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Contested Boundaries: The Reception of Shi'ite Narrators in the Sunni Hadith Tradition

Dann, Michael Harding

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Contested Boundaries: The Reception of Shīʿite Narrators in the Sunnī Hadith Tradition

Michael Dann

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Advisor: Muhammad Qasim Zaman

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the lives of roughly 150 Shīʿite narrators active in the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries and their reception in the Sunnī hadith tradition. These narrators were contemporaneous with the crystallization of sectarian boundaries and the emergence of an inchoate Sunnī orthodoxy and their reception among Sunnīs sheds considerable light on both of these processes. Through the first decades of the ʿAbbāsid period (mid-2nd/8th century), Shīʿite narrators played a central role in the transmission of hadiths in the proto-Sunnī milieu. This was especially so in the city of Kūfa, where Shīʿite narrators of various stripes were associated with nascent sectarian trends and revolutionary efforts, and even defined the religio-political mainstream in the city to a significant extent. The diverse orientations of these figures constitute a testament to both the considerable sectarian ambiguity that characterized this era and to the contested processes by which sectarian boundaries were gradually drawn and enforced.

In the course of the century following the accession of the ʿAbbāsids, the presence of Shīʿite narrators in the proto-Sunnī milieu underwent a precipitous decline. By the middle of the 3rd/9th century, the few Shīʿite narrators who continued to play a prominent role in the emergent Sunnī milieu were characterized by relatively mild Shīʿite sentiments lacking distinctively sectarian features. Several processes were at work in this decline, most prominent among which were cultural homogenization facilitated by trans-regional scholarly exchange, and increasingly exclusionary practices directed at figures who violated the boundaries of an incipient Sunnī orthodoxy.

From the perspective of the proponents of this orthodoxy, the legacy of Shīʿite narrators was problematic, consisting of elements that were deemed indispensable to the

Sunnī hadith tradition and others that were deemed vestigial reminders of its checkered genealogy. In an effort to delineate a standard for negotiating this problem, Sunnī scholars developed an increasingly nuanced discourse on narrating from "innovators," a category of which Shīʿites were one prominent subset. This discourse had a significant impact in shaping the recorded legacy of Shīʿite narrators, and in large part has defined the terms by which their legacy has been debated down to the present day.

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For Mary Jane

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List of Abbreviations

DU = Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-ʿUqaylī. *Kitāb al-ḍuʿafāʾ al-kabīr* (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmīyya, 1984).

EI^{2} = *Encyclopedia of Islam, 2*nd *ed.* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

EI^{o} = *Enyclopaedia Islamica Online*

EI^{r} = *Encyclopaedia Iranica*

GAS = Fuat Sezgin. *Geschicte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden: Brill, 1967-).

SAN = Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī. *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ* (Beirut: Muʾassast al-risāla, 1993).

TB = Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī. *Tārīkh Baghdād* (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1997).

Th&G = Josef van Ess. *Theologie und Gesellschaft in dem 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991).

TMD = ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan Ibn ʿAsākir. *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq* (Beirut: Dār al-fikr, 1995).

TS = Hossein Modarressi. *Tradition and Survival* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003).

TT = Aḥmad b. ʿAlī Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī. *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb* (Beirut: Dār al-fikr, 1984).

MT = Yaʿqūb b. Sufyān al-Fasawī. *Al-Maʿrifa wa al-tārīkh* (Baghdad: Maṭbaʿat al-irshād, 1984).

IAH = ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Ḥātim. *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa al-taʿdīl* (Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-maʿārif al-ʿuthmāniyya, 1952).

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I. Introduction

In the summer of 302/915, Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Nasāʾī stopped in Damascus during the course of a journey from Cairo to Mecca. At the age of 77, al-Nasāʾī had dedicated the majority of his lifetime to collecting, evaluating and disseminating hadith reports. Beginning in his native home of Central Asia when he was just fifteen years old, al-Nasāʾī's journey had taken him through most of the major urban centers of the Islamic Near East and by the end of his life he had come to be widely regarded as one of the foremost living representatives of Prophetic tradition. It was only appropriate that a scholar of his stature should hold a session of hadith narration in the Umayyad grand mosque in order to grace the city's inhabitants with some of the fruits of his lifelong pursuit of knowledge.

On the face of things, the session in the grand mosque should have been nothing more than a memorable stop in a six-decade itinerary charted in the service of hadith. However, al-Nasāʾī's choice of subject matter for the session proved to be a fateful one. He narrated hadiths on the virtues of the Prophet Muḥammad's Companions, a subject that could be benign enough if navigated carefully, but one that could also touch a raw nerve due to its potential implications for the internecine conflicts between the Companions. Nearly three centuries after their occurrence, memories of these conflicts still constituted some of the primary religio-political fault lines throughout the Islamic empire. The sharp divisions that had once characterized the alignments of different regions and cities had become increasingly blurred as exchange across trans-regional scholarly networks intensified and the entrepôt of the new ʿAbbasīd capital of Baghdad facilitated cultural homogenization throughout the empire, but a certain degree of regional factionalism persisted. This was especially the case in cities like Kūfa and Damascus, which had served as the capitals of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān

as they vied with one another for control of the early caliphate, and then incubated rival factions that continually drew inspiration from the original conflict. Although the Umayyad dynasty founded by Muʿāwiya had been eclipsed more than a century and a half prior to al-Nasāʾī's arrival in Damascus, the residual effects of its conflicts with ʿAlī and his descendants were still evident among the city's inhabitants, whose aversion to ʿAlī was readily apparent to al-Nasāʾī.

It is possible that al-Nasāʾī deliberately provoked his audience by choosing to narrate hadiths on the virtues of ʿAlī during his session in the grand mosque, but we do not know for certain that this was the case. Whatever he did narrate, his audience felt that Muʿāwiya had been conspicuously absent from the selection and they called al-Nasāʾī's attention to the omission. When al-Nasāʾī demurred, suggesting that the only hadiths in which the Prophet mentioned Muʿāwiya were less than flattering in their implications, an angry mob beat him severely and expelled him from the mosque. After being transported out of the city, al-Nasāʿī eventually died from his injuries.[1]

This episode provides one dramatic illustration of the inadequacy of conventional sectarian labels and categories to capture the complexity of the evolution of the Sunnī-Shīʿite divide in early Islam. Al-Nasāʾī, the last living author of one of the six canonical hadith compilations recognized by Sunnīs, died a martyr for his "Shīʿism." By the beginning of the fourth/tenth century, it had become rare for a Sunnī scholar of al-Nasāʾī's stature to be

[1] See various versions of this anecdote in *SAN*, 14/132-3; Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāẓ* (Beirut: Dār iḥyāʾ al-turāth al-ʿarabī, 1960), 2/700-1; Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmāʾ al-rijāl* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-risāla 1992), 1/338-9. On this episode and al-Nasāʾī's life and work see Christopher Melchert, "The Life and Works of al-Nasāʾī," *JSS* 59 (2014), 377-407, esp. 403-5. Melchert notes the interesting fact that this episode was not connected directly with al-Nasāʾī's death in Ibn ʿAsākir's (d. 571/1176) *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, although this connection had already been made by earlier authors such as al-Dāraquṭnī (d. 385/995), Abū ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Manda (d. 395/1005) and al-Ḥākim (d. 405/1014).

associated with Shīʿism, but he was, in fact, a late representative of a phenomenon that had once been quite widespread. In the first two and a half centuries of Islamic history, nearly two hundred Shīʿite narrators participated in transmitting and shaping the corpus of Sunnī hadith.

Narrators like al-Nasāʾī who played a central role in the formation of the Sunnī hadith tradition were not "Shīʿites" in any sectarian sense of the word. They were, however, identified with *tashayyuʿ*, a term that we normally equate with the proper noun "Shīʿism," but which connoted a particular shade of religio-political sentiment as often as it did a recognizably sectarian affiliation. For the first two and a half centuries of Islamic history, the semantic range of *tashayyuʿ* extended from one side of the mainstream religio-political spectrum to newly emergent sectarian trends. The *sine qua non* of *tashayyuʿ* was a strong affinity for ʿAli and his descendants (and, to a lesser extent, his clan) and some level of aversion towards ʿAlī's opponents, embodied for the better part of a century by the Umayyad dynasty. These sentiments were condemned by many who did not share them, but *tashayyuʿ* was only viewed as a distinctly sectarian phenomenon when such sentiments were augmented by various additional doctrines and practices. The lines dividing tolerable manifestations of *tashayyuʿ* from intolerable ones, and sentiment from sectarian affiliation were, of course, in the eye of the beholder.

When al-Nasāʾī's teachers traveled throughout the early Islamic empire to collect hadith at the end of the second/eighth century, many of the most prominent and prolific narrators who they encountered were associated with *tashayyuʿ*. Shīʿite narrators of all stripes were especially prominent in the Iraqi garrison city of Kūfa, which had served as the seat of ʿAlī's caliphate and incubated both Shīʿite rebellions and the earliest Shīʿite sectarian trends. A generation earlier, late Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid Kūfa had been the single most important

center of hadith transmission and its most prominent narrators had been associated with *tashayyuʿ*. Some of them encouraged or participated in the major Shīʿite rebellions that sought to topple the Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid dynasties in the name of one of ʿAlī's descendants. Others sat at the head of Shīʿite groups that were developing distinctively sectarian identities, but still made significant contributions to the "proto-Sunnī" milieu and the corpus of Sunnī hadith.

The fate of Shīʿite narrators was one of gradual exclusion from the evolving proto-Sunnī community. As this community sought to define the parameters of acceptable belief, it drew boundaries that ran through the middle of *tashayyuʿ*, as it were, resulting in the incorporation of a domesticated Shīʿite sentiment into Sunnism and the exclusion of those elements of *tashayyuʿ* that the majority of proto-Sunnīs found unpalatable. Given the richness of the biographical sources on early hadith narrators, their milieu is an ideal site for investigating the early evolution of the Sunnī-Shīʿite divide. This study aims to capture both the sectarian ambiguity that characterized the proto-Sunnī milieu as it emerged in the course of the late Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid periods and the strategies of boundary drawing and enforcement that led to the hardening of sectarian boundaries shortly thereafter.

Before proceeding to summaries of the chapters that make up the body of this study, it will be helpful to briefly consider two broader debates among historians of early Islam that impinge upon its conceptual framework and to which it, in turn, aspires to contribute. These debates concern the appropriate use of sectarian terminology and the utility of the concept of orthodoxy in an Islamic context.

I.1. Sectarian Terminology

Writing sectarian history can profitably be likened to traversing a literary expanse that separates the historian from her object. For the novice, well-trodden paths seem to offer a direct route to the destination. However, if followed long enough, these paths eventually diverge into a maze of faded, crisscrossing tributary paths. These faded paths occasionally blur into one another or circle around and converge, but the generally lead in different directions. Many of them simply stop abruptly or gradually vanish into the brush. The paths are, furthermore, dotted with snares that warring parties laid for their enemies centuries earlier, which have gradually taken on the appearance of natural features of the landscape. There are several old maps of the terrain but they all differ from one another. They give the appearance of having been sketched from memory or second-hand accounts and none of them corresponds very well to the topography that the traveler encounters. Even the most seasoned guides are unable to avoid getting entangled and lost several times in the course of their journeys. Learning from the mistakes of their predecessors, some would-be travelers eventually decide to forego the journey itself and focus instead on a more manageable task, such as identifying the various traps that ensnared their predecessors or accounting for the discrepancies between the maps at their disposal and the topography as they now see it.

The difficulties inherent in the journey outlined here account for the widely divergent interpretations offered for formative periods of religious history, which are encountered across traditions. Challenges arise not only in describing the origins of a new religion, but in its subsequent development along numerous trajectories and the eventual dominance of a limited number of those trajectories – what we generally refer to as orthodoxy – despite the myriad possibilities latent in the formative period. These challenges are compounded by the fact that

the only route to recovering those myriad possibilities runs straight through the territory of orthodoxy. This is often due to the fact that representations of earlier trajectories are primarily available in the writings of adherents of opponents, but, even where this is not the case, it remains that the vocabulary at our disposal for discussing sectarian history has been laden with numerous presuppositions in its journey through the centuries and is invariably too blunt and unwieldy a tool for the nuanced parsing demanded by the task. In the ambiguities and chaos apparent in the granular details of a frozen moment, we are confronted with the paradox of languages and identities that are unmistakably contested and fluid, but aim for nothing if not for authority and stability. Yet when we zoom out to the resolution of a century or a millennium, a measure of authority and stability becomes visible above the underlying fluidity.

There is no straightforward resolution to the problems occasioned by these two competing perspectives. We can coin new terms, resuscitate dead ones, affix proto- to dominant ones, or abandon tinkering with familiar labels for other methods of analysis, but these strategies only mitigate the situation. The sectarian binary of Sunnism and Shīʿism constitutes a basic premise of this study and yet is open to myriad objections, especially in the formative period that will be my primary focus. It will therefore be useful to explain at the outset how scholars of Islamic studies have attempted to navigate the difficulties outlined above, as well as the reasoning behind my adoption of some terms and not others.

The case of a prominent Sunnī scholar who was killed for his "Shīʿism" has already given us occasion to briefly consider the semantic range of "Shīʿism," or in Arabic *tashayyuʿ*. As noted above, the terms Shīʿism and Shīʿite did not necessarily connote sectarian phenomena, although they were increasingly associated with them over time. There is evidence that the

Arabic term *shīʿa*, or "party," was used already during the religio-political conflicts over the caliphate among the Companions. Certainly in the decades immediately following these conflicts the idea of *shīʿat ʿAlī*, or "ʿAlī's party" was salient.[2] More than half a century ago, Marshall Hodgson articulated a question that remains of perennial interest to the field in an article entitled, "How did the Early Shīʿa become Sectarian?"[3] Significant progress has been made in dating the emergence of sectarian Shīʿism to the late Umayyad period, but many questions concerning the nature of the teachings of nascent Shīʿite sects remain.[4] However, non-sectarian manifestations of Shīʿism persisted well into the third/ninth century. The fact that many early Shīʿite trends were not particularly sectarian and that some of the major tenets of the classical formulation of the majority Imāmī Shīʿism were not consolidated until the fourth/tenth century has led some scholars to refer to Shīʿite sects and trends prior to this period as "proto-Shīʿite."[5] For the purposes of this study, I have chosen to simply use the terms Shīʿism and Shīʿite without qualifications for two reasons. Firstly, unlike the term "Sunnī," "Shīʿite" was clearly used as a group marker from an early date, regardless of the extent to which the groups identified thereby were recognizably sectarian. Secondly, one of the fundamental conclusions that emerges from this study is the indeterminate and elastic nature of sectarian terminology, especially as it was employed in the formative period, and I see no compelling reason to impose an artificial consistency on the terms that is not reflective of the full semantic range indicated by their variegated usage in this period.

[2] See Patricia Crone, "Shīʿa," in *EI*^{2}.
[3] Marshall Hodgson, "How Did the Early Shīʿa Become Sectarian?," *JAOS* 75 (1955): 1–13.
[4] See the comments of Najam Haider, "Prayer, Mosque and Pilgrimage: Mapping Shīʿī Sectarian Identity in 2nd/8th Century Kūfa," *Islamic Law and Society* 16 (2009), 154.
[5] The term "proto-Shīʿite" is used in this manner by Montgomery Watt in *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1998), 38-62.

The term "Sunnī" presents a slightly different set of challenges, and contemporary scholarship is divided regarding the propriety of using the terms "Sunnī" and "proto-Sunnī" to describe figures and trends from the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries. Although use of the terms in this manner is widespread, some scholars have objected to their usage prior to the fifth/eleventh century, when a "Sunnī synthesis" is generally agreed to have emerged. These objections are made on the grounds that the terms predispose researchers to anachronism and teleological assumptions. Marshall Hodgson and Patricia Crone have stressed that the range of figures and orientations captured by the term "Sunnī" is far too narrow for it to serve as a comprehensive counterpart to "Shīʿite" in the formative period. Hodgson advocated the use of "Jamāʿī-Sunnī" in a reluctant concession to the ingrained usage of the term, while Crone opted for the option that Hodgson deemed ideal but impractical, replacing "Sunnī" altogether with "Jamāʿī" prior to the fifth/eleventh century.[6]

More recently, Abbas Barzegar and Kevin Reinhart have built on the work of these scholars by offering more detailed deconstructions of Sunnī claims to continuity and coherence, towards which they aruge recent Western scholarship has taken an excessively sanguine approach. Barzegar presents a critical genealogy of Sunnism by exposing the ellipses and disjunctures that characterize its evolving historical narrative and by focusing on contested concepts and figures that played a central role in the construction and contestation of communal boundaries.[7] Informed by a similar genealogical impulse, Kevin Reinhart takes scholars to task for their uncritical equation of Sunnism with orthodox Islam and their treatment of it as existing *ab initio* from the seventh century. He argues that many of those

[6] Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 1/277-9; Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 28-9, 219-20.
[7] Abbas Barzegar, "Remembering Community: Historical Narrative in the Formation of Sunni Islam." Ph.D. Dissertation. Emory University, 2010.

who claimed the title of "people of the Sunna (*ahl al-sunna*)" displayed the same level of the classical sectarian characteristics identified by Weber and Troeltsch – exclusivity, insularity and "a heightened sense of group boundaries" – as other groups generally accepted *prima facie* as sects. It was, moreover, only after the fifth/eleventh century that they succeeded in installing some features of their vision of Islam as normative.[8]

Both authors are critical of the term "proto-Sunnī" because it entails the acceptance and retrojection of the normative claims of an arbitrarily chosen historical moment and further suggests the continuity of an ahistorical essence uniting groups across time that were in fact quite different from one another. Although they give cogent expression to a valid concern that anyone dealing with sectarian terminology in this period would do well to take heed of, use of the term seems to persist unabated. A recent article by Matthew J. Kuiper focused on outlining the "proto-Sunnī movement" exhibited little awareness of the objections raised against the term and went so far as to state that "the appellation proto-Sunnī is... increasingly taken for granted in scholarly literature."[9] Kuiper demonstrates awareness of some of the methodological issues involved in using the term but largely references them in order to justify appending of the prefix "proto-" rather than to question the category altogether.

While Kuiper has offered an admirable portrait of what the proto-Sunnīs looked like, it will be useful to entertain some of the objections raised against the term in more detail. To begin with, it may be noted that the dominant mode of both Barzegar and Reinhart is deconstructive, which allows them to fully problematize the notion of "Sunnī" without

[8] Kevin A. Reinhart, "On Sunni Sectarianism," in *Living Islamic History: Studies in Honour of Professor Carole Hillenbrand*, ed. Yasir Suleiman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 209-225.
[9] Matthew J. Kuiper, "The Roots and Achievements of the Early Proto-Sunni Movement: A Profile and Interpretation," *The Muslim World* 104 (2014), 72.

proposing an alternative term that can be used to capture the same range of groups and figures when it is necessary to do so. For a study with a less deconstructive aim – for example on the sectarian affiliations of Kūfan mosques, the anomalous reign of al-Maʾmūn, the sectarian biases that inflected the work of early historians, or, as in the case at hand, the sectarian affiliations of hadith narrators – one has no choice but to make use of sectarian terminology, however fraught with difficulties it may be.[10]

This brings us again to face with Hodgson and Crone's *problematique* of Sunna vs. Jamāʿa, where "Jamāʿī" is the only plausible alternative to "Sunnī" and "proto-Sunnī" to refer to those Muslims who were not Shīʿites or Khārijīs in the late Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid periods. For the purposes of the present study, we may exclude the term "Jamāʿī" for precisely the same reasons that Hodgson and Crone wished to append it to or use it instead of "Sunnī." As they point out, the self-identifications of "*aṣḥāb al-sunna*" and "*aṣḥab al-ḥadīth*" were intended to set off the group not only, or even primarily, from Shīʿites, but also from a host of other religio-political trends. Insofar as the central focus of this study is those early figures who concerned themselves with collecting hadith and evaluating hadith transmitters, there is no need to use a term that is expressly intended to capture a broader range of orientations. In addition, although "*al-jamāʿa*" was a concept of central importance to many of these men, they employed terms like "*aṣḥāb al-sunna*," "*ahl al-sunna*" and "*aṣḥāb al-ḥadith*" to express their corporate identity with much greater frequency in the period in question. Lastly, as demonstrated by Barzegar, the idea of "*al-jamāʿa*" resonated particularly strongly with pro-Umayyad factions in the early second/eighth century, and our focus on the Kūfan milieu

[10] The comments of Jeffrey Stout, though written for a substantially different context, are poignant here: "Antinarratives were always intrinsically parasitic on the forms against which they rebelled. The current task is how to make something of these forms in the absence of the essentialist's all-too-easily-won continuity…" *The Flight From Authority* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 261.

would render a group designation derived from it out of place.[11] Given all of the above, "Sunnī" presents itself as the most obvious first order designation of the group in English.

"Sunnī" by itself, however, remains unsatisfactory given its highly limited application as a group identifier in this period. Juynboll estimates that the term *ṣāḥib sunna* was applied to no more than one hundred hadith narrators of the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries, a paltry number among the thousands of narrators who were active, even if we allow for a significant margin of error.[12] The term was also applied inconsistently and was vague in its indications. Definitions of it were frequently negative in content: a *ṣāḥib sunna* is one who is not a Qadarī, a Murjiʾī, a Shīʿite or a Khārijī, or is one who knows the *sunnas* that innovators have abandoned.[13] If we take the former definition seriously as a criterion, the term would certainly have applied to more than one hundred narrators and would have roughly the same scope as the customary usage of Sunnī, but it seems that it was generally applied only to those who achieved some level of notoriety either for their staunch resistance to such innovations or for their piety.[14] In other words, in spite of the fact that not many people in the second/eighth and early third/ninth centuries explicitly identified themselves or were identified by others as Sunnīs, some of the minimal definitions of the term could plausibly encompass the large body of narrators who were not given any sectarian label. This is the chief reason that I choose to retain the term "proto-Sunnī" in spite of all reasonable objections against it.

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[11] Barzegar, "Remembering Community," 77-88.
[12] G.H.A. Juynboll, "An excursus on the *ahl as-sunna* in connection with Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft,* vol. IV," *Der Islam* 75 (1998), 320.
[13] For the former definition see Juynboll, "Excursus," 321. For the latter see idem, "Some New Ideas on the Development of *Sunna* as a Technical Term in Early Islam," *JSAI* 10 (1987), 112. On early notions of the *ahl al-sunna/aṣḥab al-sunna* see also Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Religion and Politics under the Early ʿAbbāsids: The Emergence of the Proto-Sunnī Elite* (New York: Brill, 1997), 49-56, 59-63.
[14] See the randomly selected list of narrators to whom the term is applied in Juynboll, "Development of *sunna*," 114-6.

This usage is obviously in contrast with Reinhart's emphasis on the sectarian nature of the paradigmatic Sunnīs of the mid- to late-ninth century. The *ahl al-ḥadīth* of this period certainly exhibited a narrow and insular group consciousness, but there is no reason to give them a monopoly in defining an inherently unstable and contested notion that a variety of parties laid claim to.[15] As we will see throughout the dissertation, there was considerable variance in the degree of catholicity exhibited by those who identified with this group. There was no agreement on exactly where the parameters delineating the *aṣḥāb al-sunna* from others fell or the extent to which they were "hard" or "soft," and hence amenable to admitting figures "inside" whose doctrines and methods did not tally perfectly with the list of positions deemed central to an elusive and evolving orthodoxy. From the perspective of some among the *aṣḥāb al-sunna*, individuals who were involved to one extent or another with other trends and groups, such as the Qadarīs, Murjiʾīs, Shīʿites, Khārijīs, *aṣḥāb al-raʿy*, Sufi ascetics and practitioners of *kalām*, hovered at the margins of orthodoxy. Hybridity was the order of the day, and even those who rejected it most stridently evolved in new directions as they did so.

The synthesis that ultimately drew on or was influenced by all of these trends to varying extents only emerged, by the tacit consensus of the authors mentioned above, around the fifth/eleventh century. As noted by Reinhart, the early Sunnīs were known for eschewing debate and a fideistic adherence to the doctrines and practices that they preserved and handed down from their predecessors.[16] Their minimalist epistemology accounts for the largely negative process by which Sunnism was defined, as many of its proponents only reluctantly engaged in debate, ostensibly to defend original doctrines rather than to speculate on new

[15] To give an extreme example, the Muʿtazilīs of course never identified themselves explicitly as *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamāʿa*, but neither were they averse to laying claim to the concepts if they were defined correctly. See Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī, *Faḍl al-iʿtizāl wa ṭabaqāt al-Muʿtazila* (Tunis: Al-Dār al-Tūnisiyya lil-nashr, 1974), 185-7.

[16] See also Zaman, *Religion and Politics*, 62-3.

matters or extrapolate from old ones. This defensive posture is a key rhetorical strategy, if not always the actual practice, of claimants to orthodoxy, which develops and consolidates through identifying and refuting heresies.[17] This process is on display nowhere more clearly than in the most thorough and exacting survey of Islamic theology in the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries to date. As reviewers of Van Ess's *Theologie und Gesellschaft* have noted, the presence of early Sunnī paragons in law and hadith is relatively muted throughout the voluminous work.[18] When they do receive independent entries in the prosopographical portion of the work, they are frequently cast in a negative role; Sufyān al-Thawrī is listed under the "Antimurǧiʾitische Strömungen in Kūfa" and Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī and ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAwn are members of "Die Opposition gegen ʿAmr b. ʿUbaid."[19] Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795) does not receive an independent entry at all, but serves as a near-ubiquitous backdrop to discussions of figures at the head of major political and theological trends in Medina, with his distaste for debate on prominent display.[20]

Whatever the relative merits and demerits of the lack of attention to the *aṣḥāb al-sunna* in this work, it is highly significant for the purpose of our discussion. In addition to the fact that many of them had little or nothing to contribute to the debates that came to constitute the lifeblood of early Islamic theology, there is yet another factor that helps to explain the

[17] For a comparative study that identifies this process in the Islamic, Jewish, Christian and Neo-Confucian traditions see John B. Henderson, *The Construction of Orthodoxy and Heresy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), 1-84, 171-7.

[18] Juynboll, "Excursus," 319; Gerhard Böwering, review of *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. Und 3. Jahrhudert Hidschra*, by Josef Van Ess, *JNES* 61 (2002), 57; Michael Cook, review of ibid., *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 52 (1995), 180.

[19] *Th&G*, 1/221-228, 2/342-367. The portrayals of these figures are far more nuanced than the titles would suggest, but the point is that they are included in the analysis in their capacity as critics of the main trends that Van Ess is discussing. This point is also noted by Scott Lucas in *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunnī Islam: The Legacy of the Generation of Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Maʿīn and Ibn Ḥanbal* (Boston: Brill, 2004), 3-4.

[20] *Th&G,* 2/664-701, esp. 668. Other prominent Ḥijāzī figures, like Saʿīd b. Jubayr, Saʿīd b. al-Musayyab, ʿAmr b. Dīnār, ʿAṭāʾ b. Abī Rabāḥ, etc., lack entries.

short shrift that many of them receive. The sectarian categories that were born of polemics and came to constitute the organizational rubric of heresiographical literature also constitute the most significant organizing principle (after geography) of van Ess's work. Although many proto-Sunnī figures were associated with these groups in some way, even if only as adversaries, and thus receive entries, those who were not often fall from van Ess's picture. Existing without a label is a hallmark characteristic of socially dominant groups, and while this may have been a luxury enjoyed by many proto-Sunnīs when they were alive, it seems to have constituted a liability in the particular case of historical reconstruction at hand.[21]

At this point it will be useful to draw on a recent methodological proposal that comes from outside the field of Islamic Studies. Extensive disagreement over the application of sectarian terminology, especially the term "Gnostic," has animated discussions of early Christianity no less than of early Islam and has given rise to relatively nuanced, theoretically informed approaches to the problem. In a recent intervention on the subject, David Brakke has proposed that the functions of all of the categories and labels used by historians lie somewhere between two ideal typical poles. On the one hand, scholars may use a term in a primarily interpretive fashion without aiming at capturing a recognizably distinct social group. Examples of such terms would be neologisms like "apocalyptic Judaism" and "apocalyptic eschatology," which are used in reference to a range of groups and doctrines that differed too much to have a significant level of social coherence but nonetheless shared certain broad

[21] The social dominance of proto-Sunnīs referred to here should not be mistaken for political dominance or political backing. Although there are many examples of proto-Sunnīs who cooperated with the Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid dynasties, there is no dearth of examples of highly popular figures who ran afoul of the state. What I mean by social dominance is to have one's doctrines and teachings recognized as "natural" and normative, as opposed to those of figures and groups labeled as deviant. This understanding of dominance accounts for the fact that it was not uncommon for a single individual to be both courted by the state on account of his popular authority and punished for his recalcitrance. See Zaman, *Religion and Politics*, 167-9, 199-204 and passim.

characteristics. On the other hand, scholars use terms that are expressly intended to refer to specific social groups with concrete historical manifestations, even if these manifestations are necessarily indeterminate in terms of both their synchronic boundaries and their diachronic evolution. The example that Brakke gives here is that of "Johannine Christianity," which many scholars view as corresponding to a particular early Christian group. Brakke notes that in practice these two functions are never mutually exclusive. We would generally think of Christianity as a term of the latter type, but we use it to refer to Paul and his followers (or at least view them in some sort of continuity with what became Christianity) even though it is unlikely that they themselves did so.[22]

Brakke's own work and its reception demonstrates that his methodological proposals will not resolve longstanding debates over terminology.[23] However, at a minimum, his emphasis on the necessity for oscillation between the interpretive and identifying functions of sectarian terminology helps to clarify what exactly is at stake in these debates. Returning to the Islamic context, it is readily apparent that the term Jamāʿī promoted by Hodgson and Crone plays a predominantly interpretive role in that it is by and large a creation of modern scholarship and is too broad to correspond to a distinct social group.[24] The term "proto-Sunnī" leans in the opposite direction insofar as cognate terms were used to express a vague group identity which in turn corresponded to a clearly identifiable network of individuals engaged in a shared social and religious enterprise. The fact that this network included individuals who disagreed sharply with one another, or that it evolved across generations, or that its

[22] David Brakke, *The Gnostics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 1-28, esp. 16-18.
[23] The crux of Brakke's disagreement with other scholars lies in his insistence on the applicability of the term "Gnostic" to a group that other scholars might term "Sethian." See Karen King's review of *The Gnostics* in *History of Religions* 52 (2013), 294-301.
[24] This *pace* an isolated reference to the "Jamāʿiyya" noted by Crone, *God's Rule*, 29 n. 41. Other terms coined by Hodgson, such as "piety-minded" and "Sharīʿah-minded" would also fall into this category.

boundaries were porous, shifting and indeterminate does not nullify its existence or its significance. At the same time, "proto-Sunnī" also clearly plays an interpretive role in that its very construction presumes a certain continuity, albeit a limited and contested one, with later iterations of Sunnī Islam.

Sectarian terminology is a conundrum bequeathed to us by the vagaries of history and it bears both the claims of the parties who wielded it successfully and the traces of the polemical battles in which it was enlisted. In the present investigation, my discussion of "Shīʿite" narrators in the "Sunnī" hadith tradition is made possible by a paradoxical juxtaposition of language and history: it requires on the one hand that two distinct, bifurcated sects have been discursively constituted and, on the other hand, that this bifurcation was as yet incomplete in the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries when the narrators were active. This juxtaposition is thrown into stark relief by the overlapping and mutually contradictory usage of the terms in the period in question. Although the connotation of *ṣāhīb sunna* could frequently imply "non-Shīʿite," there were also a handful of narrators who were identified both as *ṣāḥib sunna* and as Shīʿites.[25] The question of the extent to which we make use of these terms in spite of such contradictions and limitations and the extent to which we focus on revealing the latter has largely to do with what kind of history we would like to write.[26]

[25] Certain remarks of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal implicitly define a *ṣāḥib sunna* as a non-Shīʿite: "Whoever says Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and ʿUthmān is a *ṣāḥib sunna*..." "If you come across a Kūfan who is a *ṣāḥib sunna* then he excels beyond others." Both quotes are given in the context of a discussion of preferring ʿAlī over ʿUthmān. See Abū Bakr al-Khallāl, *al-Musnad min masāʾil Abī ʿAbdillāh Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal* (Dakka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1975), 164. Muḥammad b. ʿUbayd b. Abī Umayya is also said to have "propagated the *sunna* among his fellow Kūfans by emphasizing the merits of Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and ʿUthmān." See Juynboll, "Development of *sunna*," 115. On the other hand, both Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-Aʿmash and Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir were referred to as *ṣāḥib sunna* and as Shīʿites, for which see III.2. below.

