biographical compositions. His *nesba* indicates some association with the city of Kūfa, although it is uncertain whether he was born there or just lived there for at least a part of his life. Moḥammad Kāẓem, the editor of Forāt's Tafsīr, explains the lack of interest in Forāt's biography by the early Imami biographers by suggesting that they may have taken him to be a Zaydī. Relying upon certain statements in Forāt's commentary and on the names of scholars appearing in the *esnāds* of the Hadiths he cites, Kāẓem states that the possibility that Forāt was a Zaydī cannot be ruled out. In fact, Forāt's Zaydī leanings can be exemplified by a tradition quoted by him, in which Zayd states that only Moḥammad, Fāṭema, 'Alī, Ḥasan, and Ḥosayn are immune from sin and error (*eṣma*). This



contradicts Imami doctrine about the *‘eşma* of all twelve Imams (see ČAHĀRDAH MA’ŞŪM; Forāt, 1354, pp. 122-23, 152=1410, pp. 339, 402, and editor’s Introd., p. 13).

Forāt’s main preoccupation was Hadith literature. Some of his disciples praised him as “the eminent one, the teacher of Hadith scholars of his time” (*al-fāzel, ostād al-moḥaddetīn fī zamānehi*; Forāt, 1935, intro. by M.-‘A. Ġarawī Ordūbādī, p. 5). Even if this evaluation is somewhat exaggerated, there is no reason to doubt that he was a man of some standing in this field, witnessed by the fact that many distinguished Imami scholars quoted him extensively.

The only composition by Forāt mentioned by all sources is his Qur’ān commentary. Like other exegetical works of the pre-Ġayba period, such as those of Abu’l-Naẓr Moḥammad b. Mas’ūd ‘Ayyāšī and of ‘Alī b. Ebrāhīm Qomī, it is a commentary based on traditions (*al-tafsīr be l-ma’tūr*); but it is not comprehensive in the sense that it does not refer to all verses of the Qur’ān, regardless of whether or not they include Shi’ite allusions. It reflects, however, Imami exegesis in all its unique characteristics; these include doctrines such as the superhuman and mystical qualities of the Imams, their God-given, infinite knowledge, their *‘eşma*, their role as intercessors (*šafa’ā*) on behalf of the Shi’ite community, etc.

Forāt’s commentary was known not only to scholars of his generation and to his immediate successors such as Ebn Bābawayh and his father, but also to later scholars, who cited him extensively. These include, for example, Ḥorr ‘Āmelī (d. 1104/1692), Hāšem Tawbalī Baḥrānī (d. 1107/1695), Moḥammad-Bāqer Majlesī (d. 1110/1698), etc. Majlesī counts Forāt’s *Tafsīr* among the most important sources for his composition and states that “although our colleagues [i.e., Shi’ite scholars] have neither praised nor condemned him (*lam yata’arraż laho al-aşḥāb be madḥ wa lā qadh*), from [the very fact] that his traditions coincide with traditions which we uphold and which have come down to us, and the [fact] that they have been carefully transmitted (*ḥosn al-żabt fī naqlehā*), one learns of the trust one may place in the author [of this commentary]” (I, p. 37). Many manuscripts of Forāt’s commentary are preserved, mostly in Persia and Iraq (*al-Darī’a* IV, p. 299; Sezgin, *GAS* I, p. 539; see Forāt, 1991, editor’s intro., pp. 19-22). Attributed to him is also a treatise dealing with the vilification of ‘Alī by the people of Isfahan (*fī dekr sabb ahl Esfahān le ‘Alī*; Forāt, 1410, intro., p. 12).



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