[26] Daniel Boyarin and others have noted that the variety of rubrics by which scholars may choose to date the emergence of Judaism and Christianity as separate religions renders the entire endeavor an inherently perspectival, if not ideological, affair. Given the messy and protracted nature of the process

Although I will engage in some "category critique" of my own by suggesting adjustments in the location of certain terms along Brakke's interpretive-identifying scale, this is not my primary aim. My primary aim is rather to offer a contrapuntal reading of the formation of a central aspect of Sunnī orthodoxy by highlighting the sectarian ambiguity that characterized the milieu in which Shīʿite and proto-Sunnī narrators intermingled and overlapped and the processes that led to the gradual disappearance of that ambiguity within the emerging Sunnī community.

I.2. The Question of Orthodoxy

The question of sectarian labels naturally begs the question of orthodoxy. Indeed, it could be argued that the primary purpose of sectarian labels is to define, demarcate and enforce a particular vision of orthodoxy. Debates concerning the concept of orthodoxy, however, have been as vigorous and sustained as debates concerning the appropriate sectarian terminology for early Islamic history. Although the term has been used widely since the inception of Islamic Studies in the West, a number of scholars, past and present, have deemed it inappropriate or at least highly problematic in its implications for the study and description of Islam. Scholars from earlier generations tended to argue that the relative lack of centralized ecclesiastical authority in Islamic history rendered discussions of orthodoxy out of place in the field.[27] Others have argued that the term "orthopraxy" would better capture the overall ethos of Islam, given the centrality of law in its scholarly tradition.[28]

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by which this "separation" occurred, he argues for a shift in focus to the strategies that brought it about, as opposed to an effort to date it correctly. See his *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 6-7 and passim. My thoughts on boundary drawing in this dissertation are much indebted to this work.

[27] See for example Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1998), 5-6. Ignaz Goldziher also noted the relative lack of institutions capable of producing doctrinal consensus

Most recent treatments of the subject of orthodoxy highlight the limitations of the term and its potential for creating confusion, but ultimately offer a limited conception of orthodoxy that may be analytically useful. Thus, after highlighting all of the difficulties entailed by a search for any particular locus for orthodoxy in Islamic history, Alexander Knysh suggests that we would be served best by thinking of an "orthodoxy-in-the-making," that is an ephemeral conglomeration of doctrines that asserts itself against a perceived threat in a given time and place, only to give way to a newly adjusted formulation after it achieves a measure of authority.[29] A similar proposal is made by Robert Langer and Udo Simon, who offer a broad survey of the literature on orthodoxy and suggest that we think of it as "a prize in the ongoing struggle for the power to define and control the right belief" or "a dominant position in a dynamic interacting system which balances change and stability…"[30] Josef van Ess suggests that the term is most useful when employed lightly – "als Metapher" – and that it ultimately means "nicht viel mehr als 'herrschende Elite' bzw. 'herrschende Lehre', 'mainstream'."[31] Although it emerged from anthropological rather than historical debates, one of the most influential discussions of orthodoxy in the field is that of Talal Asad, who was more optimistic regarding the utility of the concept and described it as follows: "[w]herever Muslims have the

in Islamic civilization and the concomitant lack of unanimity regarding the content of orthodoxy, but continued to use the term nonetheless. See his *Vorlesungen über den Islam* (Heidelberg: Religionswissenschaftliche Bibliothek, 1910), 181-2.

[28] For an argument in favor of the term orthopraxy see W.C. Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 20. For an argument that takes into account the centrality of law but favors orthodoxy over orthoporaxy see Norman Calder, "The Limits of Islamic Orthodoxy" in *Islamic Intellectual Traditions* ed. Farhad Daftary (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 66-86.

[29] Alexander Knysh, "'Orthodoxy' and 'Heresy' in Medieval Islam: An Essay in Reassessment," *The Muslim World* 83 (1993), 48-67.

[30] Robert Langer and Udo Simon, "The Dynamics of Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy: Dealing with Divergence in Muslim Discourses," *Die Welt des Islams* 48 (2008), 273-88.

[31] Josef van Ess, *Das Eine und das Andere* (Berlin: Water de Gruyter, 2011), 2/1303.

power to regulate, uphold, require, or adjust *correct* practices, and to condemn, exclude, undermine, or replace *incorrect* ones, there is the domain of orthodoxy."[32]

The most thoroughgoing critique of the utility of the term orthodoxy in recent years was authored by M. Brett Wilson. Wilson pushes the point raised by van Ess further, arguing that there is little to be gained by describing something as "orthodox" rather than "established" or "prevalent," and that by employing the term, scholars are in fact liable to unwittingly valorize dominant narratives and reinforce biases against parties and doctrines deemed undeserving of the label. He sees the work of Talal Asad and especially of Ovamir Anjum, who sought to build on Asad's concept of orthodoxy by further emphasizing the fact that it is subject to ratification in the forum of Islam's discursive tradition, as veering dangerously close to this pitfall.[33]

The question raised implicitly by van Ess and explicitly by Wilson – that of the precise nature of the difference between orthodoxy and establishment/prevalence – is a useful starting point for clarifying how the term is used in this study. The primary benefit of distinguishing between the concept of orthodoxy and mere establishment/prevalence is that orthodoxy conveys a sense of the heightened stakes for the parties involved. An individual may dissent from any number of doctrines or views that are established or prevalent in a given religious community without calling his legitimate identification with that community into question in the eyes of other members; not so with orthodoxy. Orthodoxy arises precisely

[32] Talal Asad, "The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam," in *Occasional Papers* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, 1986), 15.

[33] M. Brett Wilson, "The Failure of Nomenclature: The Concept of 'Orthodoxy' in the Study of Islam," *Comparative Islamic Studies* 3 (2007), 169-94. Cf. Ovamir Anjum, "Islam as a Discursive Tradition: Talal Asad and His Interlocutors," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, (2007), 656-72. Wilson's critique of the utility of the concept of orthodoxy resonates with other critiques of the concept as employed in a non-Christian context. See for example Willard Petersen, review of *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China*, ed. Kwang-Ching Liu, in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 53 (1993), 249-68. I thank Cameron Moore for this reference.

where parties with the requisite level of power and influence within a community deem it necessary to make the legitimate identification of others with that community contingent upon their adherence to a particular set of "correct" doctrines defined in opposition to "incorrect" doctrines. Insofar as these parties are able to translate their power and influence into negative consequences for those who transgress the boundaries of correct doctrine and incentives for those who respect them, they are able to install their vision of orthodoxy as the normative standard for their community. Orthodoxy is thus generally distinguished by: 1) a significant level of doctrinal conflict, 2) a heightened sense of group boundaries attached to that conflict, 3) definitions of correct doctrine in direct opposition to incorrect doctrine, 4) promoting and enforcing correct doctrine and suppressing and excluding incorrect doctrine through consequences and incentives.[34]

In practice, defining orthodoxy was an inherently incomplete, contested and generally messy affair. All of the authors mentioned above who caution modern scholars against an overly zealous quest to identify either the specific content or the legitimate representatives of orthodoxy are essentially correct. The futility of such a quest, however, should not obscure the myriad efforts made by various parties to define, promote and enforce particular doctrines and boundaries.[35] Identifying those efforts that met with greater levels of success with orthodoxy seems to offer greater analytical clarity than identifying them with establishment or

[34] All of these characteristics are identified across different traditions by John B. Henderson in *The Construction of Orthodoxy and Heresy*.

[35] Scholars of early Christianity have also struggled to find a balance that would avoid reifying any particular construction of orthodoxy while remaining cognizant of the efforts of various parties to enforce their vision of orthodoxy. In the words of David Brakke, "...we must recognize not only that pre-Nicene Christians were trying to construct boundaries that were not there, but also that sometimes they managed to do so successfully. We cannot and should not return to Irenaeus's vision of a clear orthodoxy marching to an inevitable triumph over heresy, but neither can we ignore a seemingly persistent feature of Christianity: its drive to create in social reality the single 'body of Christ'..." (*The Gnostics*, 15-16).

prevalence, provided that we bear in mind the fact that, in the words of Maribel Fierro, we encounter orthodoxy more as a "process" than as a "thing."[36]

In this study, the interest in orthodoxy stems at least as much from a retrospective perspective as it does from the perspective that emerges within the temporal scope of the study itself. While we observe some of the boundary drawing, exclusion and negative self-definition associated with orthodoxy within the temporal scope of the dissertation, these processes arguably did not meet with the requisite level of success to warrant their association with orthodoxy by the end of the third/ninth century. I thus generally qualify references to Sunnī orthodoxy in this period as "inchoate." When viewed over the *longue durée*, however, we are able to see that some of the doctrines formulated and boundaries drawn in the period under study did prove to be remarkably stable within the Sunnī community over time.[37] It strikes us as noteworthy that narrators of unsurpassed importance to the Sunnī hadith tradition would harshly criticize some of the Prophet's Companions, or state that ʿAlī was better than Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, precisely because the dominant Sunnī doctrines that emerged on these issues were remarkably successful in associating such practices with heretical Shīʿism and minimizing their presence within the Sunnī community for more than a millennium.[38] The retrospective question of orthodoxy that this dissertation seeks to raise and explore is thus

[36] Maribel Fierro, "Religious Dissension in al-Andalus: Ways of Exclusion and Inclusion," *Al-Qanṭara* 22 (2001), 464. One of the merits of Talal Asad's conception of orthodoxy, and perhaps a reason for his greater comfort with the term, is its similar emphasis on process over content.

[37] As noted by Scott Lucas, the contributions of early hadith scholars to shaping the historical outlook of the Sunnī community have received little attention in Western scholarship. See *Constructive Critics,* 2-9.

[38] The essential tenets and boundaries of the Sunnī vision of the Companions and their religio-political conflicts that emerged from the early hadith milieu arguably come closer to fitting an ideal typical model of orthodoxy than more conventional theological issues such as the attributes of God and the createdness of the Qur'an. As discussed in more detail in the epilogue, it was rare for a Sunnī in any era or locality to criticize the Companions without incurring significant reproval, if not dire consequences, for doing so. This is not to suggest that the Sunnī community was univocal in its approach to the Companions, but rather that certain boundaries were enforced with a high level of consistency.

concerned with the foreclosure of certain possibilities and the predominance of others in the course of the emergence and early evolution of Sunnism.[39]

I.3. Chapter Summaries

In the chapters that make up the body of this study, this question is approached from different angles. Chapter Two offers a broad prosopographical survey of roughly 150 Shīʿite narrators active in the proto-Sunnī milieu through the middle of the third/ninth century. This survey establishes such basic facts as the geographical and temporal distribution of the narrators, their numerical significance within the broader proto-Sunnī milieu, the sorts of sectarian terminology that were applied to them and the correlation of that terminology with specific doctrines, practices and affiliations. In aggregate, this information allows to understand how the position of Shīʿite narrators in the proto-Sunnī milieu evolved between the end of the first/seventh century and the middle of the third/ninth century, and what the implications of their gradual marginalization were for the formation of an inchoate Sunnī orthodoxy.

While the statistical analyses provided in Chapter Two provide a broad framework for understanding the evolution of the position of Shīʿite narrators in the proto-Sunnī milieu, Chapters Three and Four provide a more textured portrayal of the social processes at work in this evolution. Analyses of the lives of some of the most prominent and influential members of this milieu allow us to witness the various controversies, relationships and strategies that

[39] The retrospective perspective on orthodoxy advocated here is, again, one that finds currency in studies of early Christianity. Bart Ehrman, for example, notes that for all of their differences from later formulations of orthodoxy, certain Christian factions of the second and third centuries can be considered "ideational ancestors" of later iterations of orthodoxy. See *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 3-25.

served as the crucible from which an inchoate orthodoxy emerged but which, in their minutiae, also defy the very terms and boundaries by which that orthodoxy is defined. Chapter Three focuses specifically on the sectarian ferment that characterized late Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid Kūfa (the period spanning from roughly 100-150/718-767). In this period, both proto-Sunnīs and Imāmī Shīʿites began to draw sectarian boundaries around issues such as the status of the Companions (especially that of the first four Caliphs), the authority of the Ḥusaynī Imāms, and, to a lesser extent, the legitimacy of armed rebellion. Many of the figures examined in this chapter can be readily identified with one nascent sectarian trend or another, but none of them fit neatly within the retrospective categories applied to them. They occupied the ambiguous, liminal spaces that would gradually contract to the point of near disappearance as sectarian boundaries hardened.

Chapter Four extends the analysis of representative Shīʿite narrators further into the early ʿAbbāsid period, covering the interval spanning roughly 150-250/767-864. This chapter examines the process of hardening sectarian boundaries and the emergence of an inchoate Sunnī orthodoxy on issues of Sunnī-Shīʿite contention as two sides of the same coin. In this period, the number of Shīʿite narrators active in the proto-Sunnī milieu declined drastically. In addition, those Shīʿite narrators who enjoyed any degree of prominence in proto-Sunnī circles were no longer associated with identifiably sectarian Shīʿite trends, but were rather established fixtures of the proto-Sunnī milieu characterized by relatively mild Shīʿite tendencies. However, even as sectarian boundaries were enforced more vigorously through exclusion of those who violated them, the emerging consensus regarding the Companions – ʿAlī and ʿUthmān in particular – was shaped in significant ways by the contributions of Shīʿite narrators active in this period.

While the previous three chapters are concerned with understanding the evolution of the milieux in which Shīʿite narrators were active, Chapter Five examines the reception of these narrators in the canonical Six Books of Sunnī hadith, which were compiled from the mid- to late-third/ninth century, through a focus on hadiths on the virtues of ʿAlī. We will see that different Sunnī authors differed widely in their willingness to draw on the narrations of Shīʿites. The authors of the two most important works of Sunnī hadith, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī and Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, seem to have intentionally excluded the contributions of Shīʿite narrators from their chapters on ʿAlī's virtues, while other Sunnī authors drew from the narrations of Shīʿites on this topic liberally. In addition to surveying the reception of Shīʿite narrators in these works, this chapter examines the factors that may have contributed to the exclusion of Shīʿite narrators, at the forefront of which is the development of a technical discourse regarding narrating from Shīʿites and other "innovators." The chapter demonstrates that, contrary to the assumptions of most secondary scholarship, the newly emergent theoretical discourse on narrating from innovators played a significant role in shaping the reception of Shīʿite narrators among the authors of the canonical works of Sunnī hadith.

I.4. Approaches to the Sources

Before proceeding to the body of the dissertation, a final set of comments on my approach to the sources is in order. With the exception of the final chapter, the bulk of the material that makes up the following chapters is drawn from a particular genre of biographical literature known as *rijāl* literature. *Rijāl* literature is concerned almost exclusively with figures who narrated hadith (whether or not this was their primary activity) and is one of the

prototypical genres of biographical literature in classical Arabo-Islamic scholarship.[40] The earliest *rijāl* works that have been preserved date from the end of the period covered in this study, but the majority were compiled at least a century later and the most comprehensive works were compiled only in the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries.[41] The temporal lag between many of the sources employed and the period covered naturally begs the question of historicity. In addition, significant critiques have been leveled against the reliability of early Islamic historical literature in general, making the question of historicity even more poignant.

A great deal of ink has been spilled on this subject in the last century and, in general terms, we can state simply that different authors ranged on a spectrum from "sanguine" to "skeptical" continue to display different levels of pessimism or optimism concerning the possibility of historical reconstruction from various early Islamic sources. Debates over this issue have largely been focused on three overlapping sets of literature – hadith, prophetic biography (*sīra*) and histories of the early Muslim community and its conquests – and although there are significant overlaps and parallels between each of them, the differences in their structure and provenance present distinctive challenges and opportunities.[42] While these debates have also touched on the genre of *rijāl* literature, it is certainly not one of the primary grounds on which they have been carried out.

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[40] On *rijāl* literature and its relationship to other types of biographical literature see Wadad Qadi, "Biographical Dictionaries: Inner Structure and Cultural Significance," *The Book in the Islamic World,* George N. Atiyeh, ed. (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), 93-122.

[41] Norman Calder expressed doubts concerning the origins of *rijāl* literature in the middle of the third/ninth century, suggesting that its origins should be dated at least one generation later (*Studies in Early Muslim Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 194). For a study dispelling these doubts as they pertain to al-Bukhārī's (d. 256/870) *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, one of the earliest works in the genre, see Christopher Melchert, "Bukhārī and Early Hadith Criticism," *JAOS,* 121 (2001), 7-19.

[42] For a useful summary of this debate see Herbert Berg, ed., *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins* (Boston: Brill, 2014).

In discussing the historical value of *rijāl* literature in particular, we can treat two issues separately: the transmission and preservation of historical materials, and the historical accuracy of the material itself. In studies concerned solely with transmission and preservation, *rijāl* literature tends to fare remarkably well. Source-critical analyses reveal that authors in this genre generally reproduced their sources with assiduous accuracy, to the extent that later sources can frequently offer correctives to works compiled centuries earlier.[43] These studies should allay our concerns regarding the temporal gap between the sources and the events to a certain extent, although they also note the potential for a tendentious or "invested" presentation of the material that they preserve.[44] Apart from questions of transmission and preservation, the question of historical accuracy is obviously less accessible and attempts to answer it are more speculative. Perhaps the most that can be hoped for by way of positive demonstration of the overall reliability of this literature is a test of its coherence against a historical narrative developed from an isolated set of data. Where such tests have been attempted, they demonstrate a level of coherence that, at least in the opinion of this author, warrants employing *rijāl* literature as a historical source without arguing for its reliability at

[43] G.H.A. Juynboll argues that Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb* preserves a significant amount of material from lost or partially lost third/ninth century sources. See his *Muslim Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 135-6. A collection of articles on the value of Ibn ʿAsākir's *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq* for the study of early Islamic history similarly suggests that the work accurately preserves material from an array of earlier sources. See Steven C. Judd ("Ibn ʿAsākir's Sources for the Late Umayyad Period" in *Ibn ʿAsākir and Early Islamic History*, ed. James E. Lindsay (Princeton: Darwin Press, 2001), 78-99; Marianne Engle Cameron, "Sayf at First: the Transmission of Sayf ibn ʿUmar in al-Ṭabarī and Ibn ʿAsākir" ibid.

[44] See Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 168-76; Fred Donner, "ʿUthmān and the Rāshidūn Caliphs in Ibn ʿAsākir's *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*: a Study in Strategies of Compilation" in ed. Lindsay, *Ibn ʿAsākir*; Paul M. Cobb, "Community versus Contention: Ibn ʿAsākir and ʿAbbāsid Syria" ibid.

each turn or treating it as a portrayal that tells us more about the historical agendas of its compilers than the events it purports to describe.[45]

This is certainly not to suggest that one does not encounter the full gamut of standard problems in this literature. In what follows, we will see many examples of reports that are flatly contradictory, highly embellished or clearly anachronistic.[46] Other reports seem to be inflected by a particular sectarian bias, or are transmitted with dubious guarantees of honesty, or appear to be carefully crafted to respond to a particular quandary, or simply contain peculiarities that render their historicity questionable. Wherever such features are obvious, they are noted, and they often prove to be instructive in themselves. The majority of reports in *rijāl* literature, however, consist of laconic statements or anecdotes that are neither obviously problematic nor obviously historical. While the reliability of such reports at the individual level is a moot point, the overall picture that emerges from the profiles of hundreds of narrators possesses an internal coherence and consistency that would be exceedingly unlikely to emerge from a set of literature born of unbridled fabrication and misrepresentation.

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[45] Perhaps the most rigorous test of *rijāl* literature against a narrative developed from other sources is that of Harald Motzki in *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence: Meccan Fiqh before the Classical Schools*, tr. Marion Holmes Katz (Boston: Brill, 2002). Motzki's work relies primarily on the *Muṣannaf* of ʿAbd al-Razzāq to construct a picture of the legal teachings of a certain milieu in late Umayyad Mecca and finds that this picture is corroborated by later biographical entries on the figures active in this milieu. Najam Haider adopts a similar approach in *The Origins of the Shīʿa: Identity, Ritual and Sacred Space in Eight-Century Kūfa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Haider's work, however, is focused more on corroborating a chronology of sectarian development than on demonstrating the utility of particular sources. For another argument in favor of the internal coherence of early *rijāl* literature based on a comparison of the opinions of early hadith critics preserved in different sources see Scott Lucas, *Constructive Critics*, 133-43 and esp. 287-326. However, cf. Eerik Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism: The Taqdima of Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī* (Boston: Brill, 2001), 45, for a slightly different interpretation of some of the evidence adduced by Lucas.

[46] Based on a brief survey of encounters in which scholars admonish caliphs in biographical literature, Michael Cook suggests that the historicity of such accounts is dubious on the whole (*Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 46-67). Although I agree with this characterization, it is worth noting that such dramatized accounts are not representative of *rijāl* literature as a whole, the contents of which are generally of a more quotidian character.

Furthermore, although this study was not designed to assess the reliability of the sources, some of the data arrived at through independent analyses of terminology and reception in the first and last chapters accord remarkably well with the narrative that emerges from the biographical literature. In sum, my approach to the sources is to read them with bifocal lenses, whereby the primary focus is on the figures and events that they purport to describe and a secondary focus on issues with the sources themselves is adopted when necessary.

II: In the Eye of the Beholder: A Prosopographical Survey of Shīʿite Narrators in the Proto-Sunnī Milieu

Through the middle of third/ninth century, between 150 and 200 Shīʿite hadith narrators were active in the transmission of hadith in the milieu that gave rise to the corpus of Sunnī hadith. These narrators were reflective of the ramified nature of Shīʿism in this period. They included figures who were central to the proto-Sunnī milieu and others who were marginal to it but contributed to the evolution of independent sectarian trends. While some of these narrators were among the most prominent in their generations, the majority were relatively obscure figures who made modest contributions to the Sunnī hadith tradition.

This chapter offers a propaedeutic overview of the position of Shīʿite narrators within the proto-Sunnī milieu through prosopographical and statistical analyses drawn from Sunnī and Shīʿite *rijāl* literature. This overview allows us to understand the scope of Shīʿite participation in this milieu as well as the relative prominence and marginality of the various groups of Shīʿite narrators. Various Zaydī and Imāmī trends emerged in this period, and while these developments were more or less marginal to the proto-Sunnī milieu, we do find traces of them in Sunnī biographical literature. From the perspective conveyed in Sunnī literature, the most salient distinction between various Shīʿite narrators was that between *tashayyuʿ* and *rafḍ*. Although there was considerable overlap in the application of these terms, in general there was a marked distinction between the reception of Shīʿites and *rāfiḍīs*. This distinction is traced through analysis of the characteristics associated with narrators to whom these terms were applied and the evaluations they received among Sunnī hadith critics. The chapter also offers a chronological overview of the narrators' participation in this milieu, which suggests that their

declining prominence from the mid-second/eighth century onward correlated with the hardening of sectarian boundaries and the gradual formation of an inchoate Sunnī orthodoxy.

II.1. Contemporary Scholarship on Shīʿite Narrators

Several attempts have been made at a more or less comprehensive cataloguing of early Shīʿite narrators in the Sunnī canon. In Western languages, the only work that exists to date on this topic is that of Christopher Melchert, who identified 70 Shīʿites and 20 Rāfiḍīs included in Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's (d. 852/1448) *Taqrīb al-tahdhīb* in his brief study of sectarian figures in this work.[1] Melchert's article is valuable as an initial foray into the subject, but its exclusive focus on the *Taqrīb* renders its results incomplete and it does not move us beyond an awareness of the existence of sectarian narrators in the Six Books to a more detailed understanding of their milieu or their position within the Sunnī hadith tradition.[2]

Contemporary Islamic scholarship has devoted more attention to these narrators, although authors writing on the subject have been concerned much more with compilation than with historical analysis. The earliest attempt to compile a comprehensive list of Shīʿite narrators accepted by Sunnīs in Arabic that I am aware of is that of the Lebanese Imāmī scholar ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn al-Mūsawī (d. 1957), who enumerated 100 such narrators in the course of a highly contrived correspondence that purportedly took place between

[1] Christopher Melchert, "Sectaries in the Six Books," *Muslim World* 82, no. 3–4 (1992): 287–295.
[2] The *Taqrīb* only includes narrators found in the Six Books (and a limited number of other works by their authors) and thus excludes a considerable number of early hadith narrators, albeit less prominent ones. In addition, there are at least 34 figures associated with Shīʿism or *rafḍ* in earlier *rijāl* works whose Shīʿism is not mentioned at all by Ibn Ḥajar in the *Taqrīb*.

himself and the former Shaykh al-Azhar, Salīm al-Bishrī (d. 1916).[3] Imāmī scholars building on the work of al-Mūsawī have produced two major works cataloguing Shīʿite narrators included in the Sunnī canon. Muḥammad Jaʿfar al-Ṭabasī enumerated 143 Shīʿite narrators found in the Sunnī hadith canon, and another team of Iranian scholars attempted to catalogue all of the narrators shared by both sects.[4] Al-Ṭabasī's work is quite comprehensive, but, aside from a brief introduction, it consists mostly of verbatim reproductions from later *rijāl* compilations. The work of ʿAzīzī, et al., is broader in its scope, including a large number of narrators who were not Shīʿites at all but simply happened to narrate material included in Shīʿite works, and its methodology is similar to that of al-Ṭabasī. The only substantial work by a Sunnī author dedicated to the subject that I am aware of is that of the Algerian Karīma Sūdānī, who engages in a detailed study of al-Bukhārī's methodology in narrating from Shīʿites.[5]

A number of studies have also given more specialized treatments of individual Shīʿite narrators. Najam Haider has recently analyzed the figure of Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-Aʿmash as a paradigmatic case of a narrator with an ambiguous sectarian identity, arguing that the positions he adopted in ritual matters marked him as a proto-Sunnī in spite of a strong proclivity towards Shīʿite theological positions.[6] Etan Kohlberg situates al-Aʿmash further

[3] Sharaf al-Dīn al-Mūsawī, *al-Murājaʿāt* (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, n.d.), 104-94. On the dubious origins of this work, its contents and its reception see Rainer Brunner, *Islamic Ecumenism in the 20th Century: The Azhar and Shiism between Rapprochement and Restraint* (Boston: Brill, 2004), 51-81.

[4] Muḥammad Jaʿfar al-Ṭabasī, *Rijāl al-Shīʿa fī asānīd al-Sunna* (Qum: Muʾassasat al-Maʿārif al-Islāmiyya, 1420); Ḥusayn ʿAzīzī, Parvez Rustagār and Yūsuf Bayāt, *Al-Ruwāt al-mushtarakūn bayna al-Shīʿa wa al-Sunna* (Tehran: Al-Majmaʿ al-ʿālamī lil-taqrīb bayna al-madhāhib al-Islāmiyya, 2009). This work was originally published in Persian under the title *Rāviyān-i mushtarak: pizhūhishī dar bāzshināsī-i rāviyān-i mushtarak-i Shīʿah va ahl-i Sunnat* (Qum: Bustān-i kitāb, 1380).

[5] Karīma Sudānī, *Manhaj al-Imām al-Bukhārī fī al-riwāya ʿan al-mubtadiʿa min khilāl al-jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 2004).

[6] Najam Haider, *The origins of the Shīʿa: identity, ritual, and sacred space in eighth-century Kūfa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 220-8.

along the Shīʿite side of the spectrum in an entry on him in *Encyclopedia Iranica*.[7] Maher Jarrar recently examined the figure of Ibrāhīm b. Abī Yaḥyā (d. 184/800), a prominent and controversial teacher of al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/819) who straddled various Shīʿite and proto-Sunnī trends of his day.[8] Takim Liyakat has analyzed the evolution in the biographical profiles of two Imāmī narrators, Jābir al-Juʿfī (d. 128 or 132/746 or 750) and Abān b. Taghlib (d. 141/758), in both Sunnī and Imāmī literature.[9] Hossein Modarressi includes profiles of dozens of narrators who straddled both communities in his bibliographical survey Shīʿite literature, as does Josef Van Ess in his monumental *Theologie und Gesellschaft*.[10]

All of the studies listed here make valuable contributions that cannot be discussed here at length. None of them, however, directs sustained attention to analyzing the sectarian terminology used to describe the narrators. On the contrary, this terminology is generally taken at face value with little attention given to its inherently contested and unstable nature. This flaw is most apparent in the work of the aforementioned scholars writing in Arabic and Persian, who are more liable to assume reified essences of Shīʿism and Sunnism that extend unchanged across history. Thus al-Mūsawī and al-Ṭabasī, on the Shīʿite side, exhibit a subtle tendency to conflate Shīʿism with Imāmism, evincing only a limited awareness that the majority of the narrators in their lists were closer to the proto-Sunnī side of the spectrum than the proto-Imāmī side. Sudānī, on the Sunnī side, either completely ignores or dismisses the

[7] Etan Kohlberg, "Aʿmaš," in *EI*[r].
[8] Maher Jarrar, "Ibn Abī Yaḥyā: A Controversial Medinan *Akhbārī* of the 2nd/8th Century," in *The Transmission and Dynamics of Textual Sources of Islam*, eds. Nicolet Boekhoff-Van Der Hoot, et. al. (Boston: Brill, 2011), 197-227.
[9] Liyakat N. Takim, *The Heirs of the Prophet* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), 163-80.
[10] *TS*, passim; *Th&G*, 1/235-98, 334, 2/423-9, 716-19.

possibility that certain prominent proto-Sunnī narrators might have been "Shīʿites," in spite of the fact that they were widely associated with Shīʿism.[11]

Western studies have naturally taken a more critical view of the historical evolution of these categories, but one is nonetheless inclined to wonder whether sectarian terminology and heresiographical categories have not occassionally been overloaded with explanatory weight in these studies as well. Melchert and Juynboll, for example, follow the definitions of *tashayyuʿ* and *rafḍ* given by medieval Sunnī scholars, in spite of a subtle Sunnī bias found in the definitions.[12] Juynboll also implies that we should be able to draw a relatively strict distinction between the *mutashayyiʿ* on the one hand and the *shīʿī rāfiḍī* on the other.[13] Kohlberg, on the other hand, states that it is not possible to state whether al-Aʿmash was a Zaydī or an Imāmī, even though, as argued by Haider, it is exceedingly likely that he was neither and that his Shīʿism did not correspond closely to that of any developed sect. Haider and Jarrar tend to assume that the word "Batrī" corresponded to a concrete social group representing an early stratum of the Zaydī sect, even though, as will be demonstrated later, the word seems to have been used exclusively by Imāmīs as a derogatory label for a disparate group of figures with whom they had certain disagreements and who were not necessarily involved in the

[11] For example, she dismisses the possibility that four particular narrators were Shīʿites and does not even bother to discuss the possibility that important proto-Sunnī figures like al-Aʿmash, al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba, ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī and Abū Nuʿaym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn (on whom see below) may have been Shīʿites. See Sūdānī, *Manhaj*, 198-208.

[12] See G.H.A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 48-9; Melchert, "Sectaries," 291. The reliance of these scholars on Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's definitions of these terms is perfectly understandable since they are largely accurate, but it remains that the definitions exhibit a subtle Sunnī bias. The definitions are discussed in more detail in the conclusion.

[13] See his review of *Th&G* where he suggests "a re-thinking of the relationship – if any – of the qualifications of *mutashayyiʿ* and *shīʿī rāfiḍī*" in *Der Islam* 71 (1994), 367. For another discussion of the phenomenon of *rafḍ* that is not particularly concerned with hadith narrators and is based largely on the heresiographical tradition, see Montgomery Watt, "The Rāfiḍites: A preliminary study," *Oriens* 16 (1963), 110-21. Watt tends to equate *rafḍ* with Imāmī Shīʿism in line with the Sunnī heresiographers.

revolutionary efforts of Zayd b. ʿAlī or subsequent ʿAlid rebels.[14] Van Ess also organizes his discussion of Shīʿites largely around the heresiographical work of pseudo-al-Nāshiʾ, which occasionally leads to a flattening of the differences between narrators grouped under a single label.[15]

The broad survey undertaken here suggests that we adopt a slightly different approach to this terminology. In our examination of Shīʿite narrators, it will quickly become apparent that sectarian terminology was not applied to them in a consistent manner and that its usage varied according to perspective. Rather than relying on the artificial impositions of heresiographers or hadith scholars on this variegated usage, we can interrogate the multiple perspectives that it reveals in order to understand how sectarian terminology was enlisted to draw boundaries and define orthodoxy.

II.2. How do we identify a Shīʿite narrator?

Sunnī *rijāl* literature evinces virtually no awareness of the heresiographical categories under which Shīʿite narrators have frequently been grouped and discussed. This does not necessarily mean that these categories were not in use during or shortly after the period of the narrators' activity – a question we will deal with in more detail later on – but it certainly suggests that if they were in use, they did not enjoy broad social currency. For Sunnī hadith

[14] Cf. now Najam Haider, *Shīʿī Islam* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 103-11, where Haider places greater emphasis on the fact that "Batrī" and "Jārūdī" are heresiographical terms that did not correspond to a social group but rather signaled a gradual shift in the orientation of the Zaydīs. This work appeared too late to be fully incorporated into the present study.

[15] For example, Van Ess's particular selection of "Schiisierende Traditionarier" and his ascription of certain views to them is based on the heresiographical work of Pseudo al-Nashiʾ al-Akbar. See *Th&G*, 1/235-6; Pseudo-al-Nāshiʾ al-Akbar, *Masāʾil al-Imāma* in *Frühe muʿtazilitische Häresiographie*, ed. Josef van Ess (Beirut: Franz Steiner, 1971), 65-6. The discrepancy between the views of Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ, as reported by Pseudo-al-Nashiʾ and van Ess, and the evidence in the *rijāl* literature will be discussed in section IV.3.

critics, the Shīʿism of a hadith narrator was overwhelmingly indicated by words derived from the triliteral roots *sh-y-ʿ* and *r-f-ḍ*, such as the verbs *yatashayyaʿ* and (much less frequently) *yataraffaḍ*, the verbal nouns *tashayyuʿ* and *rafḍ*, and the *nisbas* (adjectival nouns) Shīʿī, Rāfiḍī and their plurals. Other terms were used as well: "*Shāʿī*" was a rare alternative for Shīʿī; ʿAlawī could indicate either a devoted companion of ʿAlī or one who upheld his cause, as opposed to that of ʿUthmān, in the decades after his death; "*Mukhtārī*" referred to supporters of the Kūfan rebel al-Mukhtār b. Abī ʿUbayd al-Thaqafī (d. 67/687);[16] "*khashabī*" was originally applied to a particular group of *mawālī* amongst the latter armed with wooden clubs, but later took on a more vague connotation of general revolutionary Shīʿite sentiment;[17] "*Sabaʾī*" derived from a reference to the quasi-mythical figure ʿAbd Allāh b. Sabaʾ[18] and was generally applied to adherents of doctrines viewed as extreme, being similar in this sense to *rāfiḍī* but probably chronologically prior to it.

A variety of adjectives and qualifiers that either attenuated or accentuated the Shīʿism of a narrator were also added to the primary terms derived from *sh-y-ʿ* and *r-f-ḍ*. The former were less common, and consisted of such formulations as "a little Shīʿism (*tashayyuʿ qalīl*)"[19]or "light Shīʿism (*tashayyuʿ khafīf*)."[20] The latter were both far more common and more colorful,

[16] On al-Mukhtar and his followers see Wadad al-Qadi, *al-Kaysāniyya fī al-tārīkh wa al-adab* (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1974); William Tucker, *Mahdis and Millenarians: Shīʿite Extremists in Early Muslim Iraq* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 19-33.
[17] On the original import of *khashabiyya* see Patricia Crone, "The Significance of Wooden Weapons in al-Mukhtār's Revolt and the ʿAbbāsid Revolution," in *Studies in Honour of Clifford Edmund Bosworth Vol. 1*, ed. I.R. Newton (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 174-187. On later connotations of the term see C. Van Arendonk, "Khashabiyya" in *EI²*.
[18] On Ibn Sabaʾ and the Sabaʾiyya see the excellent study of Sean W. Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic: Ibn Sabaʾ and the Origins of Shīʿism* (Boston: Brill, 2012).
[19] Al-ʿIjlī, *Thiqāt*, 1/332, in reference to Khālid b. Makhlad al-Qaṭawānī, 1/421-2 in reference to Salama b. Kuhayl and 2/299, in reference to Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir; *SAN*, 5/207, in reference to ʿAlī b. Zayd b. Judʿān.
[20] *SAN*, 8/202. I have not found any references in *rijāl* literature to the "good Shīʿism (*tashayyuʿ ḥasan*)" first discussed by Goldziher and accepted apodictically by later authors as a common category. See

consisting of such formulations as "extreme (*ghālin/yaghlū*)" or "excessive (*mufriṭ/yufriṭ*)" in Shīʿism/*rafḍ*, "among the leaders of the Shīʿites (*min ruāʾsāʾ al-shīʿa*)," "among the unwavering Shīʿites (*min ʿutuq al-shiʿa*),"[21] "a staunch Shīʿite (*Shīʿī jalad*)"[22] and "a flaming Shīʿite (*Shīʿī muḥtariq*)."[23]

Even if we restrict ourselves to the terminology attested in *rijāl* literature, it still presents a number of significant challenges. In the first place, as was the case with the various derivatives of *sunna*, nearly all of these terms were used with a considerable degree of elasticity and inconsistency throughout the formative period of the hadith tradition. Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/885), the great ʿAbbāsid polymath, compiled a list of Shīʿite hadith narrators that extended from the semantic core of *sh-y-ʿ* to its penumbral regions and beyond, including figures known for strong Shīʿite sentiments, such as Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa (d. 137/754), others known for mild Shīʿite sentiments, such as Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778), and still others who appear not to have been Shīʿites at all, such as Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān (d. 198/813).[24] Some hadith critics exhibited a predilection for unique phrases to describe Shīʿite narrators. Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 277/890) frequently employed the phrases "among the leaders of the Shīʿites"

Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, trans. and ed. S.M. Stern and G.R. Barber (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971), 108; "Beiträge zur Literaturgeschicte der Šîʿâ und der sunnitischen Polemik" in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Joseph Desomogyi (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967), 265-266; C. van Arendonk, *Les débuts de l'imāmat zaidite au Yemen* (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 28; Wilferd Madelung, *Der Imam al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm und die Glaubenslehre der Zaiditen* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1965), 228; Erling Ladewig Petersen, *ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya in early Arabic Tradition* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1964), 180; Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1998), 59.

[21] The sense of *ʿutuq* (pl. of *ʿatīq*) is not immediately clear in this context. The obvious meaning of "old" would be tempting but does not fit with the chronology of the narrators to whom it is applied. It is mostly likely related to the following meaning of *ʿatīq*: "anything that has reached the utmost in quality or degradation, beauty or ugliness," in the sense that these narrators "reached the utmost" in their Shīʿism. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Cairo: Dār al-ḥadīth, 2003), 6/75.

[22] Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl fī naqd al-rijāl* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 1963), 1/5, in reference to Abān b. Taghlib.

[23] ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil fī ḍuʿafāʾ al-rijāl* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1988), 2/188 (in reference to al-Ḥārith b. al-Ḥuṣayra), 4/320 (in reference to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ṣāliḥ), 5/260 (in reference to ʿĪsā b. Mihrān al-Mustaʿṭaf).

[24] ʿAbd Allāh b. Muslim Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif* (Cairo: Dar al-Maʿārif, 1969), 624.

and "among the unwavering Shīʿites," describing no less than 15 narrators with these phrases, even though some of them were entirely obscure.[25] In addition, narrators were not infrequently labeled with a multiplicity of terms that were seemingly contradictory or even absurd. A single narrator might be described as having "a little Shīʿism" by one hadith critic, identified as a nondescript Shīʿite by another, and as being "an excessive *khashabī*" by another.[26] Adding yet another layer of complication, hadith critics were hardly of one mind regarding who was a Shīʿite and who was a Rāfiḍī. Narrators from Baṣra tended to offer harsher assessments of Kūfan narrators' Shīʿism than narrators from other regions, and scholars of the fourth/tenth century, such as al-ʿUqaylī (d. 322/934) and Ibn Ḥibbān (d.354/965), exhibited a tendency to label narrators as Rāfiḍīs whom critics of the third/ninth century had identified as Shīʿites.[27]

The great hadith masters of the Mamlūk era attempted to resolve some of this ambiguity by giving precise definitions to the terms *tashayyuʿ* and *rafḍ* and offering a corresponding taxonomy of Shīʿism among the early generations, but these attempts were not without their own contradictions, ambiguities and biases, and they can hardly be used as a standard for analysis for the late Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid periods. Given the polyphonic nature of the sources, it seems best to forego any attempt at precise definition and build our understanding of both the terms and the narrators to whom they are applied from the ground

[25] See Appendix A.
[26] The narrator in question here is Fiṭr b. Khalīfa, although other examples could be cited as well. For these assessments of Fiṭr see ʿIjlī, *Tārīkh al-thiqāt*, 2/208; ʿAbbās al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn* (Beirut: Dār al-qalam, 1990), 1/246; *DU*, 3/464. The most disciplined parsing of mild, moderate and extreme Shīʿism seems to have been that of al-ʿIjlī, which is not surprising given his temporal proximity and his focus on Kūfan narrators.
[27] This is explained in part by the fact that the relationship of *tashayyuʿ* to *rafḍ* was that of a genus to a species, but it nonetheless underscores the contested and ambiguous nature of the terminology.

up by looking for *dominant correlations* between the labels used and the positions held by the narrators on a number of key issues.

The ambiguous nature of the terminology used to refer to the narrators was reflective of a fluid social reality and the narrators themselves did not constitute a unified group by any means. The sources provide attestation of close student-teacher relationships between some of them, sharp disagreements and mutual alienation among others and cordial relations despite differences of opinion among others. What all of them share is simply their association with Shīʿism or *rafḍ* in Sunnī *rijāl* literature. Some of them played an important role in the development of nascent Imāmī and Zaydī sectarian identities, and others were at the forefront of Kūfa's proto-Sunnī milieu. The vast majority, however, are relatively obscure figures regarding whom we possess only a handful of anecdotes, or the bare bones biographical data of when and where they lived and what they narrated from and to whom. This data, however, is of immense historiographical value in that it allows us to extend our analysis beyond the relatively small number of individuals who were prominent enough to merit detailed entries in the biographical literature to an entire milieu that is large enough to yield statistical data that puts us on firmer historical ground than mere textual analysis is able to. In the analyses that follow, I have tried to limit my own interventions to a minimum in order to let the historical record speak for itself, but it is inevitable that categories will be constructed, boundaries drawn, and ambiguities reconciled.

For the reasons outlined above, I have foregone the various subcategories of Shīʿites familiar from heresiographical literature and grouped the narrators into three primary groups: 1) Shīʿites are those referred to as such or with the verb *yatashayyaʿ* or the verbal noun *tashayyuʿ*. 2) Rāfiḍīs are those referred to as such, and have also been grouped with Sabaʾīs

since the doctrines and positions ascribed to the two groups are more or less identical. 3) Shīʿite-Rāfiḍīs are those who have been referred to with both terms. The attenuating and accentuating qualifiers described above that were added to these terms will not be analyzed statistically because the formulaic and arbitrary nature of their usage would severely skew such an analysis.

Before proceeding any further, I would like to stress that although the privileging of the categories of *rijāl* literature over those of heresiographical literature is defensible on its own merits, there is yet another reason for this choice. The analysis of this chapter is meant primarily to clarify the position of Shīʿites *within the Sunnī hadith tradition*, and not within Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid society at large. Insofar as the conclusions presented here have broader relevance, it is primarily to the development of a nascent Sunnī orthodoxy and only secondarily to the historical development of Shīʿism as a social, political and religious phenomenon.

II.3. A Statistical Profile of Shīʿite Narrators

The aforementioned works of al-Mūsawī and al-Ṭabasī provide a more or less comprehensive cataloguing of Shīʿite narrators in the Sunnī tradition. My own research has yielded only a moderate addition to their findings in terms of the sheer number of narrators, but the quantitative analyses I provide relating to geography, reception, sectarian affiliation and chronology are unprecedented to the best of my knowledge. The first question that arises from Figure 1.1 is how significant the number of Shīʿite narrators is vis-à-vis the number of hadith narrators in general. In order to address this particular question, we will make use, like Melchert, of Ibn Ḥajar's *Taqrīb* due to its high degree of accessibility. Excluding the first and twelfth *ṭabaqas* of the *Taqrīb*, both of which lie outside the temporal scope of this survey, there

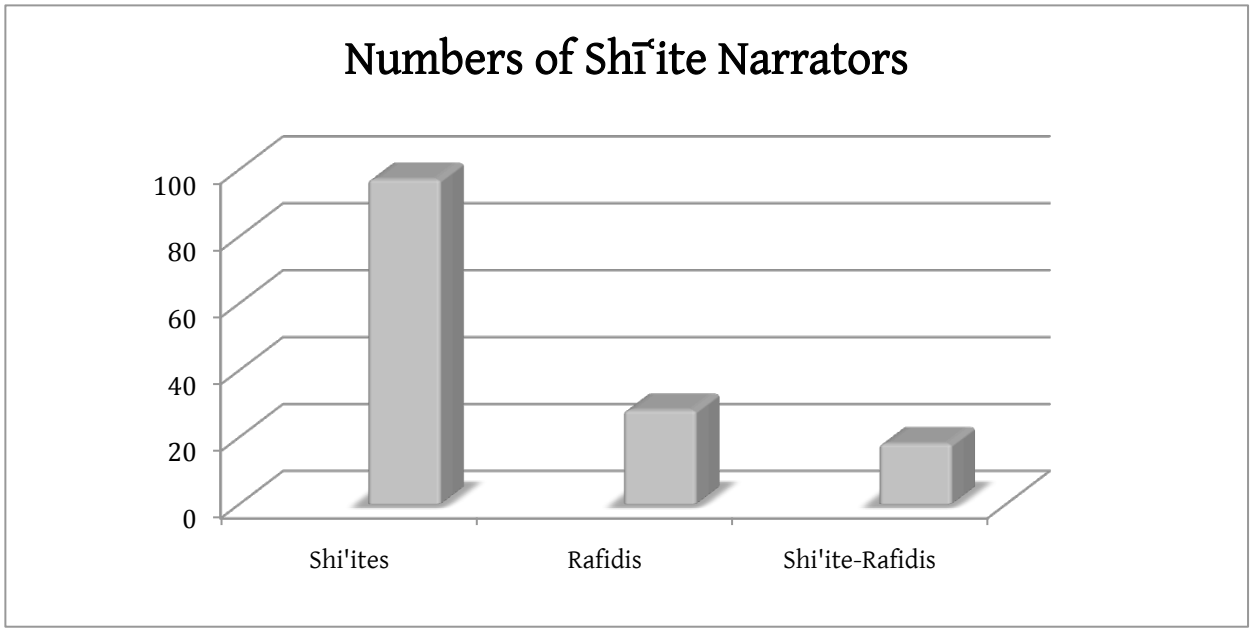


Fig 1.1. Narrators identified as Shīʿites, Rāfiḍīs or both in Sunnī *rijāl* literature up to the year 250. All subsequent graphs are based on a survey of the 153 narrators represented here.

are 6329 *identifiable* narrators in the *Taqrīb*.[28] The total number of Shīʿites and Rāfiḍīs in the *Taqrīb* is roughly 130, which means that they constitute ~2% of all identifiable narrators in the period in question. If we limit our analysis to Kūfa, this proportion increases considerably but remains in the minority. There are approximately 1137 identifiable Kūfan narrators in the *Taqrīb* in the period in question and approximately 110 of these, or approximately 10%, are identified as Shīʿites (not necessarily in the *Taqrīb*). Even if we assume that a greater proportion of narrators held Shīʿite sentiments than those who were explicitly identified as having done so in our sources, this still offers a useful corrective to the impressionistic evaluations of Islamic and Western scholarship alike, both of which have asserted that the

[28] It is necessary to exclude those narrators categorized as unidentifiable (*mastūr*, *majhūl al-ḥāl* or *majhūl*) from this calculation because any sectarian affiliations they may have had, as nearly everything else about them, are unknown. On the specific import of these terms see Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Taqrīb al-tahdhīb* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-risāla, 1997), 1/52.

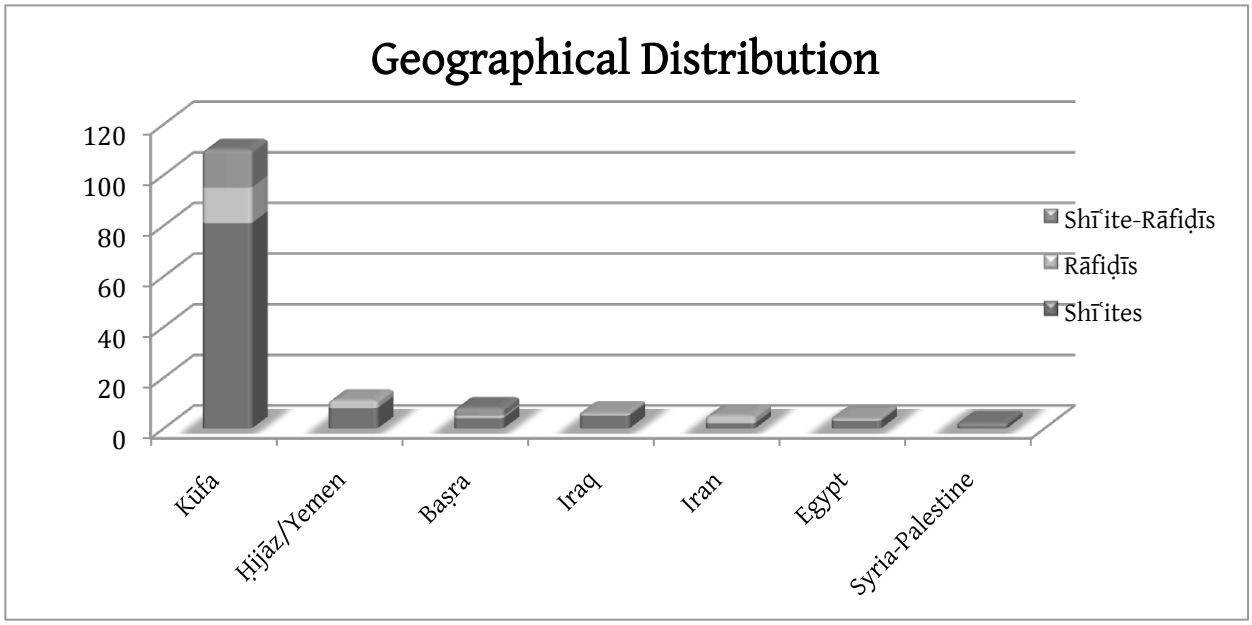


Fig 1.2. Locations of Shīʿite narrators. Narrators who lived in multiple locations are counted in each location.

majority of Kūfan narrators were Shīʿites.[29] In every other location represented in Fig 1.2, Shīʿites constituted only a negligible portion of hadith narrators. This does not necessarily indicate that Shīʿism did not enjoy considerable social currency in some of these locations. Repeated ʿAlid revolts in the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries launched from locations as varied as the Ḥijāz, Baṣra, northern and western Iran and Yemen, to say nothing of the pro-Hāshimid sentiments behind the ʿAbbāsid revolution, suggest that a minimal level of sympathy for the ʿAlid cause had broad purchase throughout the early Islamic empire, irrespective of the success or failure of these revolts.[30]

[29] The most explicit example of this assertion is G.H.A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 48. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal reportedly said that, "All of the people of Kūfa preferred ʿAlī over ʿUthmān except for two men, Ṭalḥa b. Muṣarrif and ʿAbd Allāh b. Idrīs..." See Khallāl, *Masāʾil Aḥmad*, 164. See also, *Th&G*, 1/235; *SAN*, 5/374; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/219.

[30] See the statement of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, "most of the people of Wāsiṭ adhered to *tashayyuʿ*" in connection with Yazīd b. Hārūn's contention that it did not matter if one preferred ʿAlī or ʿUthmān. Quoted in Khallāl, *Masāʾil Aḥmad*, 163 (also cited in Zaman, *Religion and Politics*, 173). Yazīd b. Hārūn and

II.4. Shīʿism and Rafḍ: Prominence and Grades of Reliability

Turning our attention to what these statistics convey at the intra-Shīʿite level, we can see that although there is some overlap in the categories of Shīʿite and Rāfiḍī, the two groups were largely viewed as distinct and were received in a markedly different manner by Sunnī hadith critics. First of all, the existence of 97 Shīʿites versus 28 Rāfiḍis and 18 Shīʿite-Rāfiḍīs indicates that Shīʿites played a significantly greater role in the narration of Sunnī hadith than Rāfiḍīs. This initial impression is strengthened by several other factors. With respect to those identified as both Shīʿites and Rāfiḍīs, many of them were identified as Shīʿites in the earliest sources and were only identified as Rāfiḍīs by later *rijāl* critics, such as al-ʿUqaylī and Ibn Ḥibbān. In addition, the majority of those identified only as Rāfiḍīs have only one or two entries in works on weak narrators. The marginal position of Rāfīḍīs is further reflected in Figure 1.3. Of 97 Shīʿite narrators, 76 (or 78%) have entries in Ibn Ḥajar's *Taqrīb*. The same percentage of those identified as both Shīʿites and Rāfiḍīs have entries. However, of 28 Rāfiḍīs, only 16 (57%) have entries in the *Taqrīb*, meaning that nearly half of the Rāfiḍīs surveyed here were ultimately excluded from the canonical works of Sunnī hadith.

The relative numerical prominence of Shīʿites and Rāfiḍīs also correlates well with Sunnī hadith critics' qualitative evaluations of them as transmitters. While only one or two assessments of a narrator's reliability may be reported for obscure narrators, it is not uncommon for a number of disparate or conflicting assessments to be reported for narrators of any prominence. In order to arrive at a quantifiable sense of how Shīʿite narrators were received by hadith critics, I assigned a number grade to each narrator based on the aggregate of opinions given for him. This is an imprecise science at best, since the terminology applied in

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Hushaym b. Bashīr, two of the most prominent traditionists in the city, both supported the revolt of Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd Allāh (on which see below). On this and Shīʿism in Wāsiṭ generally see *Th&G*, 2/435-6.

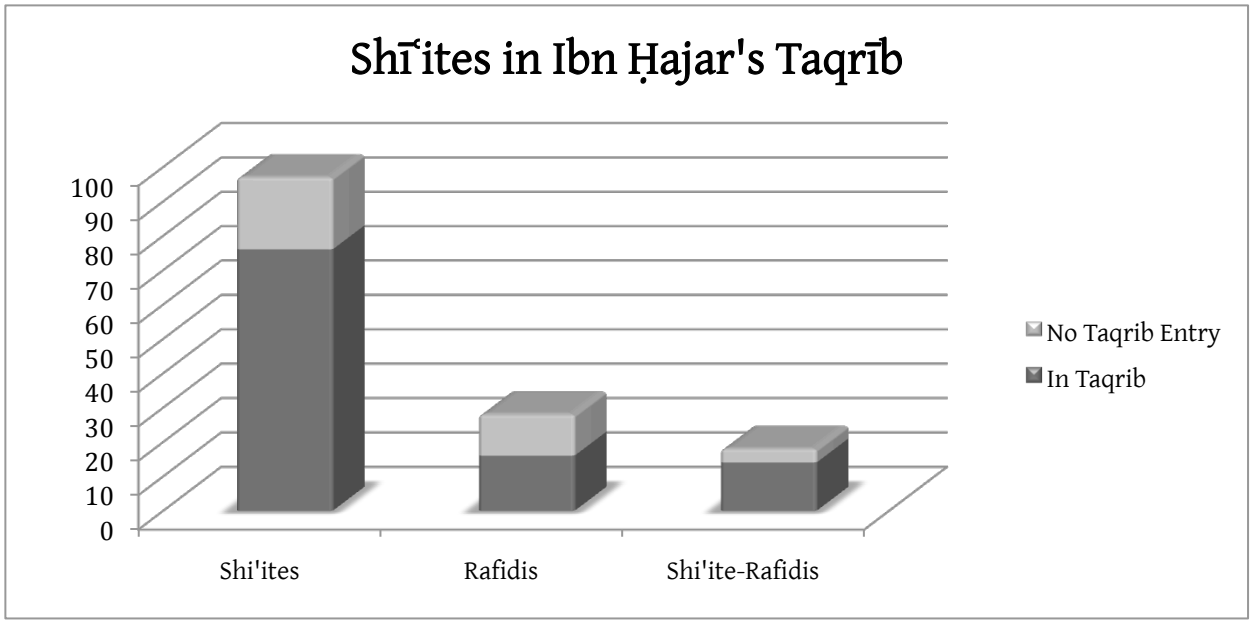


Fig 1.3. Shīʿites, Rāfiḍīs and those identified as both divided into those who were included by Ibn Ḥajar in his *Taqrīb al-tahdhīb* and those who were not.

evaluating narrators varied widely from one critic to another and was never completely standardized despite considerable efforts to do so.[31]

While I based my own scale on the eight point scale provided by Ibn Abī Ḥātim (d. 327/939) and a modified version of Ibn Ḥajar's scale given in the *Taqrīb*, I did not make any great effort to reconcile their inconsistencies due to the inherently arbitrary nature of such an effort.[32] However, the lack of precision inherent in this analysis is mitigated by the fact that our interest lies only in the average grades for large numbers of narrators.

The average grade received by Shīʿites was 5.9, which falls just below the level of *ṣadūq* (trustworthy and moderately accurate). The average grade for Rāfiḍīs was 3.1, which is below

[31] On the absence of systematic application of some of these terms, and the vexing inconsistency of their import in the usage of even a single critic, see the editors' comments in Ibn Ḥajar, *Taqrīb*, 1/40-4. For Western discussions of this issue see Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 176-190. For another set of terms and a different perspective on the extent to which they were used consistently see Lucas, *Constructive Critics*, 133-56 and especially 287-326.

[32] See Appendix B for the two versions of the eight-point scale used here.

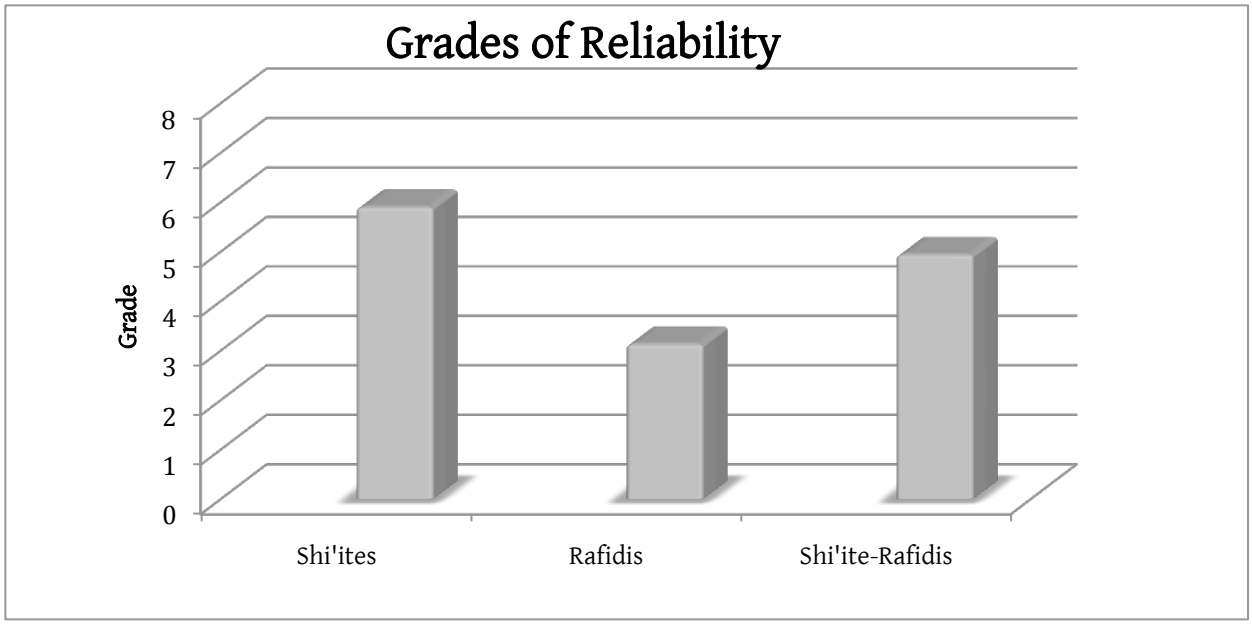


Fig 1.4. Average grade of reliability based on an 8-point scale where 8=*thiqa* (trustworthy and accurate), 4=*daʿīf* (weak) and 1=*kadhdhāb* (a known liar).

the level of a weak (*ḍaʿīf*) narrator and borders on an accusation of mendacity and fabrication. The average grade of those labeled as both was 5.1. Taking into account the fact that many of the figures in this latter category were only labeled as Rāfiḍīs by later generations of critics, this indicates that those early Shīʿites who engaged in actions associated with *rafḍ* were downgraded by some critics even though their reliability was not necessarily called into question.

A final point of interest lies in the fact that a considerable number of figures who made outstanding contributions to the development of Sunnī hadith and law were labeled as Shīʿites. The biographies of all but two of these figures will be analyzed in detail later on. For the purposes of the present discussion, it is sufficient to highlight the fact that a broad definition of Shīʿism could encompass many of the most prominent figures of Kūfa's proto-Sunnī milieu. Shīʿite sentiments are well attested for the majority of the narrators in Fig 1.5., either through

Major Proto-Sunnī Figures Associated with Shīʿism	
Name	Death Date
al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba	115/733
Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī	127/745
Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir	132/750
Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-Aʿmash	148/765
Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj	160/777
Sufyān al-Thawrī	161/778
Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd	188/804
Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ	197/813
ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī	211/827
Abū Nuʿaym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn	218/833

Fig 1.5. Figures who made outstanding contributions to the development of Sunnī hadith and/or law and were also known for Shīʿite sentiments. Most of the figures listed here narrate well over 100 hadiths in al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

explicit identification or through anecdotes. The only exceptions to this are the cases of Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī (d. 127/745) and Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj, who were among the anomalies included by Ibn Qutayba in his list of Shīʿites among the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadith*. The Shīʿite sentiments of both, however, are corroborated elsewhere.[33]

II.5. Shīʿism and Rafḍ: Dominant Characteristics

Thus far, we have discussed Shīʿite and Rāfiḍī narrators without attempting to establish a precise sense of what these terms actually meant for the parties using them in the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries. Although descriptions of various subcategories of Shīʿites and Rāfiḍīs are readily available in heresiographical literature and in later *rijāl*

[33] For Abū Isḥāq, corroboration of his Shīʿite sentiments comes from Ibrāhīm b. Yaʿqūb al-Jūzajānī, a notorious anti-Shīʿite hadith critic of Damascus who lumped him together with al-Aʿmash, Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir and Zubayd b. al-Ḥārith al-Yāmī and attempted to discredit their narrations. See Ibrāhīm b. Yaʿqūb al-Jūzajānī, *Aḥwāl al-rijāl* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-risāla, 1985), 79-81. For Shuʿba, he was listed among the Shīʿites from among the *muḥaddithūn* who preferred ʿAlī over ʿUthmān by Abū al-Faḍl al-Sulaymānī (a hadith critic active in the first half of the fourth/tenth century who I am unable to identify). Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*, 2/588. Shuʿba also declared the uprising of Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd Allāh in Baṣra to be "a lesser Badr (*badr al-ṣughrā*)." See *SAN*, 6/224. On Shuʿba see also IV.3. below.

literature, it is immediately apparent that these descriptions are either anachronistic when imported into the milieu under study or at least overly schematic. We have noted at some length that these terms are inherently ambiguous and contested in their usage, but this does not mean we cannot discern at least an overall sense of their import in the sources. The best method for doing so has been suggested by Juynboll:

> The only way, it seems to me, to find out what the 'categories' of early Muslims (e.g. *ahl al-..., aṣḥāb al-..., huwa min...* etc.) may have stood for, is reading through reams of biographical material. The greatest common divisor characterizing the members of Islam's early religious political factions then becomes clear or, at least, clearer than in Islam's heresiographies.[34]

Applying this method to our three categories of Shīʿites, Rāfiḍīs and Shīʿite Rāfiḍīs, we find that four major characteristics were distributed in uneven proportions across all three groups of narrators: 1) narrating the virtues (*faḍā'il*) of ʿAlī and the Prophet's family, 2) criticizing some of the Companions, 3) participating in or supporting an ʿAlid revolt and 4) believing in "occultation and return" (*rajʿa*).[35] Narrating the virtues of ʿAlī and the Prophet's family, or believing in them, was a *sine qua non* of Shīʿism and is well attested among all three groups of narrators. Likewise, as shown in detail below, support of ʿAlid revolts cut across different Shīʿite groups and extended to non-Shīʿites as well. The attestation of belief in *rajʿa* among all three groups is somewhat surprising since it is normally associated with more "extreme" sectartian trends such as the Sabaʾīs and the Kaysānīs. Nonetheless, the belief is

[34] Juynboll, "Development of *sunna*," 117.
[35] The doctrine of *rajʿa* took on different meaning among different groups of Shīʿites, but generally referred either to the notion that a specific ʿAlid Imām had not died but had gone into occultation and would reappear, or that a select group of believers would be brought back to life along with their leader before the Day of Judgement. See Etan Kohlberg, "Radjʿa" in *EI*[2].

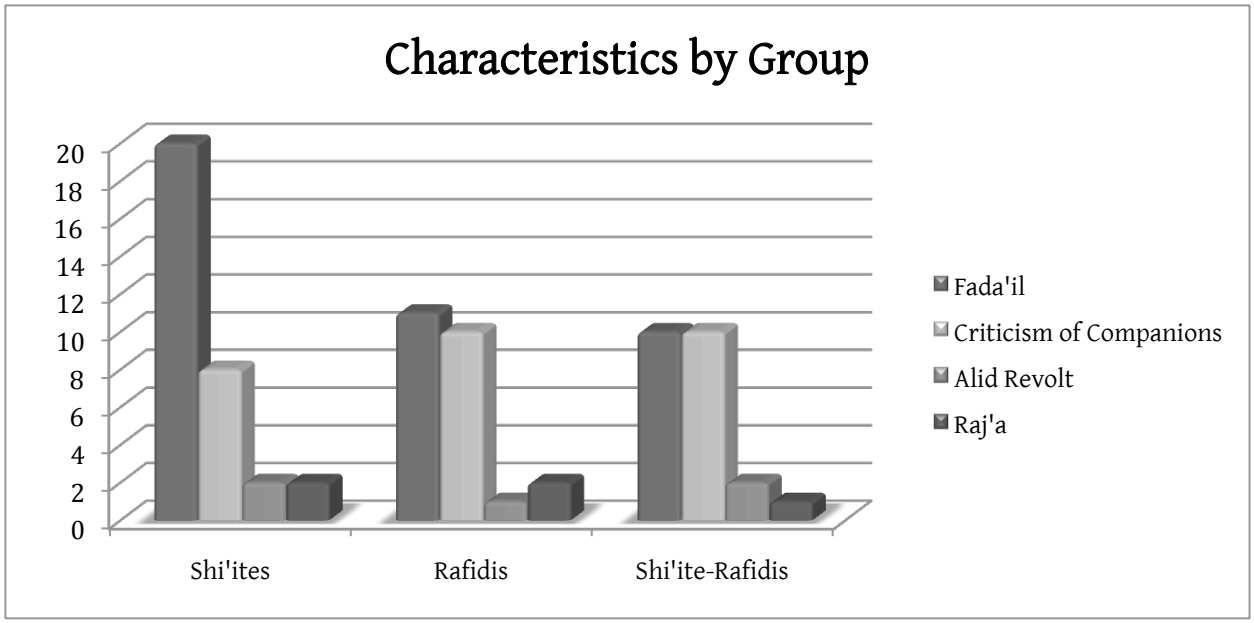


Fig 1.6. Characteristics associated with the different groups of narrators.

attested for a handful of Shīʿite narrators who were generally deemed acceptable, in addition to Rāfiḍīs.[36]

The most decisive factor in distinguishing a Rāfiḍī from a Shīʿite was criticism of the Prophet's Companions. This is not to say that Shīʿites never criticized the Companions, but rather to suggest that to criticize the Companions, especially in a categorical or extreme manner, was to invite the accusation of *rafḍ*. The origin story of *rafḍ*, irrespective of its historicity, confirms the centrality of the question of the status of the Companions in the origins of the term. According to this story, as Zayd b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 122/740) took to the battlefield against the Umayyads, some of his followers questioned him as to whether he disavowed the first two caliphs, Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. When he praised them and was consequently deserted by the questioners, he condemned them as "those who refuse (*al-*

[36] Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, 2/187; *DU*, 5/166. On the belief in *rajʿa* among Shīʿites in general see *Th&G*, 1/285-308.

rāfiḍa)."[37] As we will see, the rise in the number of narrators identified as Rāfiḍīs occurs precisely at the point at which criticism of the first two caliphs became prevalent. While criticism of the companions is also attested for Shīʿites, it was mild in comparison with the sorts of criticism leveled against them by Rāfiḍīs. Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy (d. 168/785), a figure of central importance in the early Zaydī movement who was respected by Sunnī critics but widely identified as a Shīʿite, is reported simply to have refrained from invoking God's mercy on ʿUthmān.[38] Among Rāfiḍīs, however, the claims against ʿUthmān went to extremes. Yūnus b. Khabbāb (d. mid-2nd/8th c.) was reported to have said that ʿUthmān killed the two daughters of the Prophet to whom he was married and Abū Hārūn al-ʿAbdī (d. 134/752) asserted that ʿUthmān was put in his grave as a disbeliever.[39]

II.6. Shīʿism and Rafḍ: The Question of Sectarian Affiliation

Although the sectarian terminology that we have inherited would suggest that early Rāfiḍīs should be identified with Imāmī Shīʿites, it is important to underscore yet again that this terminology does not map on neatly to the period in question.[40] For Sunnī sources to have an entry on an Imāmī narrator from the middle of the second/eighth century onward was in fact quite anomalous.[41] As shown in Figure 1.7, where such entries did exist, Imāmīs were sometimes identified with *rafḍ*, but not universally so. Abān b. Taghlib (d.141/758), a close

[37] See the discussion of Haider, *Origins*, 193-200, where he notes that the *rafḍ* story is shared among Sunnī heresiographical and historical sources but absent from Zaydī historical sources.
[38] *MT*, 2/806.
[39] On Yūnus see *DU*, 4/408; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 7/172; al-ʿIjlī, *Tārīkh al-thiqāt*, 2/377-378; Muḥammad Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī, *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn* (Mecca: Dar al-Bāz, n.d.), 3/140. On Abū Hārūn see Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 5/78.
[40] Cf. Watt, "The Rafiḍites."
[41] By way of example, only a minority of the narrators in Hossein Modarresi's monumental survey of early Imāmī literature have entries in Sunnī works. See *TS*, passim.

companion of the sixth Imām, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d.148/765), and a prominent Imāmī narrator, receives stellar reviews from early Sunnī hadith critics, is only referred to as a Shīʿite and is not associated with *rafḍ*. Jābir al-Juʿfī, who was the single most important narrator from the fifth Imām, Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 117/735), was called both a Shīʿite and a Rāfiḍī and early Sunnī narrators disagreed sharply on the extent to which he should be considered reliable, a point which will be taken up in some detail later on. Zurāra b. Aʿyan (d. 148/765), one of the most prolific narrators from both al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq, is only referred to with the verb *yatashayyaʿ* and receives scant attention in Sunnī sources. On the other hand, his brother ʿAbd al-Malik (d. mid-2nd/8th c.) was referred to both as a Shīʿite and a Rāfiḍī but is more prominent in Sunnī than in Imāmī sources. While the foregoing makes it clear that there was no direct correlation between a clear affiliation to the Imāms and *rafḍ* in the eyes of Sunnī hadith critics, the distribution of Imāmīs among the three groups is fairly even, indicating that Imāmis were more closely associated with *rafḍ* than either Zaydīs or mere "companions" of the Imāms.

The question of Zaydī sectarian affiliation, like that of the Imāmīs, was not altogether clear in the middle of the second/eighth century. Later Imāmī authors, such as al-Nawbakhtī (d. between 300/912 and 310/922) and Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 385/995), went so far as to claim that "most of the scholars of hadith" were Zaydīs.[42] While such a claim is hardly tenable (at least outside of Kūfa), it is reflective both of the attenuated nature of Zaydī sectarianism and of broad based sympathy for the Zaydī political program, which consisted in toppling the Umayyad and subsequently the ʿAbbāsid dynasties, both of whose legitimacy was widely contested, and installing a descendant of the Prophet in their stead. Revolts with such an aim garnered support from circles extending well beyond those of Kūfan Shīʿites and embracing a

[42] Muḥammad b. Isḥāq Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist* (Cairo: Al-ʿArabī lil-nashr, 1991), 369; *Th&G*, 1/239.

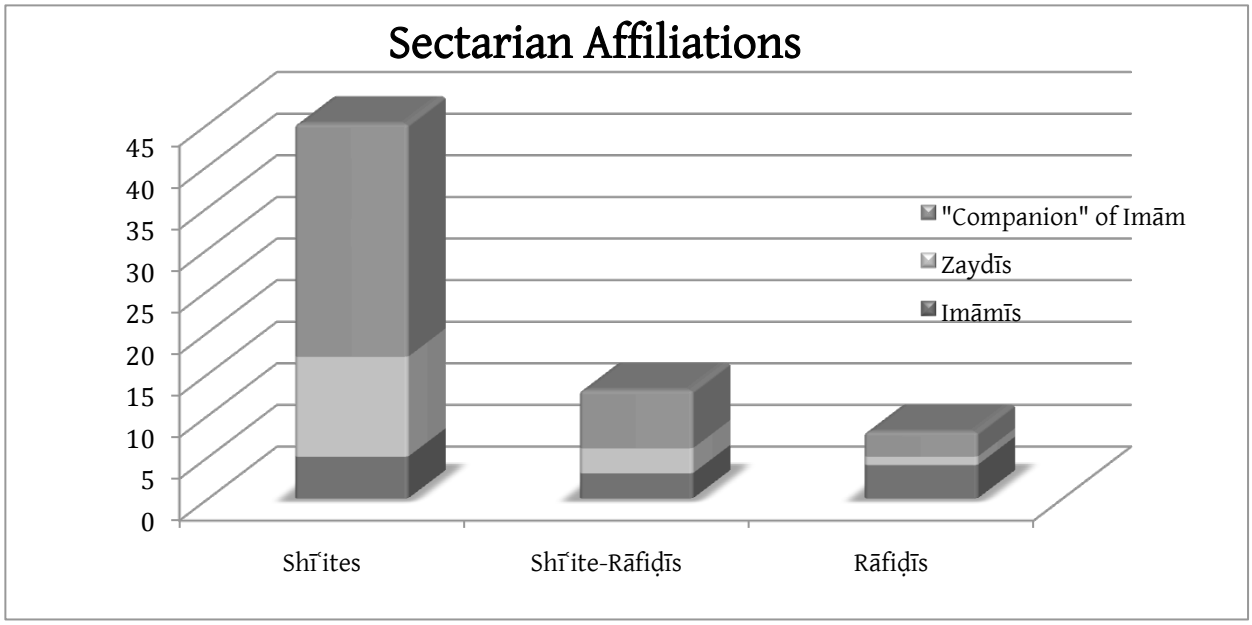


Fig 1.7. Sectarian affiliations claimed for narrators in the three categories. Those categorized as "companions" of an Imām are those who have been identified as such in Imāmī biographical dictionaries but were not recognized as bona fide Imāmīs.

variety of authoritative figures representative of disparate trends in the early Muslim community.[43] As noted by Van Ess, it is in light of this fact that the claims of Imāmī authors regarding the widespread nature of Zaydism should be understood.[44] With respect to a more restrictive definition of Zaydism, Najam Haider has recently argued that the sect underwent an evolution from a largely political revolutionary orientation to a recognizably sectarian one in the course of the half century separating the revolt of its eponymous founder, Zayd b. ʿAlī, in

[43] Lists of supporters of the ʿAlid revolts (broadly identified with Zaydism) of Zayd b. ʿAlī, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh, Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd Allāh and Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd Allāh include figures identified with a wide variety of trends: Murjiʾites such as Abū Ḥanīfa and Misʿar b. Kudām, traditionists and jurists such as Mālik b. Anas, Muḥammad b. Abī Dhiʾb, Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj and Yazīd b. Hārūn and figures of varying Shīʿite sentiments. See Van Arendonk, *Les débuts*, 307-319. Cf. the comments of Amikam Elad on the equivocal nature of some of this support in "The Rebellion of Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan (known as al-Nafs al-Zakīya) in 145/762" in *ʿAbbāsid Studies: Occasional Papers of the School of ʿAbbāsid Studies, Cambridge, 6-10 July 2002*, ed. James Montgomery (Dudley, MA: Peeters Publishers & Department of Oriental Studies, 2004), 182-9.

[44] *Th&G*, 1/239.

Kūfa in 122/740 and that of his distant cousin, Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, in the Ḥijāz in 169/786.[45] This evolution is loosely reflected in the analysis here, where Zaydīs who die in the first half of the second/eighth century are categorized as Shīʿites and those who die in the second half may be categorized either as Shīʿites or as Rāfiḍīs.[46]

This discussion would be incomplete without treating the category of narrators categorized as "companions (*aṣḥāb*)" of one of the twelve Imāms, although the correlation between this categorization and sectarian affiliation is quite weak. A considerable number of narrators who show no inkling of significant Shīʿite inclinations fall under this category simply because they narrated from one or more of the Imāms.[47] Nonetheless, the fact that a large number of narrators from each of our three primary categories are considered "companions" of the Imāms is significant. First of all, despite the well known antipathy between followers of the Imāms and Zaydīs, nine of sixteen Zaydīs identified in our sources were also considered "companions" of the Imāms and transmitted from them with full approval. Also, the fact that 30 Shīʿites were identified as companions of the Imāms without having been Imāmīs is indicative of a wide spectrum of possible Shīʿite affiliation to the Imāms.

II.7. The Question of ʿAlid Imāms

Although they are rarely associated explicitly with Shīʿism in Sunnī *rijāl* literature, our discussion would be incomplete without a survey of those ʿAlid figures who were both the

[45] Haider, *Origins*, 189-214.
[46] See Appendix A.
[47] Examples of such narrators include Sufyān b. ʿUyayna, Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān and the ascetic Fuḍayl b. ʿIyāḍ, on whom see *TS*, 372-373, 396-397, 223-224, respectively. These and other non-Imāmī narrators occupied a similar position in Imāmī hadith literature to that of Shīʿites in Sunnī hadith literature. On the category of *muwaththaq* ("deemed trustworthy") applied to them see Asma Afsaruddin, "An Insight into the Hadith Methodology of Jamāl al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Ṭāwūs" *Der Islam* 72 (1995), 25-46.

eponymous founders and the object of the veneration of various Shīʿite groups in this period. Almost all of these figures played some role in transmitting hadiths in the Sunnī canon, but the volume of narrations from them is relatively small in comparison with their stature. In the case of figures like Zayd b. ʿAlī and Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya (d. 145/762), this may be explained by the fact that they were more engaged in political and revolutionary activity than in transmitting hadiths or teaching law. Not surprisingly, the quietist Imāms ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (d. 95/713), Muḥamad al-Bāqir and Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq are the most prolific in their narrations, although even these pale in comparison to those of other authorities among their contemporaries.[48]

On the whole, early ʿAlid Imāms of both activist and quietist stripes are well received in the Sunnī hadith tradition and their reliability as narrators is hardly questioned. Criticism against any of them is limited, but is slightly more frequent for the activist Imāms. During their own lifetimes, some proto-Sunnīs condemned them and their followers for their rebellions, but later critics treated such opinions as anomalous. Abū ʿAwāna (d. 176/792) labeled Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya and his brother Ibrāhīm (d. 145/763) as "Khārijīs" (presumably in a purely lexical sense), but Abū Dāwūd (d. 275/888) defended them by recognizing their rebellions as based on a legitimate, if errant, interpretation.[49] Sufyān al-Thawrī was also strongly opposed to those of his contemporaries who joined ʿAlid rebellions.[50]

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[48] See the tabulations for the narrations of the *ahl al-bayt* in the Six Books, Mālik's *Muwaṭṭāʾ*, al-Dārimī's *Sunan* and Aḥmad's *Musnad* in Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Ghaffār al-Sāmurāʾī, *Fuqahāʾ ahl al-bayt fī ʿaṣr al-khilāfa al-rāshida wa al-ʿasr al-Umawī* (Baghdad: Anwār Dajla, 2006), 200-4. The narrations of the quietist Imāms are exponentially greater than those of activist Zaydīs.

[49] *TT*, 9/225. I presume this to be the import of Abū Dawūd's response to Abū ʿAwāna: "*biʾsa mā qāla hadhā raʾy al-Zaydiyya*."

[50] See his statements against the Batrī Zaydī Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy in *SAN*, 7/362-3, along with al-Dhahabī's comment regarding Ḥasan "He is one of the Imāms of Islam if not for his association with innovation." See also his condemnation of Abū Khālid al-Aḥmar with al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's commentary in *TB*, 9/23. See further IV.3. below.

The only critical remark against one of the quietist Imāms recognized by Imāmī Shīʿites that I am aware of is that of Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān, who made the relatively benign statement regarding Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, "I am uncomfortable with him for some reason (*fī nafsī minhu shayʾ*)."[51]

Beyond their reception as narrators, the most dominant feature of the biographies of both the activist and quietist Imāms is that they are almost universally portrayed in Sunnī literature as distancing themselves from or condemning the positions associated with *rafḍ*. In the case of the activist Zaydī Imāms, this is not particularly surprising since their followers, if not they themselves, spared no effort in condemning the "Rāfiḍīs" who were their chief competitors for legitimacy among the various pro-ʿAlid factions of the eighth century. Indeed, the only theme that is largely unique to the activist Zaydī Imāms is their specification of "the Rāfiḍīs" as an object of hostility. In addition to the origin story of *rafḍ*, Zayd is purported to have said that the Rāfiḍīs are enemies of him and his father in this world and the next.[52] ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan, the father of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, reportedly told a certain Rāfiḍī that killing him would be a means of drawing close to God if not for the rights owed to a neighbor.[53] He also singled out the Rāfiḍīs as disbelievers from among all of the people who pray towards Mecca.[54]

Although I am not aware of any accounts in which the Imāms recognized by Imāmīs denounce the Rāfiḍīs in such specific terms, in Sunnī literature they are credited with pronouncements on several of the same anti-*rafḍ* themes expressed by other ʿAlid figures. The most obvious of these is their defense of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar against those who criticize them.

[51] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/131.
[52] *TMD*, 19/463-4.
[53] Dūrī, *Tārikh*, 1/182.
[54] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil,* 3/225.

The concepts of "affiliation (*walāʾ*)" and "dissociation (*barāʾa*)" are central in these anecdotes.[55] Various ʿAlid Imāms extol the virtues of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, declare their affiliation to them and order questioners to do the same, or warn those who dissociate from them that either they or God himself will dissociate from them as a consequence.[56] They purportedly reject the practice of precautionary dissimulation (*taqiyya*) and disavow certain distinguishing features of Imāmī law, such as the non-efficacy of the triple divorce pronouncement and the prohibition of eating eel.[57] Finally, the ʿAlid Imāms are portrayed as distancing themselves from the extravagant claims of some of their followers, especially among "the people of Iraq," and reminding them that they are fallible human beings.[58]

On the points listed above, the Sunnī portrayal of the Ḥusaynī Imāms often appears to be a complete inversion of their portrayal in Imāmī literature. Significant tensions, of course, exist within the corpus of Imāmī literature itself, but these are beyond the scope of our discussion.[59] Similar contradictions are found in portrayals of Ḥusaynī Imāms' relations with the activist Zaydī Imāms and their followers. In Zaydī literature, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq is portrayed as

[55] On the concept of *walāya* see Maria Dakake, *The Charismatic Community: Shīʿite Identity in Early Islam* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007), passim. On the concept of *barāʾa* see ibid., 65-7, 81; Etan Kohlberg, "*Barāʾa* in Shīʿī Doctrine," *JSAI* 7 (1986), 139-75.

[56] For Zayd b. ʿAlī see *TMD*, 19/460-463. For Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan, the grandfather of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, see *SAN*, 4/486. For Muḥammad al-Bāqir see Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ* (Beirut: Dār al-kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1967), 3/185; *SAN*, 4/402-408. For Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq see *SAN*, 6/258-260.

[57] ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn and Muḥammad al-Bāqir on *taqiyya*: Muḥammad b. Saʿd *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabir* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1968), 5/213-4; *SAN*, 4/406-7. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq on the triple divorce: *SAN*, 6/261. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq eating eel: *Th&G,* 1/248.

[58] For Alī b. al-Ḥusayn see Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 5/214, 216; Abū Nuʿaym, *Ḥilya*, 3/136-7. For Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan see *SAN*, 4/486-7; For Muḥammad al-Bāqir see *SAN*, 4/407. For Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq see *SAN*, 6/259-60.

[59] The more extreme trend in early Imāmī Shīʿism, labeled as the *mufawiḍḍa*, tended to view the Imāms as divinely appointed and supernaturally gifted beings quite unlike other humans. This trend gave rise to the kind of portrayal of the Imāms found in the work of Mohammed Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shiʿism* (Rochester: SUNY Press, 1994). The more moderate trend, labeled as the *muqaṣṣira*, viewed the Imāms as exceptionally learned and pious scholars from the Prophet's family rightfully entitled to leadership of the Muslim community. The latter view was closer to that of the Sunnīs, although clearly separated from it by significant differences. On the history of these two trends in Imāmī Shīʿism see Hossein Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shīʿite Islam* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1993), 7-49.

being highly sympathetic towards his rebellious relatives in spite of his differences with them.[60] This sort of portrayal also comes through strongly in Imāmī literature, but here it exists alongside a large number of anecdotes that portray the Ḥusaynī Imāms as severely condemning their rebellious relatives, and especially their followers, for their ignorance of the true Imām.[61] A sizeable number of anecdotes single out "Batrī" Zaydīs for condemnation.[62] Many of these same men, however, are identified as "companions" of the Imāms in Imāmī literature and narrate from them extensively in both Imāmī and Sunnī literature.[63]

Perhaps more than any other figures in this period, the line of Ḥusaynī Imāms served as floating signifiers to whom disparate groups attributed their doctrines. Adjudicating between the mass of contradictory information that surrounds them is certainly beyond the scope of this investigation, and may well prove to be a largely arbitrary exercise.[64] The conflicts that generated such disparate portrayals of the Imāms also lay at the heart of the process that led to a more complete bifurcation of the Sunnī and Shīʿite communities by the middle of the

[60] See Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn* (Cairo: Dār iḥyā al-kutub al-ʿArabiyya, 1949), 129, 251-2, 272-3, 437, 463-4.

[61] A difference exists in Imāmī literature between portrayals of Zayd b. ʿAlī and those of other rebels. The denunciations of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya and his father ʿAbd Allāh are fairly unambiguous. See the collection of narrations in Abū al-Qāsim al-Khūʾī, *Muʿjam rijāl al-ḥadīth* (Beirut: Dār al-Zahra, 1992), 11/170-5, 17/249-50. However, there are many narrations in praise of Zayd, as well as in condemnation of him. The disparity is sufficient to lead the modern Imāmī scholar Abū al-Qāsim al-Khūʾī to conclude that Zayd recognized Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq as the Imām and had received secret permission for his rebellion from him. See ibid., 8/357-68. Tensions also exist in the portrayals of the Imāms' relations with Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd Allāh, the brother of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya who ruled in Ṭabaristān for a short period and was reportedly raised in the house of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, and Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, the Ḥusaynī leader of a failed revolt in the Ḥijāz. On them see ibid., 21/67-70, 7/44.

[62] Figures such as al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba, Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa, Kathīr al-Nawwāʾ, Abū al-Miqdām Thābit b. Hurmuz and others are denounced severely. See Khūʾī, *Muʿjam*, 7/182-4, 9/30, 9/218-19, 20/248-9; Haider, "Birth of Sectarianism," 382-3. See III.3. and III.4. for more extensive discussion of the Batrīs.

[63] See Appendix A.

[64] See the comments of Michael Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography: Heirs of the Prophets in the Age of al-Maʾmūn* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 75-6; Moojan Moomen, *An Introduction to Shiʿi Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 61-2, 73-5. False attribution to other prominent figures was of course common. It largely correlated with the stature of the figure in question, and in this respect few were equal to the Imāms. For the problematic nature of reconstructing the views of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, see Ali Suleiman Mourad, *Early Islam between Myth and History* (Boston: Brill, 2006).

third/ninth century: was there anything special about ʿAlī and his descendants? If so, what was it? And what exactly were its implications for the legitimacy of Muslim political authorities past and present?

II.8. Chronology and the Development of Orthodoxy

The crux of this chapter lies in examining why Shīʿite and Rāfiḍī narrators rise and fall in prominence, and what the relative chronology of their rise and fall means for the development of a nascent Sunnī orthodoxy. The most obvious feature of Figure 1.8 is that the peak of activity for both Shīʿite and Rāfiḍī narrators occurred around 130/748, roughly corresponding to the culmination of the ʿAbbāsid revolution (129–132/747-750). This accords well with the broad socio-political contours of the period. Shīʿism had been useful as an expression of dissent against the Umayyads but lost steam once it had served the purposes of the ʿAbbāsids, who had risen to power on the shoulders of a loose pro-Hāshimid confederacy. When it was revealed that the beneficiaries of the revolution were not the ʿAlids whom many of its supporters had expected, dissapointment ensued and Shīʿism presented a challenge to the legitimacy of the ʿAbbāsids themselves. In response, they jettisoned their Shīʿite identity and cultivated relationships with the proto-Sunnī scholarly elite as a new source of legitimacy.[65] While such broad socio-political developments were certainly an important factor in the rise and fall of Shīʿite narrators, we will see that other developments internal to the

[65] The opportunistic use of Shīʿism by theʿAbbāsids and the falling out with the ʿAlids precipitated by their seizure of power caused them to be compared to a man riding a lion; everyone was afraid of him but none more fearful of the lion than him. See Jacob Lassner, *The Shaping of ʿAbbāsid Rule* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 7-10. See further Patricia Crone, "On the Meaning of the ʿAbbāsid Call to *al-Riḍā*" in *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis*, ed. C.E. Bosworth et. al. (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1989), 95-111. On the cooperation of the ʿAbbāsids with proto-Sunnī scholars after their rise to power see Zaman, *Religion and Politics.*

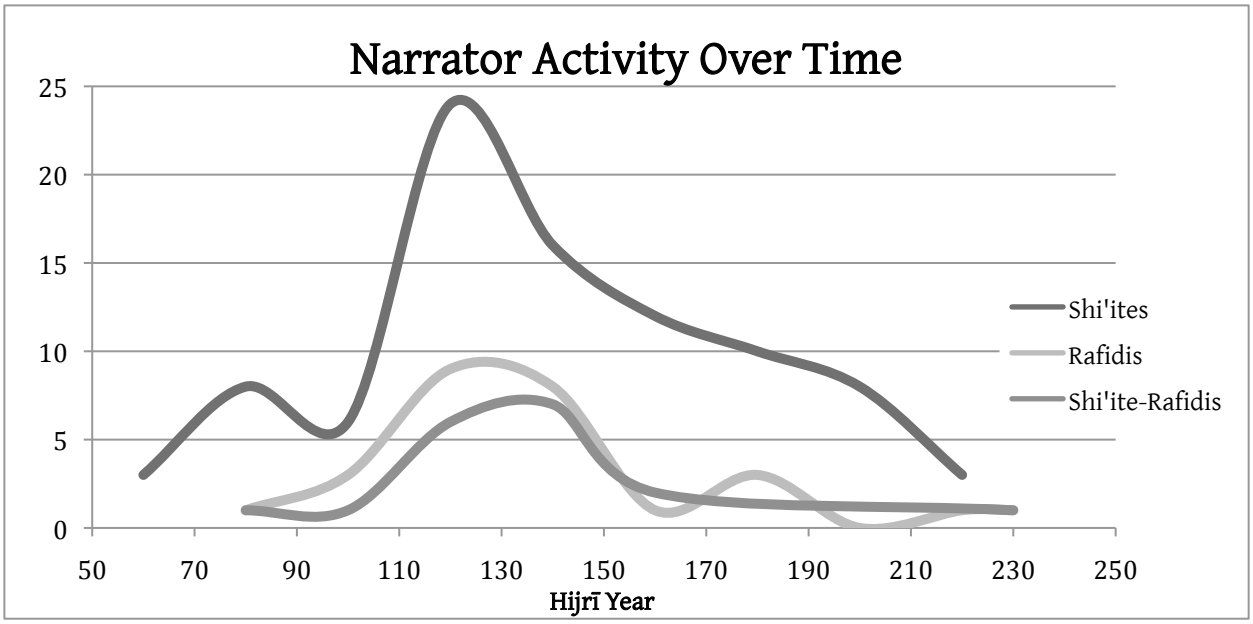


Fig 1.8. Narrator activity over a 200 year period. Note that the graph represents the number of narrators *at the peak of their activity* (placed 20 years before their death date) and not the total number of active narrators at a given point.

milieu of hadith narrators in the second half of the second/eighth century also played a significant role in this regard.

What is most important for our present discussion is a comparison of the rise and fall of the three different groups of narrators. To begin with, it may be pointed out that the sharp rise in the number of Shīʿite narrators exhibited in Figure 1.8 is somewhat mitigated by the increased prominence of Iraqi narrators *in general* in the first half of the second/eighth century.[66] Nonetheless, the increased prominence of Iraqi narrators alone certainly cannot account for the appearance of Rāfiḍīs and Shīʿite-Rāfiḍīs in the beginning of the second/eighth century after their virtual absence in the first/seventh, nor is it likely to be the sole reason for

[66] This is reflected both in biographical literature and in *isnād* analysis. For the former see Lucas, *Constructive Critics*, 327-69; Recep Senturk, *Narrative Social Structure: Anatomy of the Hadith Transmission Network, 610-1505* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 38-41. For the latter see Christopher Melchert, "Centre and Periphery in the Transmission of Hadith, 8th-9th Centuries C.E." in *Centre and Periphery within the Borders of Islam*, ed. Giuseppe Contu (Walpole, MA: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2012), 56-9.

the upsurge in Shīʿite narrators, especially when viewed in conjunction with the textual evidence from the period. In terms of the decline of the three groups, it is noteworthy that the decline of both Rāfiḍīs and Shīʿite-Rāfiḍīs was much more rapid than the decline of Shīʿites. After their emergence around the beginning of the second/eighth century and their peak concurrent with with the ʿAbbāsid revolution, both groups all but disappeared within thirty years, resurfacing only with anomalous individuals from approximately 160/777 onwards. The decline of Shīʿites was much more gradual and they retained a significant presence in the proto-Sunnī milieu well into the first half of the third/ninth century.

These broad statistical patterns are more revealing when read in conjunction with the textual evidence from this period. We have already seen that the primary characteristic that distinguished Shīʿites from Rāfiḍīs was a virulent criticism of the Companions. With respect to this issue in particular, a number of anecdotes suggest that there was a shift centered at Kūfa around the turn of the second/eighth century that correlates closely with the rapid rise of *rafḍ* and Shīʿism among narrators in the same period. We have already seen that the origin story of *rafḍ* ascribes the emergence of the term to a dispute between Zayd b. ʿAlī and his followers over the status of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar in 122/740, but this may have simply telescoped a much broader phenomenon into a paradigmatic moment. A number of other anecdotes from prominent Kūfan narrators exhibit a similar concern with the status of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar around the same period. Al-Aʿmash stated that Mughīra b. Saʿīd al-Bajalī (d. 119/737), the crucified extremist leader of a Shīʿite revolt in Kūfa, was the first person that he heard revile Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.[67] Sufyān al-Thawrī refrained from narrating ʿAlī's virtues because of the Rāfiḍīs and attempted to convince a narrator of one such hadith to stop narrating it because

[67] *DU*, 4/180. On Mughīra b. Saʿīd see Tucker, *Mahdis and Millenarians*, 52-70.

"the people had become corrupted."[68] When Zāʾida b. Qudāma (d. 161/778), a particularly stringent *ṣāḥib sunna* of some importance, repeatedly questioned a colleague as to whether one of his students was an innovator or not, his colleague asked him, "When were people like this?" Zāʾida retorted, "When did people insult Abū Bakr and ʿUmar?"[69] Layth b. Abī Sulaym (d. 143/760) claimed that he met the first Shīʿites and they did not prefer anyone over Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.[70]

As Josef van Ess commented on this narration from Layth, such anecdotes should be taken with a grain of salt at the individual level, but collectively they provide strong evidence for the issues that animated a certain milieu, although not a precise date for their emergence.[71] In the epistle of the Khārijī Sālim b. Dhakwān, we have evidence that (many of) the Sabaʾīs were already known for disassociating from Abū Bakr and ʿUmar by the turn of the first century.[72] There is also good evidence that the core doctrines associated with *rafḍ*, if not the term itself, had already emerged around 60/680 among the supporters of Mukhtār's revolt.[73] However, none of this precludes the possibility that these doctrines became particularly prominent and contentious in early second century Kūfa.

Aside from the question of the status of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, the sense that something was afoot among Kūfan Shīʿites of this period seems to have been fairly widespread. Sufyān al-Thawrī said that he refrained from narrating ʿAlī's virtues because of the Rāfiḍīs. In another anecdote, he visited the narrator of a certain pro-ʿAlid hadith in an attempt to convince him to

[68] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 1/82, 2/141-142; *SAN*, 7/253.
[69] *SAN*, 7/377. On Zāʾida see IV.3 below.
[70] *SAN*, 6/182;
[71] *Th&G*, 1/237.
[72] Patricia Crone and Fritz Zimmerman, *The Epistle of Sālim Ibn Dhakwān* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 118-121.
[73] Tucker, *Mahdis and Millenarians*, 24-33; Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 73-74.

stop narrating it because "the people had become corrupted."[74] In a rather vague anecdote, a certain Ḥasan b. al-Ḥurr (d. 133/751) invited a number of Kūfan narrators, among them al-Aʿmash and Layth b. Abī Sulaym, to his house for a meal and suggested that they write a tract for posterity due to the dissension (*fitna*) that people were engaged in. Al-Aʿmash declined, suggesting that "a man can hold his tongue and keep his counsel; he knows what is in his own heart."[75] Although it is impossible to know the precise nature of the *fitna* alluded to here, dissension over the status of the Companions seems as likely as any other possibility.

We have already observed that orthodoxy always develops in response to a perceived heresy and in the case at hand, the emergence of *rafḍ* in the early second/eighth century seems to have provided an occasion for proto-Sunnīs to close ranks on the question of the status of the Companions. Many of the anecdotes that support our impression of the shift in Kūfa in this period come from al-Aʿmash and al-Thawrī, both of whom were known to be characterized by Shīʿite sentiment themselves. As we will see in some detail, al-Aʿmash and al-Thawrī were both unequivocal in their condemnation of the extreme anti-Companion attitudes of the Rāfiḍīs in spite of their own Shīʿism. Such condemnation did not, however, spare them the criticism of their contemporaries who sought to draw even tighter boundaries around the question of the inviolable status of the Companions.[76]

This position was not unique to al-Aʿmash and al-Thawrī. It is also reflected in the fabrication of a hadith that seems to have been fairly popular among Kūfan Shīʿites in the first

[74] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 1/82, 2/141-2; *SAN*, 7/253.
[75] Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 2/384-5. My translation is borrowed from Michael Cook's discussion of this anecdote in the context of the origins of Murjiʿism and the *Kitāb al-Irjāʾ* ascribed to al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya in *Early Muslim Dogma* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 81-82.
[76] On al-Aʿmash, al-Thawrī and the controversies that they engaged in see sections III.3 and IV.3 respectively.

half of the second century. The hadith is narrated in several different versions, of which the following is representative:

> O ʿAlī, you and your companions – you and your Shīʿa – will be in paradise. But among those who claim to love you are people who are given Islam and then reject it (*yuḍfazūn al-islām thumma yalfiẓūnahu*). They read the Qurʾān but it does not penetrate past their throats. They have a derisive nickname; they are called the *rāfiḍa*. If you meet them then fight against them, for they are polytheists... [Their sign is that] they do not attend Friday or congregational prayers and they criticize the early predecessors (*al-salaf al-awwal*) [i.e. the Companions].[77]

Various versions of this hadith were narrated by no less than six Kūfan Shīʿites active in the first half of the second/eighth century, two of whom were prominent Zaydīs. Some of these versions did not include the "sign" of the Rāfiḍīs, which is hardly surprising given that some of the narrators were known to criticize the Companions and were hence labeled as Rāfiḍīs themselves.[78] The fact that this hadith circulated and almost certainly originated among Shīʿites who were viewed with suspicion by many of their proto-Sunnī peers is instructive on several levels. Most obviously, it suggests that those Shīʿites who existed at the margins of the proto-Sunnī milieu felt it necessary to distance themselves from *rafḍ* and its adherents. It also suggests that the emergence of *rafḍ* created an inconvenient pressure on the adherents of *tashayyuʿ*, who may have been subject to judgments of guilt by association. Finally, it highlights the fact that although *rafḍ* was widely considered to be a damning accusation that could plausibly be applied to Shīʿites whose views on the Companions went beyond the bounds of

[77] Sulaymān b. Aḥmad al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-Awsaṭ* (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥaramayn, 1995), 6/355. This particular version was purportedly narrated by the Kūfan Shīʿite ʿAṭiyya al-ʿAwfī (d. 111/729).
[78] For other versions of the hadith, narrated (in order of frequency) by Abū al-Jaḥḥāf Dāwūd b. Abī ʿAwf (d. mid 2nd/8thc.), Kathīr al-Nawwāʾ (d. mid 2nd/8th c.), Muḥammad b. Juḥāda (d. 131/748), Talīd b. Sulaymān (d. after 190/805) and Abū al-Jārūd Ziyād b. al-Mundhir (d. mid 2nd/8th c.), see Abū Yaʿlā al-Mawṣilī, *Musnad Abī Yaʿlā*. (Damascus: Dār al-Maʾmūn lil-Turāth, 1984), 12/117; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbāl, *Musnad Aḥmad b. Hanbal* (Egypt: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1957), 1/103; Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, 3/83, 7/208; Muḥammad b. Ḥibbān al-Bustī, *Kitāb al-Majrūḥīn*, (Mecca, n.d.), 1/205. Another version of the hadith ascribed to Ibn ʿAbbās is almost never narrated by Shīʿites.

whatever one held to be appropriate and acceptable, those bounds were ultimately in the eye of the beholder. Within approximately sixty years of their emergence, Rāfiḍīs were all but excluded from the proto-Sunnī milieu of hadith narrators.

II.9. Conclusion

In the course of this broad introduction to the phenomenon of Shīʿite hadith narrators in the Sunnī canon, several major themes have emerged. Firstly, the sectarian terminology that we must use to discuss these narrators is contested and applied inconsistently. We cannot define terms like *tashayyu*,ʿ *shīʿī* and *rafḍ* precisely because they had a range of possible applications and meanings. We can, however, look for dominant correlations between these terms and the positions held by the narrators they were applied to. This allows us to establish the central ideas and disagreements that generated sectarian labels without imposing arbitrary terminological distinctions on an era to which they do not belong. We can recognize that while there is a significant amount of overlap between the two categories, Shīʿites are distinguished primarily by their attachment to the virtues of ʿAlī and Rāfiḍīs are distinguished from them primarily by their criticism of the Companions. Between these two ideal typical poles was a wide area of overlap that would gradually wane to the point of near disappearance in the course of the third/ninth century.

The second major theme that emerges is the difference in the manner in which Shīʿites and Rāfiḍīs were received. Despite the overlap that existed between the two groups, on the whole they were received in a markedly different manner by Sunnī hadith critics. Shīʿites played a prominent role in the transmission of Sunnī hadith and were generally considered reliable, while Rāfiḍīs tended to make marginal contributions and their reliability was

considered suspect. The retrospective sectarian affiliations of narrators also correlates with their reception to a significant extent, with Zaydīs being more broadly accepted than Imāmīs, but there are numerous exceptions to this general rule.

The third major theme is that of the struggle to define orthodoxy. This struggle lies behind such phenomena as the inconsistent application of the term *rafḍ* and the contradictory claims regarding the ʿAlid Imāms. The unfolding of the struggle is exemplified at a broad level by the relative chronology of the rise and fall of Shīʿite and Rāfiḍī narrators. What remains is for us to examine the various figures at the forefront of this struggle and the methods by which they waged it in more detail.

III: Sectarian Ferment: Shīʿite Narrators in the Proto-Sunnī Milieu c. 100-150/718-757

The statistical analyses of Shīʿite narrators provided in the first chapter allowed us to construct a framework to understand their position within the Sunnī hadith tradition. The broad nature of these analyses also allowed us to incorporate the maximum number of narrators in our framework, even those for whom only the most limited amount of biographical data is preserved. In the next two chapters, we will shift our focus to providing more detailed and colorful profiles of specific individuals whose activities are illustrative of some of the most significant trends in the traditionalist milieu as it emerged and evolved in the course of the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries. These individuals were invariably prominent figures in their respective eras and locales and were located at various points along the spectrum of Shīʿite sentiment. Even a few non-Shīʿites whose lives are illuminating for our purposes will be included.

The present chapter will focus specifically on seven figures who lived in the first half of the second/eighth century. The dominant theme that emerges from their biographies is that this was an era of great sectarian ferment within the traditionist milieu of Kūfa. On the Shīʿite side of the spectrum, this was the era in which Imāmīs and Zaydīs began to be distinguished from one another. On the proto-Sunnī side, varying degrees of polarization persisted between ʿUthmānīs and ʿAlawīs/Shīʿites, and the Murjiʾīs arose as an attempt at compromise between these two trends.

However, we will see clearly that the lines dividing these various trends from one another were anything but sharp through the middle of the second/eighth century. Relationships, encounters and exchanges – both conciliatory and hostile – between representatives of different nascent sectarian trends were the rule of the day. Although the

most prominent Shīʿite narrators of the era can be readily identified with one trend or another, their scholarly relationships invariably extended to individuals associated with other trends. The sectarian ambiguity of this milieu is fully reflected in the nature of the sources that preserve reports from and about its most prominent members. In the majority of cases, it is only possible to construct a fully rounded portrait of any one individual by drawing on Sunnī, Zaydī and Imāmī sources. One of the implications of this is that narrators are often portrayed in a sharply contradictory manner in different sources and reports. However, even where such contradictions exist, they often tell us a great deal about the controversies that were salient at a given historical moment, even if they render a murky picture of the positions taken by a specific individual.

This chapter will be divided into three major sections. In the first section, I will introduce the primary socio-political, religious and intellectual contexts in which Shīʿite narrators of the first half of the second/eighth century functioned. In the second section, I will provide biographical profiles of seven prominent narrators active in this period, including six Shīʿites and one non-Shīʿie. In the third section, I will analyze the implications of their biographies for some of the broad narratives that inform our understanding of the development of sectarianism in this period.

III.1. Shīʿism and the Socio-Political Context

A twin set of truisms animates the dominant narrative of religion, sectarianism and politics through the early ʿAbbāsid period and beyond. The first of these is that the earliest and most basic sectarian divides in Islamic history owe their origins to conflicts among the Companions that were largely political in nature. The second is that the unity of religious and

political authority exemplified in the persons of the Prophet and the first caliphs was a model that quickly faded into the realm of unattainable ideals, even as a limited number of abortive attempts at restoring it punctuated the first two centuries of Islamic history. Although there is a good deal of debate among historians about the particulars of each of these processes, neither is likely to be dislodged altogether from the broad narrative arc that informs our understanding of this period.[1]

Shīʿism, of course, played no small part in the unfolding of this drama, and its fate as a religio-political venture in this era was an ironic one. For more than a century after the death of Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī at Karbalāʾ in 61/680, Shīʿism, whether in its vaguely pro-Hāshimid or specifically pro-ʿAlid guise, consistently proved to be one of the most salient rallying cries for a bevy of revolutionary efforts against established regimes. Khārijism rivaled Shīʿism as an ideological well-spring for revolutionary efforts, and civil war and ideologically amorphous revolts such as those of Ibn al-Ashʿath (d. c. 82/702) and Ibn al-Muhallab (d. 102/720) were also significant sources of instability. However, a vague, simmering Shīʿite sentiment remained the most significant vehicle for the expression and organization of discontent in at least two respects. Unlike Khārijīs, certain Shīʿite revolutionaries enjoyed enough legitimacy to be able to garner the support of significant elements of the religious elite. In addition, Shīʿite

[1] For example, both Sean Anthony and Maria Dakake have challenged the allegedly political nature of the first manifestations of Shīʿism by highlighting the salience of religious concepts for its earliest adherents (*The Caliph and the Heretic*; *The Charismatic Community*) and Zaman has argued that the reign of al-Maʾmūn should be seen as a moment in which the patterns in the relationship between religious and political authority temporarily shifted rather than as a watershed moment in which the divorce between them was made final (*Religion and Politics*). My own view is that these interventions provide useful correctives to oversimplified narratives that have long been accepted without much question, but that they do not succeed in overturning such narratives altogether. Debates over such broad issues are propelled and sustained by massive, complicated and conflicting bodies of evidence, such that they can rarely be settled in an either/or manner, but are rather amenable to different authors accenting one side of the debate by emphasizing that portion of the evidence that they find most compelling or most neglected.

sentiments were behind the only revolutionary effort that proved successful in toppling the Umayyads, although its leaders would ultimately turn against the very sentiments that helped propel them to power.

The first major Shīʿite revolt after that of Ḥusayn was launched by al-Mukhtār b. Abī ʿUbayd al-Thaqafī (d. 67/687) and his cohort of "Penitents" (*tawwābūn*), who were named as such because they staged the revolt as an act of penance for having failed to come to the aid of Ḥusayn at Karbalāʾ. Al-Mukhtār and his forces rose against the Umayyads in Kūfa in 66/685 and were able to gain control of the city for more than a year until they were vanquished by the forces of the Meccan counter-Caliph, ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr (d. 73/692), in 67/687. Al-Mukhtār drew the bulk of his support from Arab tribesmen, but his ranks also included a sizable number of *mawālī*, who experienced a significant but short-lived improvement in status while he held power in Kūfa. In spite of its fleeting political success, both the movement of al-Mukhtār and the sectarian offshoots that it spawned served as fertile grounds for the incubation and proliferation of a number of concepts that would come to play a central role in Shīʿite theology and eschatology, most prominently the notions of *rajʿa*, *ghayba*, and the person of the *mahdī*, whom al-Mukhtār believed to be Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya (d. 81/700). Whether due to doubts about the prospects of its success or the strange admixture of "qurʾānic motifs, *jāhilī* cultus, and late antique apocalyptica"[2] that constituted its symbolic apparatus, Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya maintained a safe distance from the movement while other prominent traditionists disavowed it altogether.[3]

[2] Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic*, 276.
[3] On the revolt of al-Mukhtār see Wadād al-Qāḍī, *al-Kaysāniyya fī al-tārīkh wa al-adab* (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1974), especially 49-136. On some of the specifically religious features of the movement see William Tucker, *Mahdis and Millenarians: Shīʿite Extremists in Early Muslim Iraq* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 19-33; Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic*, 256-290.

Al-Mukhtār's deviations seemed tame in comparison with those of leaders of successive Shīʿite revolts. Mughīra b. Saʿīd (d. 119/737) and Bayān b. Samʿān (d. 119/737), who were both remembered more as founders of extremist Shīʿite sects than as serious political contenders, jointly led a small number of followers in an unsuccessful revolt in Kūfa in 119/737. Both men were associated with an array of occult practices and extravagant doctrines that were apparently heavily influenced by Gnosticism. The symbolic political affiliations of the co-rebels encompassed a broad cross-section of ʿAlid leaders, but their actual connections to these ʿAlid figures were tenuous at best. Bayān was a supporter of Abū Hāshim, the son of Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, and Mughīra hailed the Ḥusaynī Muḥammad al-Bāqir as the *qāʾim* before shifting his support to the Ḥasanī Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya as the *mahdī*.[4]

Revolts that enjoyed a greater degree of support and legitimacy among proto-Sunnī scholars were of a more pure ʿAlid pedigree, being led personally by prominent Ḥasanīs or Ḥusaynīs. The first of these was that of Zayd b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, who launched his revolt against the Umayyads in Kūfa in 122/740. As noted in more detail below, a considerable number of prominent traditionist scholars of Kūfa lent varying levels of support to his efforts. These included not only those classified as Shīʿites or Zaydīs, but also Murjiʾīs like Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767) and Misʿar b. Kidām (d. c. 153/770) and even, apparently, a single ʿUthmānī.[5] Zayd's plan for revolt was exposed to the Umayyad governor, Yūsuf b. ʿUmar (r. 120-126/738-744), and he was forced into action prematurely while many of his supporters were blockaded in the city's grand mosque. After two days of clashes with Umayyad forces, he was killed in battle and

[4] On the revolt of Mughīra and Bayān and the respective sects associated with them in heresiographical literature see Tucker, *Mahdis and Millenarians*, 34-70; W. Madelung, "Mughīriyya" and "Bayāniyya," in *EI*[2].

[5] For a list of traditionist supporters of Zayd's revolt see Van Arendonk, *Les débuts*, 307-312. The ʿUthmānī was Abū Ḥaṣīn ʿUthmān b. ʿĀṣim al-Asadī (d. 127/745), who will be discussed in more detail below.

buried in secret by his followers, but his body was exhumed and crucified, giving rise to an extensive martyrology devoted to him.[6]

The only Shīʿite-inspired rebellion against the Umayyads that achieved any lasting success was, ironically, that of the ʿAbbāsids, which unfolded between 129-132/747-750. The symbolism and rhetoric used by the ʿAbbāsids to build their revolutionary network was heavily indebted to a vaguely pro-Hāshimid Shīʿism, as embodied in its hallmark call to install *al-riḍā min āli Muḥammad* in power after toppling the Umayyads. As argued by Patricia Crone and Tilman Nagel, this phrase likely implied that a *shūrā*, or consultative council, would be convened among leading Hāshimids to select a caliph, whom many people expected to be an ʿAlid. A number of reports even suggest that a meeting was convened between several prominent ʿAlīds and ʿAbbāsids, including nearly all of the major *dramatis personae* in the conflict that would emerge between the two sides after the revolution, for the express purpose of deciding who among them would become caliph.[7] Certain features of these reports do not inspire confidence,[8] but irrespective of their historicity, they certainly encapsulate a tension that lay at the heart of the ʿAbbāsid enterprise, namely capitalizing on widespread pro-Hāshimid sentiments directed primarily towards the ʿAlids while excluding them from any share in power.[9]

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[6] See Nājī Ḥasan, *Thawrat Zayd b. ʿAlī* (Beirut: Al-Dār al-ʿarabiyya lil-mawsūʿāt, 2000), 41-131. On the crucifixion of Zayd see Sean W. Anthony, *Crucifixion and Death as Spectacle: Umayyad Crucifixion in Its Late Antique Context* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2014), 46-51.

[7] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 205-8, 253-7; *Akhbār al-dawla al-ʿabbāsiyya wa fīhi akhbār al-ʿAbbās wa waladihi*, eds. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dūrī and ʿAbd al-Jābbār al-Muṭṭalibī (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalīʿa, 1971), 385-6, 388-9.

[8] See Crone, "ʿAbbāsid Call" 99-100.

[9] Crone, "ʿAbbāsid Call," 95-111; Tilman Nagel, *Untersuchungen zur Enstehung des Abbasidischen Kalifates* (Bonn: Otto Spies, 1972), 107-16. An ʿAlid perspective on the matter is provided by al-Iṣfahānī: "The propagandists of the Banū Hāshim went out in all directions... and the first thing that they would speak about was the virtue of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and his sons and the killing, fear and banishment that they were subjected to. Then once support for them was secured, each separate party among them claimed that the *waṣiyya* [belonged] to the one he was calling to. When the *daʿwa* of the ʿAbbāsids prevailed and they

This tension erupted in full shortly after the ʿAbbāsids' accession to power in the rebellion of the two Ḥasanīs, Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya and his brother Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd Allāh, in 145/762-3. The brothers had planned a coordinated attack from Medina and Baṣra, but ultimately acted separately after Muḥammad was forced into action prematurely in Medina. Although Muḥammad was the figurehead of the revolt, Ibrāhīm's army posed a more significant military threat, but both brothers were killed and the rebellion was quelled within less than six months. Perhaps even more than Zayd b. ʿAlī, Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm enjoyed significant support from traditionist scholars that was centered around Shīʿite circles but also extended well beyond them.[10] This support again proved to be ineffectual, and in the aftermath of the revolt the attitude within the proto-Sunnī milieu towards armed rebellion, which was already a highly controversial issue, shifted quickly towards a more categorical rejection of it. While ʿAlid figures would continue to revolt well into the ʿAbbāsid period, no subsequent revolt would enjoy nearly the same level of broad support and resonance.

III.2. The Traditionalist Milieu and Narratives of Sectarianism

Aside from the political upheaval that characterized the late Umayyad period, one of the most important social developments to occur was the gradual emergence and

gained power, [Abū al-ʿAbbās] al-Saffāḥ and [Abū Jaʿfar] al-Manṣūr became bent on capturing Muḥammad [al-Nafs al-Zakiyya] and Ibrāhīm [b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan]..." (*Maqātil*, 233-4).

[10] Active supporters included prominent figures such as Muḥammad b. ʿAjlān (d. 149/766), Muḥammad b. Abī Dhiʾb (d. 159/775), Yazīd b. Hārūn and Hushaym b. Bashīr. Figures who expressed sympathy and/or support for the revolt included Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj, Abū Ḥanīfa, Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-Aʿmash and Mālik b. Anas. See Van Arendonk, *Les débuts*, 312-17. Cf. the comments of Amikam Elad on the equivocal nature of some of this support in "Rebellion," 182-9. On the revolt generally see ibid., 147-89; Tilman Nagel, "Eine früher Bericht über den Aufstand von Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallah im Jahre 145," *Der Islam* 46 (1970), 227-62. On some of the millenarian undertones of the rebellion see Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "The Nature of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya's Mahdīship: A Study of some Reports in al-Iṣbahānī's *Maqātil*," *Hamdard Islamicus* 13 (1990), 59-65.

consolidation of a class of traditionalist scholars throughout the most important urban centers of the empire. As it became increasingly clear that government officials and tribal elites would hold sway in the realm of politics irrespective of their religious learning or piety, these scholars emerged as the social class that would exercise the greatest level of influence in defining religious life and law. Although their emergence as an identifiable class was a gradual process, it becomes clearly visible among the generation of young "successors" (*tābiʿūn*), who had met some of the Companions but were usually born, or at least came of age, under Umayyad rule and lived well into the Marwānid period or beyond. They shared a general orientation towards the accumulation and dissemination of religious knowledge, but their particular areas of focus were spread among one or more fields such as law, Qurʾānic recitation, history, genealogy, grammar, philology and hadith.

These scholars differed from one another not only in terms of their particular areas of specialization, but also in terms of their religio-political alignments, which were often in accord with whatever trends were dominant in their home cities. Our concern in what follows will be primarily with how a number of particularly influential traditionist scholars in Kūfa positioned themselves vis-à-vis the various Shīʿite currents of their day, as well as with how Shīʿite scholars of various stripes interacted with individuals who were aligned with opposing trends. Before embarking on our discussion, however, it is necessary to examine some of the broad narratives in modern scholarship that shape our understanding of the development of sectarianism in this period.

Contemporary scholarly opinion diverges on the question of the extent to which sectarian divisions had immediate roots in the military conflicts of the early caliphate. Were these conflicts primarily political disputes that only took on sectarian hues among subsequent

generations, or were there explicit religious issues at stake from the beginning? The two possibilities are, of course, not mutually exclusive, but different scholars clearly lay greater emphasis on one interpretation or the other. One of the strongest proponents of the former possibility is Patricia Crone, who offers the metaphor of a caravan as a useful way to wrap our minds around the religio-political imagination of the earliest Muslim polity. The caliph, or imām, was the leader of the caravan and it was he alone who was capable of guiding his followers on a perilous journey through the desert of life to salvation. "Everyone who travelled with him would be saved, everyone else was lost." Since salvation and divine pleasure were fully contingent upon following a rightly guided imām, the issue of succession that arose in the wake of the assassination of ʿUthmān was preeminently theological. The followers of Muʿāwiya and ʿAlī could not both be rightly guided, and, indeed, they spoke of themselves as being "upon the religion" (*ʿalā dīn*) of their respective leaders. According to this interpretation, the major religio-political factions of early Islam – ʿUthmānīs/Jamāʿīs, ʿAlawīs/Shīʿites and Khārijīs – did not drift away from one another gradually, but were rather thrust into diametrically opposed camps by a single moment of religiously charged conflict.[11] It is not clear exactly how long Crone believes that this religio-political vision remained dominant, but, in her latest writings, she implies that it dissipated gradually until a thoroughgoing "de-politicization of the community of believers" occurred by the early ʿAbbāsid period.[12]

[11] Crone, *God's Rule*, 17-47; Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 40-42.

[12] In *God's Caliph*, first published in 1986, Crone and Hinds imply that a notion of the absolute identity of religious and political authority in the person of the caliph remained salient into the ʿAbbāsid period, although they concede that its appeal had begun to wain earlier ("one suspects that al-Walīd II's letter had an outmoded ring to it already at the time of its publication [125/743]" (57)). In Crone's article "ʿUthmāniyya," in *EI*^{2}, she writes that this vision is less evident in the sources beginning in the Marwānid period. She does not specify a timeline in her latest work, *God's Rule* (2004), although she implies again that the vision remained salient for much of the Umayyad period and the reference to the

Crone cites a considerable body of evidence in support of the vision that she lays out, and there is indeed much to recommend it.[13] There is, however, a significant body of contrary evidence that suggests that at least some of the participants in these conflicts, if not the majority, did not view them in such absolute terms.[14] Space does not permit us to pursue this question in detail here, but what is significant for our purposes is that in spite of the fact that Crone insists that the model she proposes is essential for understanding how sects emerged from apparently political conflicts, we find that it is not particularly useful for making sense of

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"de-politicization of the community of the believers" is clearly associated with the early ʿAbbāsid period (30-32).

[13] Although Crone draws evidence from a variety of early factions, from the perspective of mature sectarian discourse, her interpretation clearly has a distinctly Khārijī ring to it. For her, "[o]ne has to grant" that among all the early factions, "only the Khārijites refused" to break their principles (*God's Rule*, 55). It is noteworthy, however, that the Khārijīs came to be rejected by the majority precisely because of their absolute and uncompromising identification of religious legitimacy with political conduct.

[14] See, for example, Madelung, *Succession*, 145-146, 208-209 (on the Companions who famously remained neutral after the death of ʿUthmān), 176 (on ʿĀʾisha's remorse at having caused bloodshed amongst Muslims), 178-181 (on another interpretation of what it meant to invoke the new-fangled notion of *dīn ʿAlī* and the new legal problem of warfare amongst Muslims), 218-219 (on ʿAlī instructing his followers not to disassociate themselves (*barāʾa min*) from or curse their opponents), 283-286 (on the ambiguous position of the surviving "religious aristocracy" among the Companions during the arbitration) and passim. Madelung has been criticized for his sanguine approach to the sources (he was aware that even his own account would be tinged by the mythical elements that are inextricable from their narratives), but one of the merits of his approach is that the intensely personal character of the internecine conflicts of early Islam comes to the fore. As it appears in his account, the issues at stake in these conflicts were not so much black-and-white theological quandaries as they were personal rivalries and competing interests. If the personal rivalries and interests that seem to predominate over religious considerations in the sources are a back-projection, then they are a back-projection of later generations whose machinations were undertaken in the service of a half-hearted ecumenical agenda. Occam's razor would seem to dictate that personal interests and rivalries were indeed primary, and that the theological implications of the conflicts became more prominent as the personal memories faded and later generations began to cast past conflicts in a more explicitly doctrinal mold. For another more nuanced account in which the interests of larger social blocs are emphasized see Martin Hinds, "Kufan Political Alignments and Their Background in the Mid-Seventh Century A.D." *IJMES* 2 (1971), 361-7. It should be noted that Crone follows her account with a caveat admitting that it is oversimplified, but still defends the integrity of her basic model (*God's Rule*, 27). For a general critique of the tendency in this work to portray complex phenomena as being over-determined by religion see Aziz al-Azmeh, "God's Caravan: Topoi and Schemata in the History of Muslim Political Thought," in *Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and the Theory of Statecraft* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2013), 326-97.

the activities of traditionalist scholars in the very period in which Shīʿism is generally recognized to have taken on increasingly sectarian hues.

An alternative model for understanding the religio-political factions of the Umayyad period is found in the work of Montgomery Watt, who noted that the idea of a "moderate or central party" was suggested by the sources, but that it was difficult to give any detailed, positive description of it. For Watt, this group was made up of "men who were neither Khārijites nor extreme Shīʿites, neither out-and-out supporters nor out-and-out opponents of the Umayyads." He cites Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī (d. 96/714), ʿĀmir b. Sharāḥīl al-Shaʿbī (d. after 100/718) and Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) as examples of the kinds of figures at the forefront of this party.[15] As will be demonstrated in what follows, the notion of a central party that shared a sufficient number of basic presuppositions to allow them to participate in a joint scholarly venture while differing on issues that they recognized to be secondary is essential to understanding the milieu under study. An individual with mild Shīʿite or ʿUthmānī sentiments could constitute a central fixture of this milieu, an individual with more radical sentiments might exist at its margins and an individual with unmistakably heretical views would be recognized by all as falling beyond the pale.

While it is useful to understand some of the broad models that frame our understanding of this period, none of them can fully capture all of the nuances, complexities and ambiguities that characterized it. There is no alternative to delving into the relationships, activities and controversies that animated the milieu of Shīʿite narrators in order to fully appreciate its significance and its relationship to subsequent historical developments.

[15] Watt, *Formative Period*, 72-3. See also Hodgson's nuanced, geography-based parsing of religio-political factions belonging to the "piety-minded opposition" in *Venture*, 1/263. Crone also recognizes that those who fell between (extreme) Shīʿites and Khārijites shared certain things in common, but places less emphasis on the fact (*God's Rule*, 28-9, 134-5).

III.3. Shīʿite Narrators in the Proto-Sunnī Milieu

ʿĀmir b. Sharāḥīl al-Shaʿbī (d. after 100/718)

Although he spent only part of his life as a Shīʿite, there are few figures whose lives exemplify the controversy over Shīʿite trends among hadith narrators of the late Umayyad period better than ʿĀmir b. Sharāḥīl al-Shaʿbī. Al-Shaʿbī was one of the most prominent jurists, hadith narrators and historians of late Umayyad Kūfa. His stature as a narrator is described in superlative terms and numerous anecdotes portray him as an authority on par with some of the last surviving Companions while they were still alive. He was a tutor for the sons of the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 65-86/685-705), acted as an emissary on his behalf and served briefly as a judge under ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (r. 99-101/717-720). His relations with the ruling dynasty had not always been warm, however. He reportedly participated in the early planning stages of al-Mukhtār's revolt, but grew disillusioned with it and ultimately ran afoul of al-Mukhtār, which forced him to go into hiding in Medina. In several reports, he appears to have been skeptical of some of the claims broadly accepted by al-Mukhtār's supporters, such as his clairvoyance or his assertion that he was acting strictly in accordance with the wishes of Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya.[16] He also participated in the more ideologically ambiguous revolt of Ibn al-Ashʿath, and it was only after the infamous Umayyad governor al-Ḥajjāj (r. 73-95/692-714) pardoned al-Shaʿbī for his participation that the Umayyads availed themselves of his services.[17]

Al-Shaʿbī's personal evolution put him in a unique position to comment on the Shīʿite trends of his era as a former insider, and the body of reports attributed to him in this regard is considerable. A number of these reports present him undercutting or deriding the claims of

[16] Qāḍī, *Kaysāniyya*, 91, 113.
[17] For a summary of al-Shaʿbī's biography see Steven C. Judd, *Religious Scholars and the Umayyads: Piety-Minded supporters of the Marwānid caliphate* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 41-51, especially 44-6; G.H.A. Juynboll, "al-Shaʿbī," in *EI²*.

the extremist Shīʿite rebel Mughīra b. Saʿīd, at times on the basis of his personal knowledge of some of the earliest Shīʿite forerunners. According to one such report, he denounced Mughīra b. Saʿid as a liar when he learned that he had been falsely ascribing his doctrines to two prominent disciples of ʿAlī, al-Ḥārith al-Aʿwar (d. 65/685) and Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣūḥān (d. before 60/680). He noted that al-Ḥārith had taught him how to calculate inheritance shares and that he knew everything that Ṣaʿṣaʿa narrated.[18] According to another report, he asked Mughīra b. Saʿīd about his love of ʿAlī and when the latter replied that it permeated his bones, his flesh, his nerves and his veins, al-Shaʿbī told him to gather it all together and urinate on it.[19]

Al-Shaʿbī's antipathy towards Shīʿites was not limited to the *ghulāt* but extended to more mainstream Shīʿites as well. When he saw the "Batrī Zaydī" Sālim b. Abī Ḥafsa (for whom see below), he would yell at him, "O *shurṭa* of God, fall down and fly away like a grain of barley," in a derisive reference to the supporters of al-Mukhtār.[20] We will see below that he was strongly opposed to Jābir al-Juʿfī, a younger contemporary who was one of the most prominent Shīʿite narrators of the late Umayyad era. He even called al-Ḥārith al-Aʿwar, his aforementioned inheritance teacher, a liar, although the reason for this is not specified.[21]

It is likely that al-Shaʿbī viewed Shīʿite affiliations as a slippery slope that potentially led to heresy. He reportedly told Mālik b. Mighwal (d. 159/776), a younger Kūfan narrator with more pronounced anti-Shīʿite sentiments, "Bring me a small Shīʿite (*shāʿī*), I will extract from him a big *rāfiḍī* for you. Bring me a small *rāfiḍī*, I will extract from him a big heretic (*zindīq*) for

[18] *DU*, 4/180-1.
[19] *DU*, 4/178.
[20] *MT*, 2/595, 709. On the use of *shurṭat Allāh* in reference to the forces of al-Mukhtār see Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic*, 282-5. If Sālim had participated in al-Mukhtār's revolt, as Anthony tentatively asserts, he must have been quite young at the time, since he died a full seventy years after its occurrence. The import of al-Shaʿbī's scornful exclamation (*qaʿī wa ṭīrī kamā taṭīr ḥabbat al-shaʿīr*) is lost on the modern reader, although it is tempting to see in it a reference to the dance that some of al-Mukhtār's supporters performed around the symbolic chair of ʿAlī. See ibid., 261ff.
[21] Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 1/244.

you."[22] This is reported from Mālik via his son ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, who is in all likelihood the culprit in the fabrication and attribution of another report to al-Shaʿbī that would become a standard item in medieval anti-Shīʿite polemic. This extended report identifies the Shīʿites/*rāfiḍīs* as "the Jews of this community," and proceeds to list the abominable offenses that they share with Jews.[23] Although this latter report is unlikely to have represented the actual views of al-Shaʿbī, it underscores the fact that he was remembered as someone who could condemn Shīʿites with particular authority due to his intimate knowledge of their milieu.[24]

Al-Shaʿbī's antipathy towards Shīʿites and his affiliations with the Umayyads are not easily matched with the historical outlook indicated by the hadiths and historical reports that he transmitted. He narrated a number of hadiths on the virtues of ʿAlī, as well as those of ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, who was a veritable symbol of loyalty to the ʿAlid cause.[25] His reports are found throughout the pro-ʿAlid work on the battle of Ṣiffīn by Naṣr b. Muzāḥim.[26] In a study of the historiography of the conflict between ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya, E.L. Petersen concluded that al-Shaʿbī "has no doubt whatever" regarding the legitimacy of ʿAlī's cause and that he viewed the actions of his opponents, including Ṭalḥa and Zubayr, as blameworthy and unlawful.[27] The

[22] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 4/288. Another version is narrated with the anachronistic interpolation of *zaydī* in place of *shāʿī*.
[23] Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *Al-ʿIqd al-farīd* (Cairo: 1940), 2/409. For a variety of anti-Shīʿite reports transmitted by Mālik and his son ʿAbd al-Raḥmān see Ibn Taymiyya, *Minhāj al-sunna al-nabawiyya fi naqḍ kalām al-Shīʿa wa al-Qadariyya* (Riyadh: Jāmiʿat al-Imām Ibn Saʿūd, 1986), 1/22-34.
[24] For a discussion of the report and its provenance see Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic*, 171-2.
[25] See for example Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Kitāb faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-risāla, 1983), 1/549, 2/575, 858-9. On ʿAmmār as a symbol of the Shīʿite cause see Etan Kohlberg, "The Attitude of the Imāmī-Shīʿīs to the Companions of the Prophet" (Ph.D. dissertation, Oxford University, 1971), 326-42.
[26] Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn* (Qum: Kitābfarūshī-yi Baṣīratī, 1962), index s.v. "al-Shaʿbī."
[27] E.L. Petersen, *ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya in Early Arabic Tradition* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1964), 23-51, esp. 31.

tension inherent in the combination of al-Shaʿbī's view of ʿAlī and his service to the Umayyads is captured in the following anecdote narrated by al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066) and Ibn ʿAsākir:

> Yazīd b. Muslim left the presence of al-Ḥajjāj and said, "The governor has issued a ruling." Al-Shaʿbī said to him, "And what is that?" He said, "[In the event of a divorce] those things that normally belong to men go to the man and those things that normally belong to women go to the woman." Al-Shaʿbī: "[This is] the judgment of one of the people of Badr." Yazīd: "Who?" Al-Shaʿbī: "I won't tell you." Yazīd: "Who is it? I give you a covenant and a pledge from God that I won't tell him [al-Ḥajjāj]." Al-Shaʿbī: "It is ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib." [Yazīd] entered upon al-Ḥajjāj and informed him. [Al-Ḥajjāj] said: "Woe to you! It was not his judgments that made us hate ʿAlī. We already know that he was the best judge among them."[28]

Given such tensions, it is hardly surprising that views of modern scholars who have attempted to place al-Shaʿbī along the ideological spectrum of the late Umayyad period are widely divergent. On the one hand, Petersen, based on a comparative study of al-Shaʿbī's historical reports, had no doubt as to his pro-ʿAlid views. On the other hand, Madelung considered him "a moderate ʿUthmānid" and interpreted reports suggesting otherwise as "pro-Batrī" fabrications.[29] Steven C. Judd represents a middle path between these two scholars, noting that it is difficult classify al-Shaʿbī and that "his views were moderate to the point of being almost nondescript."[30]

In many respects, al-Shaʿbī seems to have been an early example of a figure who sought to transcend the polarizing trends that pushed many of his contemporaries into opposing camps. In another encounter with Mughīra b. Saʿid, al-Shaʿbī told him that people have four positions regarding ʿAlī and ʿUthmān: they either love both, hate both or love one and hate the other. He then tells Mughīra that he differs from all these groups, since he loves them both and

[28] Al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Sunan al-kubrā*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.) 10/269; *TMD*, 65/388.
[29] Madelung, *Succession*, 143, 207; idem, *Der Imam al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm und die Glaubenslehre der Zaiditen* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1965), 58 n. 94. See further note 33 below.
[30] Judd, *Religious Scholars and the Umayyads*, 46.

asks God to forgive them both.[31] When ʿUmar b. Dharr (d. 153/770), a prominent Murjiʾī,[32] approached al-Shaʿbī to ask about ʿAlī and ʿUthmān, al-Shaʿbī told him that he had no need for either one of them to have a claim against him on the day of judgment.[33] In a statement preserved in several versions, al-Shaʿbī attempted to outline a middle course that avoided what he saw as the sectarian pitfalls of his day, advising that one should love the family of the Prophet without being a *rāfiḍī/shīʿī/khashabī*, leave what one does not know to God without being a Murjiʾī, know that good is from God and evil is from oneself without being a Qadarī, and obey the Imām even if he is an Ethiopian slave (*ʿabd ḥabashī*).[34] In the course of yet another exchange with Mughīra b. Saʿīd, al-Shaʿbī cited the aforementioned ʿAlawī, Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣūḥān, as praising Abū Bakr and ʿUmar and taking an agnostic position on ʿUthmān, saying that both his caliphate and his murder were by divine decree (*kānat imāratuhu qadaran wa qatluhu qadaran*).[35]

Al-Shaʿbī's irenic tendency also extended to his historical reports about the Companions in general. In an early example of the tendency to exonerate the senior Companions from culpability in the *fitna*, he purportedly claimed that no more than six Badrīs (Companions who participated in the battle of Badr) participated in the Battle of the Camel.[36]

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[31] *DU*, 4/181; *TMD*, 25/371-2.
[32] Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, 80, 144.
[33] *TMD*, 25/372. The fact that this is narrated by a Murjiʾī renders it suspect, but it is in line with al-Shaʿbī's other statements on the issue.
[34] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 6/248-9; Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, 1/182; *TMD*, 25/372-3. This is the statement that Madelung dismissed as a pro-Batrī fabrication, although he did not specify why it should be considered as such. There seems to be no particular reason to dismiss it, especially since it was widely reported from al-Shaʿbī.
[35] *DU*, 4/180-1. The agnostic nature of this expression is clear in light of the fact that there was a great deal of controversy as to whether ʿUthmān had been killed as a wrongdoer (*ẓāliman*) or as one who was wronged (*maẓlūman*). See Crone, "Uthmāniyya" in *EI*[2]. In several narrations, ʿAlī is also portrayed as discussing the matter in similar terms. See Madelung, *Succession*, 151, 212, 231.
[36] There are different versions of this report in which the number of Badrīs varies from four to seven. See Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1993), 137; Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa al-mulūk* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī, 1998), 3/467; ʿAmr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-ʿUthmāniyya* (Cairo: Dār al-kitāb al-ʿarabī, 1955), 10-11, 175-6. As noted by Sean Anthony, the number given by other contemporaries of al-Shaʿbī was considerably higher. Al-Suddī (d. 127/745) put the number of Badrīs on

The avoidance of *fitna* also takes on a prominent role in his account of the pledge of allegiance given to ʿAlī after ʿUthmān's death, with several senior Companions excusing themselves from pledging allegiance on the grounds that they did not want to fight against other Muslims.[37] As noted by Sean Anthony, his attempt to minimize the senior Companions' culpability in the *fitna* can be seen as a precedent for the sort of ahistorical scapegoating engaged in by one of his students, the controversial Kūfan historian Sayf b. ʿUmar (d. 180/796).[38]

Al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba (d. 115/733)

Al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba was one of the most prominent Kūfan jurists and narrators of his day and several narrations indicate that some of the legal authority of al-Shaʿbī, who was one of his teachers, devolved to him after his death.[39] His knowledge and authority were compared to that of the leading scholars of the late Umayyad period, including Ibn Shīhāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742), ʿAṭāʾ b. Abī Rabāḥ (d. 114/732) and Ibrāhīm al-Nakhiʿī (d. 95/714). When al-Ḥakam came to Medina, crowds would disperse to allow him to pray in front of a special pillar in the mosque of the Prophet.[40] Al-Ḥakam's student, Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj, narrates extensively from him in Sunnī sources and counted him among four of his most reliable teachers, along with

ʿAlī's side at 130 and Saʿīd b. Jubayr (d. 94/712-3) said that 800 of the Anṣār and 400 of those who witnessed the pledge preceding the treaty of Ḥudaybiyya (*bayʿat al-riḍwān*) were with ʿAlī. See Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic*, 107; Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Tārīkh*, 138.

[37] Madelung, *Succession*, 145-6.

[38] Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic*, 107-9.

[39] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 6/332; *MT*, 2/831; *SAN*, 209-12.

[40] ʿAlī b. al-Jaʿd, *Musnad* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1996), 63; Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, 1/362; Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 2/593. Praying in front of the pillar (*sāriya*) of the Prophet was apparently a significant honor. Prominent persons such as Hishām b. ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr (d. 146/763) and ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan (d. 144/762) had the pillar reserved for them at particular times of the day. On one occasion, a dispute over the spot between ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan and a certain Umayyad nearly led to a violent outburst. See *TMD*, 27/373.

three other Kūfan Shīʿites, Salama b. Kuhayl (d. 122/740), Ḥabīb b. Abī Thābit (d. 119/737) and Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir (d. 132/750).[41]

The echoes of al-Ḥakam's Shīʿite sentiments are faint in Sunnī literature but present nonetheless. Ibn Qutayba included him in his list of Shīʿites and another third/ninth century author, al-ʿIjlī, stated that his Shīʿism only became known after his death, although this seems unlikely.[42] Two separate narrations state explicitly that al-Ḥakam preferred ʿAlī over Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.[43] If we read these reports in light of al-ʿIjlī's statement, we might surmise that the *extent* of al-Ḥakam's Shīʿite sentiments was not known until after his death. As we will see in detail in the next chapter, it was not uncommon for Shīʿite narrators to be selective in choosing those to whom they disclosed their views on controversial issues. Whatever the case may have been, like other prominent proto-Sunnīs with Shīʿite inclinations, al-Ḥakam condemned those manifestations of Shīʿism that he considered to exceed proper bounds, noting that one of his teachers, Yaḥyā b. al-Jazzār, was extreme in his Shīʿism.[44]

Imāmī literature is more generous regarding both the nature of al-Ḥakam's Shīʿite sentiments and his friction with other Shīʿites, but the picture that emerges from this literature is still obscured by contradictory portrayals of the nature of his relationship to the Imāms. Several narrations imply that al-Ḥakam was on familiar terms with Muḥammad al-Bāqir. He appears to have been genuinely interested in his opinions, impressed by his knowledge and may have even upheld a limited conception of the special status of the Imāms. In one narration, al-Bāqir indicated that al-Ḥakam was familiar with his home due to repeated

[41] *IAH*, 1/139. The full implications of Shuʿba's statement will de discussed in the entry on him in IV.3.
[42] Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 624; ʿIjlī, *Thiqāt*, 1/313.
[43] Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Al-Muntakhab min dhayl al-mudhayyal* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī, n.d.), 129; *SAN*, 5/209; van Arendonk, *Les débuts*, 28. Al-Dhahabī expressed doubts about the veracity of this report and criticized one of the narrators as unreliable (*SAN*, 5/209).
[44] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 6/294; Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 3/93.

visits.[45] In others, al-Ḥakam asked al-Bāqir about a variety of legal matters ranging from ritual performance to legal testimony to blood torts.[46]

In a handful of questionable narrations, al-Ḥakam appears to have fully endorsed the notion of the Imāms being divinely inspired,[47] but when his position is viewed through the prism of the full range of narrations attributed to him on the issue, it is in fact somewhat ambiguous. The issue found its most prominent expression in a complicated web of contradictory anecdotes reported by Zurāra b. Aʿyan (d. 148/767) and his brother Ḥumrān, who had been students of al-Ḥakam before they became attached to the Ḥusaynī Imāms. The import of these anecdotes ranges from a mild acceptance of al-Ḥakam to outright condemnation of him. In the most conciliatory report, Ḥumrān states that al-Ḥakam informed him that ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn had said that the knowledge of ʿAlī was contained in a single verse of the Qurʾān, but then refused to tell him which verse it was. Al-Bāqir was surprised that al-Ḥakam would narrate this, and informed Ḥumrān that the word *muḥaddath* (divinely inspired individual) referred to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and was attached to the verse, "And We never sent before you a messenger or a prophet [or a *muḥaddath*]..." (Q, 22:52).[48] In another narration the situation was reversed, and it was al-Bāqir who sent Zurāra to al-Ḥakam for the purpose of

[45] Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī* (Tehran: Dār al-kutub al-islāmiyya, 1944), 6/446.
[46] Kulaynī, *Kāfī*, 3/557, 7/385, 7/329-30.
[47] Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār, *Bāṣāʾir al-darajāt* (Tehran: Maṭbaʿat al-Aḥmadī, 1984), 32; Kulaynī, *Kāfī*, 1/398; 8/76-7.
[48] Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār maʿrifat al-rijāl* (Tehran: Sāzmān, 2003), 252; Ṣaffār, *Baṣāʾir*, 389. On the concept of the *muḥaddath* see Etan Kohlberg, "The Term 'Muḥaddath' in Twelver Shīʿism," in *Studia Orientalia memoriae D.H. Baneth dedicata* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1979), 39-47. The word *muḥaddath* is not part of the standard ʿUthmānic text but the variant text cited by the Imāms was part of the codex of Ibn ʿAbbās and a similar variant was reported from Ubayy Ibn Kaʿb, who read "*wa lā nabiyyin muḥaddathin*." See Arthur Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qurʾān* (Leiden: Brill, 1937), 148, 202; ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Khaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt* (Damascus: Dār saʿd al-dīn, 2002), 6/133. For preservation of this variant in the Imāmī tradition see Etan Kohlberg and Mohammad Amir-Moezzi, *Revelation and Falsification: The* Kitāb al-qirāʾāt *of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Sayyārī* (Boston: Brill, 2009), 178 (English text) and 90 (Arabic text).

informing him that the legatees (*awṣiyāʾ*) are divinely inspired.[49] In yet another version, al-Bāqir tells Zurāra to rebuke Ḥumrān for having done just that, since the likes of al-Ḥakam are not fit to hear such a thing.[50]

In spite of al-Ḥakam's relationship to the Imāms and the neutral import of some of the reports about him in Imāmī literature, his reception in the Imāmī tradition was in fact overwhelmingly negative. In contrast to some of the narrations attributed to him, his primary failing in Imāmī eyes seems to have been a lack of sufficient recognition of the exclusive authority and hereditary knowledge of the Imāms. In a narration quoted in several variations that seems to have defined al-Ḥakam's reputation, al-Bāqir tells him and the aforementioned Salama b. Kuhayl, who seems to have visited al-Bāqir with al-Ḥakam frequently, to search the east and west as they may, but "knowledge is only taken from the people of a house on which Gabriel descended."[51] The coupling of al-Ḥakam with Salama b. Kuhayl in these anecdotes offers some insight into the reason that al-Ḥakam was categorized as a "Batrī Zaydī" even though he died seven years before the revolt of Zayd b. ʿAlī. Salama b. Kuhayl was also known as a Batrī in spite of the fact that he did not participate in Zayd's revolt, but rather sympathetically advised him against rebelling and sought his permission to leave Kūfa before the revolt took place.[52] As we will see in more detail later, the greatest common denominator among those labeled as Batrīs was not necessarily their support for Zayd, but rather their friction with the nascent Imāmī community over the nature and identity of the Imām and the

[49] Kulaynī, *Kāfī*, 1/270.
[50] Kashshī, *Rijāl*, 253.
[51] Ṣaffār, *Baṣāʾir*, 29-30; Kulaynī, *Kāfī*, 1/399-400.
[52] *MT*, 2/796; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 5/488-9; *TMD*, 19/473. Although Salama seems to have given his pledge of allegiance to Zayd, there is general agreement that he did not participate in the revolt. As noted by Van Ess, given his purported birth date of 47/667, he would have been quite old at the time of the revolt. See Ḥasan, *Thawrat Zayd*, 60-61; van Arendonk, *Les débuts*, 308-309; *Th&G*, 1/244.

status of the Companions. This explains why al-Ḥakam could be remembered as a paradigmatic Batrī even though there is virtually no evidence linking him to Zayd's revolt.

Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir (d. 132/750)

Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir was also one of the most prominent traditionists of late Umayyad Kūfa and was renowned for his prodigious memory, piety and asceticism. The *isnād* in which he forms the link between Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī and Sufyān al-Thawrī was considered by some Sunnī hadith critics to be the soundest of all *isnāds*.[53] Despite his opposition to the Umayyads, he received a stipend for some sort of service in the army, for which he reported periodically.[54] He was also forced by the Umayyad governor Ibn Hubayra (r. 97-105/713-724) to serve as a *qāḍī* for a very brief stint, but his fear of judging incorrectly rendered him wholly ineffective and he was quickly removed from the post.[55]

Manṣūr's Shīʿite sentiments were reported in both Sunnī and Zaydī literature. Al-ʿIjlī noted that he was characterized by "a little Shīʿism and was not extreme" and Ibn Qutayba included him in his list of Shīʿites.[56] According to the eighth/fourteenth century scholar al-Dhahabī, "his Shīʿism consisted of love and allegiance only," implying that he did not insult the Companions or adhere to controversial Shīʿite doctrines.[57] Sufyān al-Thawrī and Shuʿba both mentioned him, along with other prominent Kūfan Shīʿite traditionists, among their favorite teachers.[58]

[53] *SAN*, 5/402, 412.
[54] *MT*, 2/638.
[55] *SAN*, 5/405-406. For his biography generally see *SAN*, 5/402-412; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 28/546-555.
[56] ʿIjlī, *Thiqāt*, 2/299; Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 624.
[57] *SAN*, 5/408.
[58] Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 292; *IAH*, 1/139.

The picture of Manṣūr that emerges from the biographical sources seems to confirm the mild characterizations of his Shīʿism given by later Sunnī authorities and to explain their unequivocal embrace of him. Manṣūr told Zāʾida b. Qudāma that he should not insult oppressive rulers while he was fasting, but that it was acceptable to insult those who criticized Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.[59] As we will see in more detail below, Manṣūr was even unwilling to tolerate criticism of the more controversial figure of ʿUthmān. These sentiments, however, apparently did not go far enough in the eyes of Baṣran ʿUthmānīs. Echoing Yazīd b. Zurayʿ's description of al-Aʿmash, the Baṣran ʿUthmānī Ḥammād b. Zayd (d. 179/795) said that he saw Manṣūr in Mecca and that he was a *khashabī*, but that he did not think that he would lie.[60]

Sunnī literature itself offers only limited clues as to why Ḥammād b. Zayd would call Manṣūr a *khashabī*, a term which, despite its vagueness and elasticity, conjures notions of Shīʿite political activism. Al-Fasawī reported that Manṣūr used to go to Zubayd b. al-Ḥārith al-Yāmī, another Kūfan Shīʿite who enjoyed some prominence in the proto-Sunnī milieu, and attempt to convince him to join Zayd b. ʿAlī's rebellion by enumerating the travails suffered by the Prophet's household. Zubayd, however, refused to rebel with anyone less than a prophet.[61] This scant picture of Manṣūr's Shīʿite activities is filled out by a group of narrations regarding his active support for Zayd's revolt in Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī's (d. 356/967) *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*. According to two of these reports, Manṣūr served formally as an emissary who tried to rally support for Zayd's cause. According to the report of al-Faḍl b. Dukayn,[62] he was slow in returning to Kūfa from his mission, with the result that Zayd was killed before he reached him,

[59] *TB*, 10/177.
[60] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 6/338; *MT*, 2/798. Ḥammād's statement "*wa kāna min hādhihi al-khashabiyya*" is misprinted in *MT* as "*wa kāna fīhi khashya*."
[61] *MT*, 2/807. For a similar version with slight differences see *SAN*, 5/297.
[62] On him see Chapter 3.

and he fasted for a year due to his regret over this.[63] According to another report, Manṣūr and Muḥammad b. Abī Laylā (d. 148/765) had pledged their allegiance to Zayd but were among those blockaded in the grand mosque of Kūfa by the Umayyad governor in order to prevent them from participating in the ensuing rebellion.[64] Despite his Shīʿite inclinations and his active participation in Zayd's revolt, Manṣūr was not categorized as a Batrī, suggesting again that the precise import of the category deserves more attention than it has received.[65]

Jābir al-Juʿfī (d. 128 or 132/746 or 750)

Jābir al-Juʿfī was one of the most prolific and controversial Shīʿite hadith narrators of the late Umayyad era. He he straddled both the proto-Sunnī and the nascent Imāmī communities and was especially prominent among the early Imāmīs. Like other prominent narrators in this period, he combined an interest in historical reports with an interest in hadith and left his mark on both disciplines. He was the most prolific source for reports from Muḥammad al-Bāqir in Imāmī literature. His reception among Sunnīs was lackluster at best, whether among his elders, his peers or his students, but this did not prevent Sunnī authors from including large numbers of his narrations in their works.[66] Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal gave pithy expression to Jābir's overall reception among Sunnīs when asked about his status as a transmitter: "He has no ruling (*ḥukm*). There is no choice but to narrate from him, [since] he narrates certain matters [that no one else does]."[67]

[63] Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 145.
[64] Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 148. See also van Arendonk, *Les débuts*, 310.
[65] On this point see section III.5 below.
[66] For summaries of Jābir's life, contributions and reception see *TS*, 86-103; Liyakat N. Takim, *The Heirs of the Prophet: Charisma and Religious Authority in Shīʿite Islam* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), 170-179; W. Madelung, "Ḏjābir al-Ḏjuʿfī," in *EI*[2]; *Th&G*, 1/294-298.
[67] *DU*, 1/195.

We will revisit the question of the necessity of narrating from Jābir when we discuss some of his students in the next chapter. For the time being, our discussion will be restricted to how he was regarded by his elders and peers and what sorts of objectionable beliefs he was associated with in Sunnī biographical literature. It is clear that Jābir earned the opprobrium of prominent proto-Sunnī elders and contemporaries, many of whom regarded him as a liar. None other than al-Shaʿbī swore that Jābir would not die until he had lied.[68] He also told Jābir and Dāwūd b. Yazīd al-Awdī (d. 151/768), a weak narrator who was not a Shīʿite, that if he had authority over them and found nothing but a needle he would sharpen it and pierce them with it.[69] In separate narrations, both Saʿīd b. Jubayr (d. 94/713) and Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī (d. 131/749) accused Jābir of mendacity when they heard about some of his most extravagant claims. Even Abū Ḥanīfa, who was hardly renowned for his authority as a hadith critic, called Jābir a liar and prohibited inquisitive students from narrating from him.[70]

Jābir's peers generally did not specify the reasons for their low opinion of him, but the next generation of Kūfan narrators did. The most commonly cited reason was his belief in *rajʿa*, which was noted with disapproval by Zāʾida b. Qudāma (d. 161/778), Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (d. 188/804) and especially Sufyān b. ʿUyayna (d. 198/813).[71] Zāʾida also accused Jābir of being a *rāfiḍī* who insulted the pious predecessors.[72] Ibn ʿUyayna stopped narrating from Jābir because of Jābir's claim that miraculous hereditary knowledge was passed down in the Ḥusaynī line until Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq.[73] The same claim was also corroborated by Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778).[74]

[68] *DU*, 1/192; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/113. Takim, relying on an edition of al-Bukhārī's *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*, confuses al-Shaʿbī in this anecdote for Shuʿba. See Takim, *Heirs*, 170. As we will see below, Shuʿba was a young student of Jābir's and defended him against critics.
[69] *DU*, 2/41; Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī, *Qabūl al-akhbār* (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 2000), 2/102.
[70] Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, 1/216; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/113.
[71] Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, 1/207; *DU*, 1/192, 193-194; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/114-116.
[72] *DU*, 1/193.
[73] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/115.

Other claims related to the line of Ḥusaynī Imāms are also cited against Jābir. A man asked Ibn ʿUyayna if people abadoned Jābir's hadiths because he referred to Muḥammad al-Bāqir as "the legatee of the legatees (*waṣī al-awṣiyāʾ)*" and he replied, "That is the least of it."[75] A variety of reports in which he claims to know tens of thousands of hadiths are also cited against him. In some of these reports, Jābir specifies that he had revealed only a fraction of what he learned from al-Bāqir, or that the knowledge that he obtained from al-Bāqir was not conveyed by conventional means but rather by thaumaturgical feats.[76]

The profile of Jābir's beliefs that emerges from the Sunnī biographical literature is a pale but more or less accurate reflection of his vast contribution to Imāmī literature, which has been treated in detail elsewhere and is beyond the scope of this investigation. The predominant characteristics of his narrations in Imāmī literature are aptly summarized by Hossein Modarressi as reflective of "the populist branch of late Umayyad Kūfan Shīʿism: exaggeration about ʿAlī and his descendants, now mostly directed towards the Ḥusaynid branch, esoteric, hostile towards the caliphs before ʿAlī and, of course, the ʿUthmāniyya, and awaiting a turn in the tide of events in favor of the House of the Prophet."[77] The notion that Jābir's reports were ultimately correct but should not be spread openly since they were too much for people to accept forms a topos in Imāmī literature and is attributed to both al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq.[78]

Jābir's profile as a hadith transmitter is consistent with the color of his historical reports, which were staunchly pro-ʿAlid and often embellished the earlier Kūfan historical

[74] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/115.
[75] *DU*, 1/194.
[76] *DU*, 1/192, 193; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/113.
[77] *TS*, 88.
[78] Kashshī, *Rijāl*, 265-266, 439.

tradition to which he was heir.[79] He composed several works on ʿAlī's wars, the most famous of which is largely preserved in Naṣr b. Muzāḥim's *Waqʿat Siffīn*.[80] Al-Shaʿbī was a major source for Jābir's historical reports in spite of the contentious relationship between them. Jābir's beliefs rendered him a highly controversial figure in Kūfa's proto-Sunnī milieu, but, as we will see in the next chapter, even many of those who held his beliefs to be objectionable did not excise him from the pantheon of acceptable narrators altogether.

Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa Abū Yūnus al-Tammār (d. 137/754)

If Jābir al-Juʿfī represented one end of the spectrum of Shīʿite sentiment found within the milieu of proto-Sunnī narrators and al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba and Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir represented another, Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa represented a middle ground between the two. The Sunnī reception of him was accordingly mixed. His Shīʿism was widely noted and often described as extreme, but critics were divided as to whether or not his hadiths were acceptable. Of the Six Books, his narrations are found only in the *Sunan* of al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892), although al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) narrated from him in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*.[81] Although he was counted as a companion of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq in Imāmī sources, there was clearly a great deal of friction between him and members of the Imāmī community in Kūfa, who counted him among the Batrīs.

Sālim's Shīʿism was widely noted by early Sunnī biographers and hadith critics, including Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/845), Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn (d. 233/848), Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and Abū Dāwūd

[79] Petersen, *ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya*, 42, 62-63, 105 and passim.
[80] Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, index s.v. "Jābir al-Juʿfī." In addition to his work on the battle of Siffīn, Jābir composed works on the battles of the Camel and Nahrawān and the deaths of ʿAlī and al-Ḥusayn. *TS*, 99-102.
[81] Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, *al-Adab al-Mufrad* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-kutub al-thaqāfiyya, 1986), 39.

al-Sijistānī (d. 275/888).[82] Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, himself a prominent proto-Sunnī associated with Shīʿite sentiments, said that he stopped frequenting Sālim because he was quarrelsome due to his Shīʿism.[83] The picture of his sentiments that emerges from the sources is again somewhat indeterminate, but it seems to confirm Jarīr's contention. In keeping with his categorization as a Batrī, he seems to have been politically active, although there is no record of him having taken part in Zayd's revolt. We have already seen that al-Shaʿbī associated him with the *shurṭa* of al-Mukhtār in scornful remarks, and Abū Dāwūd also called him a *khashabī*.[84] The most widely reported story about him is that he circumambulated the Kaʿba at the beginning of the ʿAbbāsids' reign using a modified *talbiya*: "Here I am at your service, O destroyer of the Umayyads, here I am."[85] In al-Kashshī's (d. c. 340/951) version of this report, we learn that Sālim did this after emerging from hiding from the Umayyads.[86] Although this suggests that he was an agitator, he was not explicitly associated with any Shīʿite rebellion with the possible exception of that of al-Mukhtār.[87]

Sālim's Shīʿism also manifested in his attitude towards the early caliphs, although this too is difficult to discern with any precision. In some versions of the report about his *talbiya*, he purportedly said "destroyer of *naʿthal*" along with or rather than "destroyer of the Umayyads," in a derogatory reference to ʿUthmān.[88] In a somewhat odd report, the Murjiʾī ʿUmar b. Dharr

[82] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 6/336; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, 1/342; Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 1/546; Abū ʿUbayd Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ājurrī, *Suʾālāt Abī ʿUbayd al-Ājurrī Abā Dāwūd al-Sijistānī* (Mecca: Dār al-istiqāma, 1997), 1/245.
[83] *DU*, 2/152.
[84] *DU*, 2/152; Ājurrī, *Suʾālāt*, 1/245. For al-Shaʿbī's comments see note 19 above.
[85] *DU*, 2/152. The usual version is simply, "Here I am at your service, O my Lord, here I am."
[86] Kashshi, *Ikhtiyār*, 310.
[87] See note 19 above.
[88] *DU*, 2/153; al-Jūzajānī, *Aḥwāl al-rijāl*, 54. On the use of the term *naʿthal* in reference to ʿUthmān see Murtaḍā al-ʿAskarī, *Aḥādīth Umm al-Muʾminīn ʿĀʾisha* (Qum: Al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmī al-Islāmī, 1997), 1/161-6. The lexical meaning of *naʿthal* is "a crazy old man," or "a male hyena." Less plausible are claims that Naʿthal was the name of a Jewish man in Medina or a long-bearded man from Egypt who resembled

laid the responsibility for ʿUthmān's assassination on Sālim, accusing him of being content with what happened. In one version of the report, Sālim responded (sardonically?), "As you wish, I am the killer of ʿUthmān."[89] According to another report, Sālim was at the forefront of those who criticized Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.[90] Other reports, however, suggest that his view of the first two caliphs was positive, or that it changed after an encounter with Muḥammad al-Bāqir. According to a companion of Sufyān al-Thawrī, Sālim would preface his narration of ʿAlī's virtues by narrating the virtues of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. Al-Thawrī saw this as a ruse and told others to beware of this practice of Sālim's since "he intends what he intends!"[91] There are also several versions of a report in which Sālim asks Muḥammad al-Bāqir about Abū Bakr and ʿUmar and al-Bāqir commands him to affiliate himself to them and to disassociate from their enemies (*tawallahumā wa-braʾ min ʿaduwwihimā*).[92]

Much like his fellow "Batrīs," al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba and Salama b. Kuhayl, Sālim's views of the Ḥusaynī Imāms caused significant friction with their devoted Kūfan followers, especially Zurāra b. Aʿyan. Sālim narrated from the Imāms with apparent approval in both Sunnī and Shīʿite circles, but, like al-Ḥakam, he resisted the notion of their absolute knowledge and authority. He pointed out to Zurāra that Muḥammad al-Bāqir had asked him about many mundane things that he had not seen before in Iraq, asking how he could take such a person as his Imām.[93] He also criticized Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq for the equivocating practice of precautionary

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ʿUthmān. See Majd al-Dīn b. al-Athīr, *Al-Nihāya fī gharīb al-ḥadīth wa al-athar* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), 5/79-80.

[89] Two different versions of the report are given in Balkhī, *Qabūl al-akhbār*, 2/95 and *DU*, 2/153. Al-ʿUqaylī's version is more difficult to make sense of, but its general import is confirmed by al-Balkhī's version. The portion of al-Balkhī's report in which Sālim accepts responsibility for the assassination is not found in al-ʿUqaylī and may be an interpolation from the *talbiya* report mentioned above.

[90] *DU*, 2/153.

[91] *DU*, 2/153-4; Ājurrī, *Suʾālāt*, 1/245.

[92] *TMD*, 54/284-5.

[93] Kashshī, *Rijāl*, 309.

dissimulation (*taqiyya*), saying that he spoke in seventy different ways and always had a way out.[94] He challenged Abū ʿUbayda al-Ḥadhdhāʾ (d. c. 148/765), another Kūfan follower of al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq, regarding his understanding of a hadith that they had both heard from al-Bāqir in which those who die without an Imām are severely condemned. When Abū ʿUbayda reported this to al-Ṣādiq, he condemned Sālim for his ignorance of the true rank of the Imām.[95] Sālim was also condemned harshly by the Imāms in a number of statements against various groups of Batrīs.[96]

Although the intricacies of such intra-Shīʿite debates left few traces in Sunnī literature, some proto-Sunnī figures seem to have been dimly aware of them. Sufyān al-Thawrī once explained to a group of narrators that Zurāra b. Aʿyan had not heard from al-Bāqir directly but had gathered his hadiths from others, and that Zurāra and his brothers, Ḥumrān and ʿAbd al-Malik, were all Shīʿites. Someone then asked al-Thawrī about Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa and he clarified that the brothers were "beyond him in this matter."[97] Although the question of the nature and identity of the Imām was clearly one of the principle sources of division between Sālim and his Imāmī interlocutors, it seems to have hardly registered for al-Thawrī, who only saw in Sālim and the sons of Aʿyan different gradations of a single phenomenon.

Abān b. Taghlib (d. 141/758)

Abān b. Taghlib represents a unique and curious case of a solidly Imāmī narrator whose narrations were accepted almost unanimously by Sunnīs. The majority of Imāmī narrators

[94] Kulaynī, *Kāfī*, 8/100.
[95] Ṣaffār, *Baṣāʾir*, 279, 529, 530; Kashshī, *Rijāl*, 310; Kulaynī, *Kāfī*, 1/397. On Abū ʿUbayda al-Ḥadhdhāʾ see *TS*, 116-8.
[96] Kashshī, *Rijāl*, 304-5, 311, 315.
[97] *DU*, 2/96.

from the late Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid period were either completely absent from or marginal to the proto-Sunnī milieu and even those who were more prominent within it received largely negative reviews from hadith critics, as we saw in the case of Jābir al-Juʿfī. Within the Sunnī canon, Abān narrated extensively from a variety of proto-Sunnī figures of differing inclinations. He narrated most often from those known for Shīʿite leanings, such as al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba, Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī (d. 127/745) and al-Aʿmash. The subject matter of his hadiths varied widely and his narrations were included by the compilers of all of the Six Books except for al-Bukhārī. Sunnīs also recognized him as an expert in Qurʾānic recitation, grammar, lexicography and poetry.[98]

The comments of the first Sunnī hadith critics of the third/ninth century regarding Abān were almost unanimously laudatory. Ibn Saʿd, Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 277/890) all declared him to be *thiqa*, ranking him in the highest category of narrators with respect to both honesty and accuracy.[99] The only exception in this regard was Ibrāhīm b. Yaʿqūb al-Jūzajānī, who said that Abān was "blameworthy in his creed, declaring it openly, deviant."[100] As noted in the first chapter, al-Jūzajānī was alone in his condemnation of many prominent proto-Sunnī Kūfans for their Shīʿite inclinations and the later Sunnī hadith tradition recognized his opinions regarding such narrators to be anomalous.

Despite his near stellar reception among third/ninth century Sunnī critics, the Sunnī sources also preserve faint echoes of friction between Abān and others in the proto-Sunnī milieu, including fellow Shīʿites. Yazīd b. Hārūn, whose relationship to Shīʿism was somewhat ambiguous, said repeatedly that he did not narrate from Abān because he was "one who

[98] For his biography see Takim, *Heirs*, 164-9; *TS*, 107-16.
[99] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 6/360; Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 3/284; *IAH*, 2/296-7.
[100] Jūzajānī, *Aḥwāl al-rijāl*, 67.

falsifies speech (*al-ṣāʾigh*)."[101] Al-ʿUqaylī reports that Abān once narrated a hadith that was somehow critical of ʿUthmān (*fīhi qarṣ li-ʿUthmān*) in the gathering of Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī. In spite of his own Shīʿite leanings, Abū Isḥāq became extremely angry, shouted at Abān, expelled him from the gathering and told him never to return.[102] In another version of this report, Abān narrates this hadith from Muḥammad al-Bāqir and it is Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir who becomes angry and shouts at him.[103] Al-ʿUqaylī also reports that Abān gave a luke-warm reply to the *salām* of one of Sufyān al-Thawrī's first teachers, ʿAmr b. Qays al-Mulāʾī (d. mid-2nd/8th c.), prompting ʿAmr to declare, "There is rancor in their hearts towards the believers. If it was appropriate for us not to greet them with *salām* we would not do so."[104]

ʿAmr's harsh statement against Abān is indicative of some sort of group consciousness that pitted himself and "the believers" on one side against Abān and his likes on the other. This is, however, the sole indication in Sunnī sources that Abān was conceived of in anything approaching properly sectarian terms, and one of the few cases in which a figure classified as a Shīʿite, as opposed to a *rāfiḍī*, is discussed in such a manner. Sectarian notions appear more frequently in anecdotes about Abān in Imāmī literature, but even here he appears as someone who played a relatively ecumenical role. He asked Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq how he should answer non-Shīʿites who come to him with questions in the mosque, and the latter instructed him to

[101] *DU*, 1/37.
[102] *DU*, 1/37; *TMD*, 46/229. The printed version of al-ʿUqaylī gives a somewhat confusing account in which Abū Isḥāq hears the hadith and then Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir shouts at Abān for narrating it. This is apparently an interpolation from a separate narration, since the version narrated by Ibn ʿAsākir through al-ʿUqaylī does not mention Manṣūr at all.
[103] *DU*, 1/37.
[104] *DU*, 1/37. Modaressi refers to the anecdotes cited by al-ʿUqaylī as examples of "comments by Abān's contemporaries among the ʿUthmāniyya in Kūfa" (*TS*, 108). With the possible exception of ʿAmr b. Qays al-Mulāʾī, this seems to be another case in which centrist figures with pro-ʿAlid views are classified as ʿUthmānīs, similar to Madelung's categorization of al-Shaʿbī noted above.

answer them on the basis of "what you know of their opinions."[105] Al-Ṣādiq also apparently instructed Abān to mingle with the people of Medina so that they could see someone of his caliber amongst his followers.[106] Aside from the question of Abān straddling communal boundaries, his accolades in Imāmī sources are of the highest order and have been treated in detail by Modarressi and Takim.

The most significant puzzle emerging from Abān's profile for our purposes is the question of why Sunnīs accepted him almost unreservedly even though he was a prominent member of the Imāmī community of his day. The sorts of criticism leveled against him by Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī, Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir and ʿAmr b. Qays al-Mulāʾī are well attested for other prominent proto-Sunnī narrators, are considerably fewer than those directed against Jābir al-Juʿfī, for example, and should not be understood to nullify his overall positive reception by any means. Both Modarressi and Takim offer potential hints as to the reasons for Abān's broad acceptance. Modarressi considers Abān to be representative of "the more moderate, non-Extremist trend of Kūfan Shīʿism that, though profoundly Shīʿite and pro-ʿAlid, was not much influenced by the esoteric ideas conventionally identified with Sabaʾī/Kaysānī Shīʿism."[107] In a similar vein, Takim points out that Abān was not associated with some of the more controversial theological concepts that many of his Imāmī contemporaries promoted, such as *rajʿa*, *badāʾ* and anthropomorphism, and that this may have preserved his reputation amongst Sunnīs.[108]

What is perhaps most unique about Abān among Imāmī narrators, however, is the extent of his participation in various niches of the proto-Sunnī scholarly milieu. We have seen

[105] Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār*, 395-396.
[106] Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār*, 396.
[107] *TS*, 110.
[108] Takim, *Heirs*, 169.

that his hadiths, which he narrates from an array of proto-Sunnīs, were included in five of the Six Books. He was also reportedly one of only three students of al-Aʿmash to complete reading the entire Qurʾān with him. Prominent Qurʾān reciters of the following generation, such as al-Kisāʾī (d. c. 189/805), who was the source of one of the seven canonical readings, also touted their study with Abān.[109]

The relatively broad range of Abān's teachers and students stands in marked contrast to the conception of knowledge that seems to have held sway among the majority of the Imāmī community in this period, which restricted authoritative knowledge to a succession of Imāms in the Ḥusaynī line. There seem to be two possible explanations for this. On the one hand, it is possible that Abān's study with proto-Sunnī authorities pre-dated his relationship to the Imāms, as was the case with Zurāra and Ḥumrān b. Aʿyan, and that he later came to share the conceptions of the Imāms' knowledge held by the majority of his fellow Imāmīs. However, in Abān's case we do not see the same sort of clear rupture with his erstwhile teachers that we saw with Zurāra and Ḥumrān. This would suggest that his straddling of the two communities was a genuine reflection of conceptions of community and knowledge that were less restrictive than those of the majority of his Imāmī contemporaries. Contemporary scholars have suggested that such a trend existed within the early Imāmī community, and some of Abān's narrations suggest that his views were in line with it.[110] Given the overwhelming prosopgraphical and anecdotal evidence indicating that Abān enjoyed decent relations with many of his proto-Sunnī contemporaries, we have good reason to read competing anecdotes

[109] *TS*, 109.

[110] An ecumenical trend in the early Imāmī community has been discussed by Modarressi and van Ess (*Crisis and Consolidation*, 30-2; *Th&G*, 1/319-21) and was likely referred to in al-Kashshī as *murjiʾat al-shīʿa* (*Rijāl*, 321). This trend is most closely associated with the figure of Ibn Abī Yaʿfūr (d. 131/749) and the "Yaʿfūriyya" who purportedly followed him, but Modaressi cites a quote from Abān on the definition of the *shīʿa* as an example of it (*Crisis and Consolidation*, 30, n. 76).

like the following as attempts to bring his ecumenical tendencies in line with a more stringent Imāmī theology than the one to which he adhered:

> [Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq] said, "Abān, when you go to Kūfa narrate this hadith: Paradise is obligatory for whoever testifies sincerely that there is no god but God (*lā ilāha illā Allāh*)." I [Abān] said, "People of all kinds (*kullu ṣinf min al-aṣnāf*) come to me. Should I narrate this hadith to them?" He said, "Yes. Abān, on the day of resurrection, when God gathers the first and the last, *lā ilāha illā Allāh* will be removed from everyone except those who adhere to this affair."[111]

Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-Aʿmash (d. 148/765)

Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-Aʿmash was arguably the most prominent proto-Sunnī narrator of his generation in Kūfa. He has been discussed in some detail by Najam Haider, Josef van Ess and Etan Kohlberg and the fact that anything significant remains to be added to what they have written is a testimony to his centrality in the proto-Sunnī milieu and to his multi-faceted contributions to both the Sunnī and the Shīʿite hadith traditions. In proto-Sunnī circles, al-Aʿmash was renowned for his expertise in Qurʾānic recitation, his vast knowledge of hadiths and his legal acumen. His widely recognized stature is indicated by the fact that al-Zuhrī held him in high regard in spite of his well known disdain for Iraqi narrators.[112] Imāmīs counted him as a companion of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, and Ibn Bābawayh (d. 381/991) in particular narrated from him fairly extensively. His political stance, like that of many other scholars of his era, seems to have been one of cautious and quiet rejection of both the Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid dynasties. A variety of anecdotes place him in encounters with officials from both dynasties and in some of these he narrates pro-ʿAlid material that they disliked. Although he seems to have flirted with rebellious ʿAlid circles, he did not actively participate in any ʿAlid uprising.[113]

[111] Kulaynī, *Kāfī*, 2/521-522.
[112] *TB*, 9/12.
[113] For his biography see Haider, *Origins*, 221-30; Etan Kohlberg, "Aʿmaš," in *EIʳ*; *Th&G*, 237-9.

Among Sunnīs, al-Aʿmash's Shīʿism was noted by al-ʿIjlī and al-Fasawī and he was included in the expansive lists of Shīʿites drawn up by both Ibn Qutayba and Abū al-Faḍl al-Sulaymānī.[114] Certain Baṣran ʿUthmānīs among his younger contemporaries went so far as to label him a "Sabaʾī," although this would seem to have been a case of polemical overreach.[115] The specific character of al-Aʿmash's Shīʿism can be inferred from the types of hadiths that he transmitted and his distant association with ʿAlid rebellions. In one particularly controversial hadith that al-Aʿmash transmitted, ʿAlī states, "I am the criterion of hellfire (*anā qasīm al-nār*)," implying a remarkably uncompromising pro-ʿAlid theology.[116] A similar theological position is associated with al-Aʿmash in Imāmī and Zaydī literature, where an anecdote preserved in several versions states that Abū Ḥanīfa, Ibn Shubruma (d. 144/761) and Ibn Abī Laylā, or alternatively Abū Ḥanīfa and Ibn Qays al-Māṣir (d. mid-2nd/8th c.), visited al-Aʿmash on his deathbed to convince him to recant his narration of several pro-ʿAlid hadiths, chief among which is a hadith that depicts the Prophet and ʿAlī sitting in judgment over the Muslim community on the day of judgment and consigning them to paradise or hell on the basis of their allegiance to the Prophet's family.[117] A similar anecdote is mentioned by al-ʿUqaylī in a highly truncated form in which it is two other Murjiʾīs, Misʿar b. Kidām and al-Warqāʾ b. ʿUmar, who attempt to dissuade al-Aʿmash from narrating the "criterion of hellfire" hadith and

[114] ʿIjlī, *Thiqāt*, 1/432; *MT*, 2/637; Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 624; Dhahabī, *Mīzān*, 2/588; Haider, *Origins*, 223-224.

[115] Ibn Ḥanbal reports that Yazīd b. Zurayʿ (d. 182/798) called al-Aʿmash a *kharibī Sabaʾī*, which might be better read as *khashabī Sabaʾī* (*ʿIlal*, 2/342). Van Ess attributes this statement to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in *Th&G*, 1/238, although he only transmitted the statement of Yazīd b. Zurayʿ and it is unlikely that he accepted this characterization of al-Aʿmash. Bishr b. al-Mufaḍḍāl (d. 187/803) is also reported to have derided al-Aʿmash as a Sabaʾī in the context of a one-sided polemical exchange with Sufyān al-Thawrī over the relative merits of Kūfan and Baṣran narrators. See ʿAbd al-Ghanī b. Saʿīd al-Azdī, *Fawāʾid ḥadīth al-Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Ghanī b. Saʿīd al-Azdī* (Riyadh: Dār al-mughnī, 2004), 42-4.

[116] Several narrations of the hadith and the controversy over it are found in *DU*, 3/415-416. It was also reported from al-Aʿmash in Imāmī literature. See Ṣaffār, *Baṣāʾir*, 211-2, 436.

[117] Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī* (Qum: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1414), 628-9; Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār* (Beirut: Dār iḥyā al-turāth al-ʿarabī, 1983), 24/273-4; Haider, *Origins*, 226.

another hadith in which "so-and-so (*fulān*)" does "such and such (*kadhā wa kadhā*)" on the bridge over hell (*ʿalā al-ṣirāṭ*).[118] In the Imāmī versions, al-Aʿmash vigorously defends his narration of the hadiths in a dramatic scene on his deathbed, and in al-ʿUqaylī's version he denies having narrated them at all.

On balance, it seems that the Sunnī version of this incident suffers from omission while the Imāmī versions suffer from embellishment. There is strong evidence that these processes effected other narrations regarding al-Aʿmash. On the Sunnī side, the more controversial pro-ʿAlid and anti-Umayyad narrations of al-Aʿmash are often buried in the remote recesses of *rijāl* literature or historical works and excluded from biographical entries dedicated explicitly to him. On the Imāmī side, al-Aʿmash's widely recognized authority was frequently enlisted to endorse the exclusive knowledge and authority of ʿAlī and the line of Ḥusaynī Imāms, a position that was clearly at odds with his own activities.[119]

Although the gulf dividing Sunnī and Shīʿite portrayals of al-Aʿmash certainly widened over time, there is broad confirmation that his pro-ʿAlid narrations were already a subject of significant controversy during his own lifetime. One of his most prominent students, Abū Muʿāwiya (d. 195/811), said that he and others attempted to dissuade al-Aʿmash from narrating "these hadiths" but that al-Aʿmash insisted that he should continue since others might be able to correct any mistakes in his narration. Abū Muʿāwiya went on to tell the story of his own feeble attempt to interrupt al-Aʿmash's narration of the "criterion of Hellfire" hadith by clearing his throat, upon which al-Aʿmash exclaimed that the Murjiʾīs did not allow him to

[118] *DU*, 3/415.
[119] For examples of narrations in which al-Aʿmash lends support to Imāmī doctrines see Ṣaffār, *Baṣāʾir*, 77, 211-12; Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Bābawayh al-Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī* (Qum: Muʾassasat al-biʿtha, 1996), 250, 252, 296, 350, 586 and passim; idem, *al-Khiṣāl* (Qum: Manshūrāt jamāʿat al-mudarrisīn, 1983), 479, 506 and passim.

narrate ʿAlī's virtues and ordered that they be expelled from the gathering.[120] Al-Aʿmash, however, did not always have the upper hand in such encounters. ʿĪsā b. Yūnus (d. 187/803), the grandson of Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī, only saw al-Aʿmash "submit himself" once, when a group of the "people of the *sunna*" reproached him for strengthening the cause of various groups of Kūfan Shīʿites by narrating the "criterion" hadith. In this particular incident, al-Aʿmash excused himself for narrating this hadith by saying that he had simply heard it and passed it on.[121] On other occasions, he purportedly explained that he only narrated the hadith in scorn, denied narrating it at all and even implied that he disapproved of his own source for having narrated it.[122]

The row over this hadith, as well as the variegated and contradictory reports that it produced, are instructive on a number of levels. The controversy certainly exemplifies al-Aʿmash's ambiguous position at the intersection of the nascent sectarian trends of late Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid Kūfa, a point that has been emphasized in previous discussions of him.[123] At a more subtle level, the various responses attributed to him when he was confronted by different parties for narrating this hadith invite consideration. A simple solution would be to dismiss the inconsistent responses as fabrications because they are mutually contradictory, and some fabrication may well have occurred. However, it seems far more likely that the contradictory responses derive at least in part from al-Aʿmash trying to "be everything to everyone" and fending off criticism in a situational manner so as to preserve his position as

[120] *MT*, 2/764.
[121] *DU*, 3/416.
[122] *DU*, 3/415-416.
[123] This point has been emphasized by Haider, who argues that al-Aʿmash, on balance, fell within the proto-Sunnī camp in spite of his Shīʿite theological views because of his adherence to proto-Sunnī ritual law (*Origins*, 221-230), and by Kohlberg, who places greater emphasis on al-Aʿmash's Shīʿite identity, stating that "the available evidence does not allow us to decide whether Aʿmash was a Zaydī or an Imāmite" ("Aʿmaš," in *EIʳ*). I believe that the interpretation of Haider is largely correct, although see also III.5. below.

one of the most prominent narrators of Kūfa, a status that he relished considerably.[124] This interpretation is supported by the fact that the "criterion" hadith seems to have attracted an unusual number of listeners to al-Aʿmash, as he remarked to another Shīʿite colleague that the members of various tribes would come to him because they wanted to "steal" the hadith from him.[125]

Al-Aʿmash's apparently lukewarm commitment to the contents of this hadith, and his willingness to present it differently in different contexts, are hardly the only element in his biography that appears equivocal. His view of ʿUthmān seems to have been less than favorable, especially from the perspective of ʿUthmānīs, but contradictory narrations on this point abound. Al-Jūzajānī reported from Ḥammād b. Zayd that al-Aʿmash sought forgiveness for fabricating hadiths against ʿUthmān in his dying moments.[126] Al-Fasawī also reported a curious dream in which the biblical prophet Jonah told a certain narrator that Jewish lore was similar to al-Aʿmash's narrations about ʿUthmān in its mendacity.[127]

These anecdotes, however, only give one side of a more complex story. Al-Fasawī also included several reports from al-Aʿmash in which Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān, a famous Companion

[124] See section IV.2 below for a discussion of how al-Aʿmash and others sought to bolster their reputations as narrators.
[125] *DU*, 6/41. That the hadith became popular among Shīʿites as a result of al-Aʿmash is corroborated by the statement of Abū Bakr b. ʿAyyāsh, "...the people have recorded it from you in their notebooks and you claim to have narrated in scorn!" (*DU*, 3/416). In the technical vocabulary of hadith critics, "stealing hadith (*sariqat al-ḥādith*)" meant giving a newly fabricated *isnād* to a known hadith. See Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Hadith* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009), 75.
[126] Jūzajānī, *Aḥwāl al-rijāl*, 192. Al-Jūzajānī also asserted that these fabrications were widely narrated (*mutawātira*) from al-Aʿmash, although this seems unlikely since they left only limited traces in both Sunnī and Shīʿite literature.
[127] *MT*, 2/763. The dream is meant to address the issue of the propriety of Muslims narrating Jewish lore (*isrāʾīliyyāt*) moreso than al-Aʿmash's position on ʿUthmān, although the report clearly assumes that it was not favorable. On this issue of narrating Jewish lore see G. Vajda, "Isrāʾīliyyāt," in *EI*^{2}; M. J. Kister, "Ḥaddithū ʿan banī isrāʾīla wa-lā ḥaraja. A Study of an Early Tradition," in *Studies in Jāhiliyya and Early Islam* (London: Varorium Reprints, 1980).

who had been opposed to ʿUthmān,[128] made blatantly contradictory statements regarding ʿUthmān's assassination. In one narration, Ḥudhayfa seems to express confidence that ʿUthmān was a disbeliever, although he is unsure regarding his assassins, and in another he states that those who love ʿUthmān will follow the anti-Christ (*al-dajjāl*) if he emerges.[129] Yet al-Aʿmash also narrated from Ḥudhayfa that God will disgrace those who have rebelled against ʿUthmān, and he narrated that Ibn Masʿūd said that the best of the *umma* had been chosen when the news of ʿUthmān's election by the *shūrā* council reached Kūfa.[130] Nearly all of these reports were transmitted to al-Fasawī via a single intermediary, Abū Nuʿaym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn (for whom see the following chapter), making it unlikely that any of them were falsely attributed to al-Aʿmash.[131] The most reasonable explanation for the contradiction is, again, that al-Aʿmash transmitted controversial material related to the religio-political disputes of early Islam without being committed to their contents as doctrine.

Several statements attributed to him suggest rather explicitly that this was the case. He reportedly complained regarding some of his students that he had "informed them of [what] the Companions of Muḥammad [said in] anger, and they took it as a basis for their religion."[132] After he reported an acrimonious exchange between Abū Hurayra and ʿAlī to the extremist rebel Mughīra b. Saʿīd, the latter declared that ʿAlī had spoken the truth and Abū Hurayra had

[128] On his oppositional role during ʿUthmān's caliphate see Madelung, *Succession*, 114-115.
[129] *MT*, 2/763, 768. The wording of the first report in al-Fasawī is somewhat unclear but this interpretation is confirmed by a less ambiguous version of the same report in Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha* (Cairo: Dār iḥyāʾ al-kutub al-ʿarabiyya, 1959), 3/51.
[130] *MT*, 2/762 and 760 respectively.
[131] Abū Nuʿaym was regarded as a narrator of the highest caliber and the pro-ʿUthmān and anti-ʿUthmān content of the reports negate one another. On Abū Nuʿaym see section IV.3. below.
[132] *MT*, 2/764-5; *TMD*, 32/93.

lied. Al-Aʿmash objected and said that they had both simply said something to one another in anger.[133]

Al-Aʿmash is also credited with a rudimentary expression of what would later become the standard Sunnī doctrine of suspending any negative judgment regarding the Companions: "There is nothing but a veil (*sitr*) between us and the Companions of Muḥammad."[134] If the attribution is correct, then his own conception of the scope of this dictum was obviously less expansive than the standard Sunnī conception, as indicated by the aforementioned narrations regarding ʿUthmān and especially by his vituperative narrations against Muʿāwiya and ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ.[135]

The nature of al-Aʿmash's relationships with Kūfan ʿUthmānīs constitutes a further suggestion that he conceived of the conflicts between the Companions in less than doctrinaire terms. He noted that some of his own teachers who had been on opposite sides of the ʿUthmānī-ʿAlawī divide were quite close to one another in spite of their differences.[136] Some of al-Aʿmash's closest students and teachers were also ʿUthmānīs.[137] Among peers, mundane factors seem to have gone farther than doctrine in determining the nature of al-Aʿmash's relationships with ʿUthmānīs, which ran the full gamut from friendly to hostile. Ṭalḥa b. Muṣarrif al-Yāmī (d. c. 112/730), who was well-known as a Kūfan who clung to his love of

[133] *DU*, 4/179. These anecdotes suggest that al-Aʿmash believed some reports were meant to be taken lightly, but not necessarily that he transmitted material that he believed to be inaccurate. There is explicit evidence that other narrators, such as Sufyān al-Thawrī, did transmit material that they believed to be unreliable simply because of its novelty (*ʿalā jihat al-taʿajjub*). See IV.2. below. Although I have not found explicit attestation that this was al-Aʿmash's practice, the body of reports attributed to him strongly suggests that it was.
[134] *TB*, 9/7.
[135] Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 217-18, 220.
[136] *SAN*, 4/169.
[137] Al-Aʿmash narrated from Abū Wāʾil Shaqīq b. Salama (d. c. 100/718) extensively and ʿAbd Allāh b. Idrīs al-Awdī (d. 192/807) narrated from al-Aʿmash extensively (on their ʿUthmānī sentiments see ʿIjlī, *Thiqāt*, 1/460, 2/21).

ʿUthmān in spite of all opposition, was one of only three individuals who completed reading the entire Qurʾān with al-Aʿmash and al-Aʿmash is one of the sources for reports regarding Ṭalḥa's love of ʿUthmān.[138] Al-Aʿmash and Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir also used to share laughs with an ʿUthmānī colleague, Mughīra b. Miqsam al-Ḍabbī (d. 136/753),[139] at the expense of a fellow Shīʿite, Fiṭr b. al-Khalīfa, over glasses of *nabīdh*.[140] In the case of Abū Ḥaṣīn ʿUthmān b. ʿĀṣim (d. 127/745), a lifelong rivalry was set in motion when he embarrassed the youthful Aʿmash by prompting him to read a verse of the Qurʾān incorrectly to his teacher. Al-Aʿmash countered by threatening to have his entire neighborhood testify that Abū Ḥaṣīn was an illegitimate child and the two remained rivals thereafter.[141]

The final area of interest regarding al-Aʿmash's activities is his position on the ʿAlid revolts that occurred during his lifetime. Here, too, the picture is far from clear. In Sunnī literature, al-Aʿmash explains his lack of participation in Zayd b. ʿAlī's revolt by stating that he did not want to put his religion in someone else's hands, hardly a supportive position.[142] In Zaydī literature, however, al-Aʿmash tells Zayd's emissary that he would come to Zayd's aid if only he knew that there were three hundred reliable men supporting him.[143] Sunnī *rijāl* literature does not include any information on al-Aʿmash's position regarding the subsequent revolt of Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, although al-Ṭabarī reports that the ʿAbbāsid Caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136-158/754–775) sent a letter forged in the name of Muḥammad

[138] ʿIjlī, *Thiqāt*, 1/434, 479-81; *TMD*, 39/502.
[139] Al-ʿIjlī noted that he was an ʿUthmānī (*Thiqāt*, 2/293).
[140] *DU*, 4/364. This should not be taken to indicate that al-Aʿmash and Mughīra were necessarily the best of friends. In one narration, Mughīra asserted that al-Aʿmash and Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī were responsible for corrupting the hadiths of the people of Kūfa (Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 1/244). It simply indicates that whatever differences there were between figures like al-Aʿmash and Mughīra did not preclude significant personal and scholarly exchange.
[141] *TMD*, 38/413; *SAN*, 5/409.
[142] ʿAlī b. al-Jaʿd, *Musnad*, 128; *TMD*, 19/473.
[143] Iṣbahānī, *Maqātil*, 147-8; van Arendonk, *Les débuts*, 309-10.

to al-Aʿmash seeking his support, suggesting that his sympathies for the ʿAlid cause were widely known and a source of concern.[144] According to Zaydī narrations, al-Aʿmash was a full-fledged supporter of the cause who encouraged others to join Ibrāhīm even though his blindness prevented him from doing so himself.[145] His support for Ibrāhīm may also have been the context for his alleged defense of the rebellious views of the Batrī Zaydī Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. al-Ḥayy.[146] After Ibrāhīm's death, al-Aʿmash, ever a cantankerous figure, told a group of confidants that he would confront al-Manṣūr in the grounds of his own palace if he had sufficient support from the people of Kūfa.[147]

III.4. Between Centrism and Sectarianism

At the outset of this chapter, we noted that there are two competing models for understanding sectarian developments within the traditionalist milieu of the late Umayyad period. The model proposed by Montgomery Watt stresses the notion of a centrist party that agreed on a tacit minimal consensus and the model proposed by Patricia Crone stresses early religio-political fractures that were quite absolute, leaving little room for centrism. It is apparent from the profiles in this chapter that both polarizing and irenic trends existed and developed in tension with one another in the traditionalist milieu of Kūfa in the first half of the second/eighth century. In their broadest formulations, neither of these models can fully explain the myriad ways in which these trends manifested. While conflict over certain key

[144] Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 6/204.
[145] Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn al-Hārūnī, *Al-Ifāda fī tārīkh al-aʾimma al-sāda* (Ṣaʿda: Markaz ahl al-bayt, 2001), 66; van Arendonk, *Les débuts*, 315-16.
[146] Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1986), 18/84. Al-Aʿmash's defense of Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ is mentioned in the context of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal criticizing the contents of Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī al-Karābīsī's (d. 245/859) *Kitāb al-mudallisīn*. According to Aḥmad and his students, al-Karābīsī fabricated a statement of al-Aʿmash that apparently endorsed armed rebellion.
[147] Iṣbahānī, *Maqātil*, 383.

points of disagreement led to the coalescing of nascent sectarian groups, many individuals also held unique configurations of opinions that defy retrospective attempts at straightforward categorization.

In searching for a figure who exemplified the centrist positions described by Watt, we will find no better candidate than ʿĀmir b. Sharāḥīl al-Shaʿbī, who was the only non-Shīʿite examined in this chapter. Although we have discussed al-Shaʿbī already at some length, it is worth reiterating the particular amalgamation of opinions and positions that he held. He was: 1) familiar with and hostile to nascent sectarian groups of Shīʿites, 2) attached to the Umayyad regime in various capacities, 3) pro-ʿAlid in his historical outlook and 4) at least somewhat ecumenical in his approach to conflicts among the Companions. It is important to recapitulate these salient views not simply because al-Shaʿbī was an important figure in his own right, but because such a combination of seemingly incongruous religio-political positions was hardly unique to him.

We have seen that Madelung's categorization of al-Shaʿbī as an ʿUthmānī fits well with his hostility to Shīʿites and service to the Umayyads but not with the content of his historical reports. Similar difficulties arise for several other prominent figures of the era. Madelung also categorized ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Laylā (d. 83/702) as a moderate ʿUthmānī, although he fought on ʿAlī's side at the Battle of the Camel and Ṣiffīn and a large number of narrations indicate that he held pro-ʿAlid views.[148] The only thing that would seem to warrant labeling him as an ʿUthmānī is the fact that he believed the claims of some of his Shīʿite contemporaries

[148] See Madelung, *Succession*, 166 n. 117. For his presence at the Battle of the Camel and Ṣiffīn see J. Schacht, "Ibn Abī Laylā," in *EI*[2]; Kashshī, *Rijāl*, 315-17. For narrations in which his love of ʿAlī is contrasted to ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUkaym's love of ʿUthmān see Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 6/112-14;ʿIjlī, *Thiqāt*, 1/480. His son Muḥammad, who was also known as Ibn Abī Laylā, participated in Zayd b. ʿAlī's revolt and was categorized as a Batrī by the Imāmī heresiographer al-Nawbakhtī. See Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 148; al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shīʿa* (Najaf: Maṭbaʿat al-Ḥaydariyya, 1936), 7.

about ʿAlī to be unfounded.[149] The same sort of ambiguity is also found among narrators whose ʿUthmānī views were more widely recognized. ʿĀṣim b. Abī al-Najūd (d. 127/745) was widely known as an ʿUthmānī but bolstered the authority of his recitation of the Qurʾān by tracing it to ʿAlī through his teachers, one of whom was a prominent ʿAlawī.[150] Even a figure like al-Zuhrī, who lands squarely on the ʿUthmānī-Umayyad side of the religio-political spectrum, defended ʿAlī against Umayyad detraction in several instances and portrayed him as being in the right in his wars against the other Companions, although his portrayal of ʿAlī's cause was clearly not as sympathetic as that of other early historians like al-Shaʿbī.[151]

All of this supports Watt's argument that a loose-knit group of prominent scholars who adopted centrist positions of one shade or another was an important feature of the traditionalist milieu. It further suggets that grasping this nuanced centrism is essential if we are to avoid essentialized portrayals of the positions of many of its most prominent members. If Crone's positing of a more thoroughgoing splintering of the community from an early date was indeed the more dominant factor, we would have to explain how and why these scholars would move from a position of unremitting hostility towards an irenic one in the space of one or two generations. This impression is supported even further when we examine the relationships that connected figures who belonged to opposing religio-political camps. Al-ʿIjlī recorded that ʿUthmānīs and ʿAlawīs who were "bonded by ties of brotherhood (*mutaʾākhayn*)"

[149] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 6/113; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2/580; Jūzajānī, *Aḥwāl al-rijāl*, 40.
[150] *SAN*, 5/258-9.
[151] For instances in which al-Zuhrī's positive portrayal of ʿAlī is contrasted with Umayyad detraction from him see ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf* (Beirut: al-Majlis al-ʿilmī, 1972), 5/343; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Fāḍāʾil al-ṣaḥaba*, 2/591; *TMD*, 55/370-1. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dūrī summed up al-Zuhrī's portrayal of ʿAlī's tumultuous reign as follows: "ʿAlī was then elected as caliph because his status and qualifications made him the obvious candidate. In discussing the rebellion of Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr, the accounts offered by al-Zuhrī side with ʿAlī and cast a slight shadow on the revolutionaries. In the conflict between ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya, ʿAlī's case appears to be the just one, although Muʿāwiya is made to appear more astute" (*The Rise of Historical Writing among the Arabs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 116-7).

would do such things as leave bequests to one another, pay off one another's debts and lead the funeral prayer for one another's deceased family members.[152] Two separate narrations indicate that Abū Wāʾil Shaqīq b. Salama and Zirr b. Ḥubaysh (d. 81-83/700-703), two Kūfan narrators of the late first/early eighth century, enjoyed excellent relations despite the fact that the former was an ʿUthmānī and the latter an ʿAlawī.[153] Several anecdotes indicate that when certain narrators knew that they differed on the issue of preference of the Companions, they would deliberately avoid discussing it.[154] Others appear to have discussed their preference of ʿAlī or ʿUthmān in a lighthearted manner.[155]

These narrations need not all be taken at face value, especially at the individual level, and they should certainly not be taken to indicate that relations between ʿUthmānīs and ʿAlawīs/Shīʿites were always amicable. Nonetheless, there seem to be no reasonable grounds to ignore their collective implications altogether. The very fact that student-teacher ties cut across ʿUthmānī-ʿAlawī/Shīʿite lines with such frequency suggests that the two groups should be viewed more as representing competing trends within a single community than as factions or sects that were diametrically opposed to one another.

We find further evidence of this when we examine the reception of certain political leaders who, to the extent that this is possible, were able to unify different trends within the traditionalist camp in their support. ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (r. 99–101/717–720), an uncontested

[152] Ijlī, *Thiqāt*, 1/480. Two of these figures are the aforementioned ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Laylā and his colleague ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUkaym. Their close relationship is also documented in Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 6/113-14.
[153] *SAN*, 4/168-9.
[154] See ʿIjlī, *Thiqāt*, 1/480; *SAN*, 5/219.
[155] See Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 114; ʿIjlī, *Thiqāt*, 1/480, where ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUkaym tells ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Laylā, "Had your companion [ʿAlī] only been patient people would have rallied to him," and *SAN*, 5/260, where ʿĀṣim b. Abī al-Najūd is challenged to explain a statement in which ʿAlī seems to imply that he was the best Muslim after Abū Bakr and ʿUmar and he replies that ʿAlī was "better than to claim virtue for himself."

favorite among the traditionalists, was educated among and maintained ties with traditionalist circles in Madina loyal to the Umayyads, but he instituted a variety of pro-ʿAlid reforms that effected some degree of rapprochement with the latter, including an interdiction of the Umayyad practice of cursing ʿAlī from the pulpit during Friday prayers and the restoration of the property of Fadak to the ʿAlids.[156] Likewise, the only ʿAlid revolts to garner significant support from within the traditionalist camp were those of Zayd b. ʿAlī and Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya. This support came not only from Shīʿites but from disparate trends within the broad traditionalist camp. Not only were Murjiʾīs, such as Misʿar b. Kidām and Abū Ḥanīfa, and non-Shīʿite traditionalists, such as Ibn Abī Dhiʾb, Yazīd b. Hārūn and Hushaym b. Bashīr, among the supporters of these revolts, but even a handful of ʿUthmānīs were either active supporters or were considered as plausible candidates for recruitment to the cause.[157]

The diverse support, or at least acceptance, enjoyed by these figures again points to a tacit minimal consensus among representatives of different trends within the traditionalist camp. It goes without saying that at the political level ʿUthmānīs were more inclined to loyalism and Shīʿites to rebellion, and that at the religious level these two groups differed on the proper interpretation of history and its implications for the present. However, none of this

[156] "ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz," *EI*²; Etan Kohlberg, "Some Imāmī Shīʿī Interpretations of Umayyad History," in *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society*, ed. G.H.A. Juynboll (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), 153-154. Cf. Nancy Khalek, "Early Islamic History Reimagined: The Biography of ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz in Ibn ʿAsākir's Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq," *JAOS* 134 (2014), 431-51, where greater emphasis is laid on the literary function of ʿUmar as a tool of Sunnī legitimation in Ibn ʿAsākir's presentation. Space does not allow for this argument to be fleshed out any further than it has been here, but ʿUmar's sojourn in the Ḥijāz is not without significance. The ʿUthmānī-ʿAlawī split central to Crone's thesis was a predominantly Iraqi (and Syrian, although more one-sided there) phenomenon and it seems not to have been as stark in the Ḥijāz. The traditionalist circles that developed among the pupils of Ibn ʿUmar and Ibn ʿAbbās roughly corresponded to the same religio-political alignments but there is little indication that they developed competing labels or identities.

[157] For the participation of Abū Ḥaṣīn in Zayd's revolt, see *TMD*, 19/473, 38/414. Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd Allāh also attempted to win the Baṣran ʿUthmānī ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAwn b. Arṭabān (d. 151/768) to his cause, although he chose to remain neutral (Judd, *Religious Scholars and the Umayyads*, 65). Judd makes a similar argument against the stark boundaries posited in Crone's thesis on the basis of his study of Ibn ʿAwn.

precluded their agreement on the relative desirability of certain candidates for power or a significant level of collaboration in transmitting and elaborating religious knowledge. Yet while this "centrism" was an important aspect of the traditionalist milieu of the late Umayyad period, the milieu also witnessed the emergence and interaction of a variety of nascent sectarian movements that were of no less significance.

III.5. Sectarian Ferment

The majority of the figures profiled in this chapter were associated with a nascent sectarian group. Although retrospective sectarian affiliations tend to imply that the divisions between different groups were sharper and neater than they actually were, they can still serve as a useful heuristic in assessing the impact of the polarizing and irenic trends that were at work in this period. Two Imāmīs, Jābir al-Juʿfī and Abān b. Taghlib, were examined in this chapter. The mere fact that they made significant contributions to the proto-Sunnī milieu is noteworthy since the vast majority of their Imāmī contemporaries fell outside of its purview. The Aʿyan brothers are a case in point. Zurāra in particular is virtually unrivaled in his centrality in the Imāmī hadith tradition, but in Sunnī biographical literature he is little more than a stock heretic who appears for cameos in other narrators' biographies. This reminds us again that the implications of this investigation are relevant primarily to the proto-Sunnī milieu and that its conclusions are attenuated as they are extended beyond this milieu. To say that Jābir al-Juʿfī and Abān b. Taghlib made significant contributions to the proto-Sunnī milieu is not to imply that there was a great deal of overlap between proto-Sunnīs and Imāmīs in the

late Umayyad period, but rather to emphasize that such overlap was still possible and that it occurred in a limited number of cases.

Within the proto-Sunnī milieu, Jābir was by far the most controversial Shīʿite narrator of his day. What drew the ire of his peers was not necessarily his pro-ʿAlid historical outlook, which many of them may have shared to one extent or another, but rather his belief in ideas such as *rajʿa* and hereditary knowledge passed down in a line of Ḥusaynī Imāms. While these beliefs were shared by many of Jabir's Imāmī contemporaries, they were rare within proto-Sunnī circles and were roundly condemned by its most prominent representatives. Jābir's pro-ʿAlid historical outlook, on the other hand, was something that he shared not only with more moderate Shīʿites active in the proto-Sunnī milieu, but even with other figures openly hostile towards Shīʿites. It is noteworthy in this regard that Jābir narrated historical reports on ʿAlī's wars extensively from al-Shaʿbī. Although al-Shaʿbī was clearly hostile to Jābir and to the sort of Shīʿism that he represented, there was apparently a significant amount of overlap in the pro-ʿAlid historical outlook of the two men. As we will see in more detail in the next chapter, in spite of the widely held objections to some of Jābir's beliefs, some of the most prominent scholars of the proto-Sunnī milieu defended his reputation and his narrations and it was nearly impossible to delegitimize him completely.

Abān b. Taghlib was also a prominent Imāmī narrator but was not nearly as controversial as Jābir. On the contrary, he was well regarded by virtually all of the Sunnī hadith critics who commented on him. Ironically, Abān was also one of the few Shīʿite narrators in this era who seems to have been perceived as part of a group that was clearly demarcated from the broader proto-Sunnī milieu, as indicated by the aforementioned remarks of Sufyān al-Thawrī's teacher, ʿAmr b. Qays al-Mulāʾī. This impression of group consciousness is

also reinforced by narrations indicating that Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq instructed Abān to answer the questions of non-Shīʿites on the basis of "their opinions." Bearing in mind that Abān was equally if not more respected within the nascent Imāmī community, which clearly viewed itself as being set apart not only from proto-Sunnīs but even from other Shīʿites, there is little doubt that Abān must have indulged the notions of community operative among Imāmīs in one way or another. But whatever barriers divided the Imāmī and proto-Sunnī communities at large, they were apparently still flexible enough for Abān to function successfully as a full-fledged participant on both sides of the divide.

According to a schematized account of sectarian developments in this period, Zaydīs should occupy a middle ground between Imāmīs and proto-Sunnīs. Two other narrators examined in this chapter, al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba and Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa, have traditionally been categorized as "Batrī" Zaydīs and a third, Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir, was an ardent supporter of Zayd b. ʿAlī's revolt but was not categorized as a Batrī. It will be useful to examine the reason for this discrepancy at some length since the category of Batrī has been used widely in contemporary scholarship on early Shīʿism, but the extent to which the category corresponded to a concrete social group is highly questionable.[158]

Drawing on heresiographical sources, Madelung held that the Zaydīs were formed through the merger of two subgroups, the Batrīs, who were more moderate and closer to proto-Sunnism, and the Jārūdīs, who were more extreme and closer to Imāmīsm. Although the two groups competed for legitimacy at first, the doctrines of the Jārūdīs quickly gained sway as

[158] In addition to the studies mentioned below, the Batrī category is given great explanatory weight in a recent article by Maher Jarrar. See his "Ibn Abī Yaḥyā: A Controversial Medinan *Akhbārī* of the 2nd/8th Century," in *The Transmission and Dynamics of Textual Sources of Islam*, eds. Nicolet Boekhoff-Van Der Hoot, et. al. (Boston: Brill, 2011), 197-227. At times, the use of the category borders on a catch-all for proto-Sunnīs with Shīʿite inclinations, as when it is suggested that ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī may have been a Batrī because he included an extensive chapter on *al-masḥ ʿalā al-khuffayn* in his *Muṣannaf*.

the defining ethos within Zaydism by the second half of the second/eighth century.[159] Najam Haider has recently argued convincingly that this account of Zaydism's development should be modified, demonstrating that the Batrīs, in all likelihood, represented the earliest stratum of Zayd's followers and that the doctrines identified with the Jārūdīs only emerged and became dominant in the latter half of the second/eighth century.[160] Van Ess briefly notes that those categorized as Batrīs were a heterogeneous lot, but in keeping with the general organization of his work, he uses the term as a major organizational rubric within his discussion of Shīʿites.[161] The focus on a broader cross-section of Shīʿite narrators in this study not only throws the heterogeneity of the Batrīs into stark relief, but calls the centrality of their association with Zayd b. ʿAlī and the extent to which they constituted a recognizable social group into question.

If Batrīs were indeed followers of Zayd who held moderate views on issues of sectarian contention, Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir would appear to have been a prime candidate for the label, and certainly a better one than either al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba or Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa (or, for that matter, Salama b. Kuhayl). Manṣūr was in fact the only one of these three to take an active role in Zayd's revolt, but he is never mentioned as a Batrī, suggesting that the term may have in fact connoted something other than – if overlapping with – Zayd's moderate supporters. What al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba, Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa and other Batrīs had in common, to the exclusion of Manṣūr, was friction with the nascent Imāmī community over the nature and identity of the Imām and the status of the Companions. Before it was absorbed by the Muʿtazilī and (later on) the Sunnī heresiographical traditions, the label "Batrī" appeared exclusively in Imāmī literature. All indications suggest that the term emerged in the course of intra-Shīʿite debate,

[159] W. Madelung, "Zaydiyya" and "Batriyya" in *EI*^{2}; idem, *Der Imām al-Qāsim*, 44-51.
[160] Haider, *Origins*.
[161] *Th&G*, 1/239-52.

that it was used by Imāmīs to designate other Shīʿites with whom they had certain disagreements and that its connection to supporters of Zayd b. ʿAlī was only tangential.[162]

The word "Batrī" does not seem to have been used at all in the proto-Sunnī milieu and it is not preserved in Sunnī *rijāl* literature. From the perspective conveyed by this literature, those designated by the Imāmīs as Batrīs appear as a fairly disparate group.[163] Al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba, and to a lesser extent Salama b. Kuhayl, enjoyed both a spotless reputation and a degree of authority that were unparalleled among other Batrīs. Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa was a controversial figure whose contributions to the proto-Sunnī milieu were marginal. With the exception of Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy, who will be examined in more detail in the next chapter, other figures designated as Batrīs were also marginal to the proto-Sunnī milieu and many of them were not well regarded as hadith narrators.[164] From the perspective of Sunnī literature, the extent of what can be said about them as a group is that many, though by no means all, of

[162] Van Arendonk made many of these observations long ago, but still held on to a reified notion of the term: "Comme al-Ḥakam est mort longtemps avant Zaid, que Salama b. Kuhail ne lui survécut même pas, ou peu s'en faut, et que Kaṯīr al-Nawwāʾ et Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa étaient ses contemporains, il n'est pas impossible qu'il faille voir à l'origine dans la Batriyya un courant šīʿite-pré-zaidite, qui s'opposait au courant imāmite, et qui d'ailleurs n'évolua pas entièrement dans la direction donnée par Abū 'l-Ǧārūd et ses sympathisants. On s'attendrait à les voir mentionnés comme ses partisans de Zaid; mais les chefs de file de cette tendance ne se distinguent pas particulièrement comme ses partisans, à l'exception de Salama b. Kuhail qui, étant peu enthousiaste, demanda d'être relevé de son engagement" (van Arendonk, *Las débuts*, 86-7).

[163] A standard list of Batrīs includes al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba, Salama b. Kuhayl, Abū al-Miqdām Thābit b. Hurmuz, Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa, Kathīr al-Nawwāʾ and Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy (Kashshī, *Rijāl*, 307-8). For a more expansive list see ibid., 453-4.

[164] My presentation of this issue admittedly differs from that of Haider in his dissertation, where he contrasted the relatively positive reception of Batrīs with the negative reception of Jārūdīs (Haider, "Birth of Sectarianism," 377-86. In the corresponding chapter of *Origins*, the less prominent Batrīs are largely dropped from the discussion). It is true that most Batrīs receive better reviews than Jārūdīs (who often received no entries in Sunnī works at all), but there is nonetheless a marked contrast between the unanimously positive reception and substantial contributions of al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba and Salama b. Kuhayl on the one hand and the mixed reviews and marginal contributions of other Batrīs on the other. The only other Batrī who was not in some way criticized by hadith critics was Abū al-Miqdām Thābit b. Hurmuz, but only two of his hadiths were included in the Six Books (Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 4/380-1). Both Kathīr b. Ismāʿīl al-Nawwāʾ (Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 6/66-7) and Hārūn b. Saʿd al-ʿIjlī (al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, 1/264; *DU*, 4/362; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūḥīn*, 3/94; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 7/162-3) received mixed reviews and were frequently identified with extremist tendencies.

them shared certain controversial opinions, such as a critical view of ʿUthmān and especially a strong endorsement of ʿAlid rebellions. From the perspective of Imāmī literature, what Batrīs held in common was an attempt to promote a misguided view of the nature, role and identity of the Imām in Shīʿite circles. These two perspectives need not be viewed as mutually exclusive. Rather, they underscore the fact that the proto-Sunnī and nascent Imāmī milieus found different aspects of the narrators' activities to be of significance and thus worthy of preservation. The impression that "Batrī Zaydīs" occupied some sort of middle space between the Imāmīs and proto-Sunnīs is thus generally accurate, but the extent to which they actually constituted a group or sect that was identifiable to the majority of their contemporaries is doubtful.[165]

Aside from their position within the nascent Zaydī movement, it is worth highlighting the centrality of both al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba and Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir within Kūfa's proto-Sunnī milieu. It is no exaggeration to state that they, along with other Shīʿite-leaning figures like Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī and al-Aʿmash, were among the most prolific and authoritative narrators of late Umayyad Kūfa. In these figures, we see another example of the centrism that gave a minimal common orientation to scholars who had different religio-political affiliations. We have seen that several anecdotes indicated that al-Ḥakam was viewed as something like a replacement for al-Shaʿbī, in spite of the latter's antipathy towards Shīʿites. Abū Isḥāq and Manṣūr also seem to have leaned towards the center where conflict between the Companions was concerned. They both displayed little tolerance for criticism of ʿUthmān, much less of the first two caliphs. While such stances did not spare these figures from the criticism of their

[165] Cf. now Haider, *Shīʿī Islam*, 103-11, and my comments on this work in section II.1. above.

ʿUthmānī contemporaries altogether, their scholarly credentials were sufficient to effectively render any criticism leveled against them void.

This was even more the case with al-Aʿmash, who provided critics with no shortage of controversial material by which they might impugn his reputation, but who remained one of the most important proto-Sunnī narrators of his generation nonetheless. Al-Aʿmash was the last narrator of his stature who could plausibly be claimed by later generations of both Imāmīs and Sunnīs. On balance, Najam Haider is correct in his contention that al-Aʿmash was much more of a proto-Sunnī than anything else and that his connection to the Imāmī community was tenuous if it existed at all. The majority of Imāmī scholars recognized that al-Aʿmash was not one of their own, and later Sunnī scholars tended to mute the tenor of his Shīʿism, if not ignore it altogether, due to his prominence in the Sunnī canon.[166] Al-Aʿmash thus exemplifies two interrelated realities that are essential to our understanding and portrayal of sectarian developments in the late Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid periods. On the one hand, his unique status reminds us that Sunnī-Shīʿite polarization increased dramatically in the wake of the ʿAbbāsid revolution, leaving little room for the sort of sectarian ambiguity that he embodied. On the other hand, and perhaps more importantly, he reminds us that the sectarian vocabulary that we have inherited is inadequate to the task of capturing the complexity of the milieu that served as the crucible from which it emerged.

[166] Although I agree generally with Haider's conclusions regarding al-Aʿmash, his contention that the Imāmīs "never claimed him as one of their own" (*Origins*, 227) seems to be an oversimplification. See the entry on al-Aʿmash in Abū al-Qāsim al-Khūʾī, *Muʿjam rijāl al-ḥadīth* (Beirut: Dār al-Zahrāʾ, 1983), 9/294-5. On his reception among Sunnīs, see the discussion of his narrations in the Six Books in section V.4.

IV: Towards Orthodoxy: Shīʿite Narrators in the Proto-Sunnī Milieu c. 150-250/767-864

In the previous chapter, I offered detailed portrayals of the lives of seven prominent Shīʿite narrators active in the first half of the second/eighth century in an effort to provide a textured portrayal of the milieu in which they were active. The present chapter also consists of portrayals of seven figures whose lives spanned from the mid-second/eighth to the mid-third/ninth centuries, a period that was crucial in the processes of both the bifurcation of Sunnism and Shīʿism and the consolidation of some of the central features of Sunnism, including the compilation of canonical works of hadith and the formation of legal schools. As in the previous chapter, nearly all of the figures profiled here were associated with Shīʿism, although one non-Shīʿite is included for the purposes of illustrating shifts in attitudes towards Shīʿites in the broader traditionalist milieu.

The chronological division adopted here is not merely arbitrary or convenient, but rather is suggested by several considerations. To begin with, we might ask why we should choose the middle of the century as a point of demarcation rather than the more conventional periodization based on the succession of dynasties? Although the accession of the ʿAbbāsids exercised considerable influence at all levels of society, other developments clustered in the second half of the second/eighth century were of greater significance for the milieu under study, of which two in particular stand out. The first of these is the waning of support for ʿAlid rebellions in the traditionalist milieu after the rebellion of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya in 145/762-3. The second is the heightened social prestige that was attached to the narration of hadith as it developed into a specialized field with increasingly strict standards.

The chapter closes in the middle of the third/ninth century for two reasons. Firstly, as demonstrated in the first chapter, the number of Shīʿite narrators active in the proto-

Sunnī milieu declined drastically by this point. Thereafter, we find only isolated cases of Shīʿite narrators who made significant contributions to the Sunnī hadith tradition. Secondly, the majority of canonical Sunnī hadith compilations were composed at this time, bringing about drastic changes in the nature of hadith narration and a reduction in the importance of narrator criticism for figures who lived after this date.

IV.1. Shīʿism and the Socio-Political Context

We have seen in the previous chapter that the rebellion of Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya and his brother Ibrāhīm enjoyed broad support in the traditionalist milieus of Iraq and the Ḥijāz. The cause was supported not only by Shīʿites, but by figures associated with a panoply of other religious trends. In the wake of this revolt, however, the overall position of traditionalist scholars shifted decidedly towards rejecting any sort of armed rebellion against the established political order. Hereafter, support for ʿAlid revolts was generally restricted to committed Shīʿites with some sort of sectarian identity. This certainly does not mean that the ʿAlid political cause died with al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, but rather that it was relegated to the margins. Not only did its base of support become more narrow, but many of the revolts that it spawned now occurred on the periphery of the empire.[1]

Various explanations have been offered for the increasingly marginal position occupied by ʿAlid rebels after al-Nafs al-Zakiyya. Asad Ahmed has emphasized socio-economic and political factors, arguing that the increasing tendency of ʿAlid families towards endogamy had the effect

[1] Those revolts that did occur in the central lands of the empire, such as the revolt of al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī Ṣāḥib Fakhkh in the Ḥijāz in 169/786 and that of Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Ṭabaṭabāʾī and Abū al-Sarāyā in Kūfa in 199/815, were short lived and had limited support. Efforts on the outskirts of the empire met with more success, leading to the foundation of the Idrīsid dynasty in the Maghreb in the late second/eighth century and the Zaydī Imāmate of Ṭabaristān in the mid-third/ninth century. See Van Arendonk, "*Les débuts*," 62-70, 95-106.

of isolating them from other elements of the religious elite and that the ʿAbbāsids were successful in currying favor with this elite through plying them with a variety of appointments and gifts.[2] Najam Haider has emphasized factors of a more strictly religious nature, noting that more radical sectarian views predominated among the supporters of ʿAlid rebels in the second half of the second/eighth century. The strident position adopted by ʿAlid leaders like Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan on ritual questions that had become sectarian shibboleths alienated not only the general population and proto-Sunnī traditionalists, but even some supporters who explicitly identified with the Zaydī cause.[3] Khaled Abou El Fadl has emphasized the maturation of legal discourse and jurstic culture as a factor in the dwindling of support for ʿAlid rebels, arguing that the consolidation of a class of legal scholars in the early ʿAbbāsid period created both a vested interest on their part in the maintenance of law and order and a buffer between them and the effective holders of power through their monopoly over legal interpretation.[4]

The different factors emphasized by each of these scholars stem from the subjects of their studies and they are certainly not mutually exclusive. What is of particular interest to us here is not necessarily the cause of this shift, but rather its ramifications for the reception of Shīʿite narrators. A poignant illustration of the rapid shift in attitude within the traditionalist milieu is found in the contrast between the reception of two prominent supporters of the ʿAlid cause among Kūfan proto-Sunnīs, Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir (d. 132/750) and Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy (d. 168/785), the latter of whom lived roughly four decades into the ʿAbbāsid period. Whereas

[2] Asad Ahmed, *The Religious Elite of the Early Islamic Ḥijāz* (Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research, 2011), 160-7.
[3] Haider, *Origins*, 189-214. See also Jarrar, "Ibn Abī Yaḥyā," 206-9. The discussions of Haider and Jarrar describe this shift in terms of a transition from the Batrī to the Jārūdī tendency within Zaydism. As noted in the previous chapter, while we have good reason to question how well these categories account for the complexity of the actual historical situation, they do serve as a useful heuristic for understanding the overall trajectory of the development of Zaydism.
[4] Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence in Islamic Law* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 75-84.

Manṣūr's reputation was hardly tarnished by his active role in Zayd's revolt, Ḥasan was rejected by a large portion of his proto-Sunnī peers due to his rebellious views, in spite of the fact that he was not known to have personally taken part in a rebellion and enjoyed a reputation for considerable learning and piety. The shift in attitude was so rapid that some of Ḥasan's contemporaries perceived it as a virtual reversal within the space of two generations. Thus, when Ḥafṣ b. Ghiyāth (d. 194/810), a prominent Kūfan narrator and judge, criticized Ḥasan for his rebellious views, someone responded to him, "Mention (*hāt*) those who did *not* believe in the sword among the people of your time. All of them, or most of them except for a few, did..."[5]

As late as the turn of the third/ninth century, we still find isolated examples of prominent Shīʿite narrators who are purported to have supported ʿAlid rebellions. However, not only were such instances much less common, but the roles taken on by scholarly figures in the revolts were much less significant. In addition, the dominant mood in the proto-Sunnī milieu was now not only opposed to rebellion, but was generally intolerant of those who even flirted with it.

IV.2. The Evolving Ethos of the Traditionalist Milieu

In the previous chapter, we noted that the late Umayyad period witnessed the emergence and consolidation of a class of traditionalist scholars who began to distinguish themselves as religious authorities in diverse and often multiple fields. In the early ʿAbbāsid period, the various fields that they cultivated evolved increasingly sophisticated and precise standards, and the tendency for this class of scholars to specialize in particular disciplines

[5] *DU*, 1/232.

increased. These developments were exemplified in the production of some of the first systematic works in such fields as law, theology, Qurʾānic interpretation, history and hadith.

It has long been noted that the second/eighth century was a watershed moment in the development of hadith, especially in terms of its role in the related field of law. This observation has generally been made in the context of arguments about the authenticity of hadiths themselves, with the implication being that, on the whole, they were far more reflective of the legal, political and doctrinal conflicts of the second/eighth century than they were of anything that was said in the first/seventh.[6] There is, however, another side to the proliferation of hadith in this period that has received far less attention. The growth in the volume and authority of hadiths was paralleled by a rise in the level of prestige that accrued to those that collected and transmitted them. Similarly, as scholarly attention towards hadith intensified, the level of critical expertise demanded of participants in its transmission increased. As the hadith milieu evolved and consolidated, scholars competed not only for this prestige, but also to establish their sense of the appropriate standards for the transmission and content of hadith as authoritative. Prestige, expertise and competition constitute the lifeblood of a field of specialization, and beginning from roughly the mid-second/eighth century onward, a class of specialists in hadith (widely referred to as *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*) becomes increasingly identifiable and distinguishable within the overall body of claimants to religious authority.

Like any community of specialists, the activities of hadith narrators were guided by sets of values and norms – generally more implicit than explicit – concerning how the fruits of

[6] For classic statements of this argument see Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 43-144; Joseph Schacht, *On the Origins of Muhammedan Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). For the most prominent critique of Schacht's thesis in particular see Motzki, *Origins*. Motzki argues that Schacht overstated the case for systematic fabrication and that portions of the hadith corpus can be reliably dated to the late first/seventh century.

their labors should ideally manifest. Because investigations of hadith scholarship have been primarily focused on questions of authenticity and historicity, only a limited amount of attention has been given to the rich internal dynamics that animated the narrators' milieus. Insofar as any attempt to thoroughly understand one or another aspect of these milieus ought to be grounded in a prior understanding of the values and norms that informed the activities of its participants, I offer a sketch of those values and norms that had the greatest impact on the reception of Shīʿite narrators in what follows.

The foremost value prized by participants in the hadith milieu, and one of the few things that bound them all together in spite of their differences, was hadith itself – its possession, preservation, transmission and critical examination. This is, no doubt, stating the obvious, but underscoring the point seems warranted on two counts. In the first place, the immense value accorded to hadith appears to have structured the web of relationships between students, teachers, colleagues and rivals and suffused the interactions between them to such an extent that neither can be fully grasped without some palpable sense of what was at stake in the collection and transmission of hadith. Secondly, certain points emphasized in textual studies focused on the question of authenticity, such as the widespread phenomenon of fabrication and the lack of importance accorded to hadith through the late Umayyad period, have the subtle effect of implying that hadith narrators were almost entirely unconstrained by the core values that they claimed to uphold. A focus on the internal dynamics of the milieu as portrayed in the biographical literature, however, strongly suggests that these values shaped

the activities of its participants to a large extent and, significantly for our purposes, that they had a considerable impact on the reception of Shīʿite narrators.[7]

One of the first examples of a narrator who relished the newfound prestige that accrued to him for his expertise in hadith is Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-Aʿmash, the last narrator examined in the previous chapter. Al-Aʿmash emphasized the privileged access that he had to hadith as a young student and used it to claim a unique status as an elder teacher. Anecdotes from al-Aʿmash's youth suggest that hadith was already guarded and dispensed carefully by some of his teachers at the turn of the second/eighth century. He claimed that Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī (d. 95/714) would give him the full *isnād* of hadiths to the exclusion of other students because he favored him.[8] He also stated that Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī would narrate a choice selection of the hadiths of Ibn Masʿūd to him when they were alone.[9] When al-Aʿmash became a prominent narrator in his own right, he seems to have been equally parsimonious in dispensing hadith. One of his students claimed that he never heard al-Aʿmash narrate more than nine (or eleven) hadiths in a single session.[10] Al-Aʿmash also refused to narrate hadiths to those he deemed unworthy, demurring, "Who hangs pearls on [the necks of] pigs?"[11] He believed that his preeminence as a student entitled him to similar renown as a teacher. He complained that students would travel to Kūfa with no other goal than to learn from him, but after their arrival other narrators would eventually convince them that they had no need of

[7] One of the central points of Motzki is that a critical textual analysis of hadith literature and an analysis of biographical literature yield pictures of the traditionalist milieu of late Umayyad Ḥijāz that are essentially mutually reinforcing. See *Origins*, 75-287, esp. 285-7.
[8] *SAN*, 6/247.
[9] *MT*, 2/636, "*kuntu idhā khalawtu bi-Abī Isḥāq ḥaddathanā bi-ḥadīth ʿAbd Allāh ghaḍḍan.*" The literal meaning of "*ghaḍḍ*" is "fresh" or "succulent."
[10] ʿIjlī, *Thiqāt*, 1/432.
[11] ʿIjlī, *Thiqāt*, 1/432. Those deemed unworthy in this instance may have been uneducated villagers, as the anecdote opens, "*atā al-Aʿmash nāḥiyat hādhā al-sawād fa-atāhu qawm minhum…*"

him.[12] Whenever Abū Bakr b. ʿAyyāsh (d. 193/809) and his cohort of young students came to al-Aʿmash, he would ask them who else they had heard hadiths from and proceed to deride them one by one.[13]

While subsequent generations of narrators did not revel in their status as unabashedly as al-Aʿmash, the competitive quest for privileged access to hadith and the concomitant accrual of prestige that he embodied continued unabated. The case of Shuʿba, who sat at the crest of the wave of obsession with the collection and sifting of hadith, is a particularly vivid illustration of this phenomenon. He and his peers were consumed by their pursuit of hadith, to the extent that he declared that he was a slave to anyone who had even two hadiths.[14] He captured the dominant ethos of his milieu when he asked rhetorically, "What is more delightful than finding a shaykh who has met people [i.e. prominent narrators] in the shade with a breeze while you prompt him and elicit knowledge from him when no one else is around!?"[15]

The competitive nature of this venture is typified in anecdotes regarding Shuʿba's relationships with his colleagues. He vied with them to gain access to teachers, collect their hadiths and later to attract students. He once reviewed the hadiths of Abū Ḥaṣīn with Qays b. al-Rabīʿ (d. c. 160/777) and wished that the ceiling would crash upon them both when he realized that Qays had learned a far greater number of hadiths from Abū Ḥaṣīn than he had.[16] He would later quip that he had dug his own grave after he temporarily lost his usual cohort of

[12] ʿIjlī, *Thiqāt*, 1/433.
[13] *TB*, 9/12.
[14] *SAN*, 7/225.
[15] *SAN*, 7/217.
[16] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 6/39. On Qays b. al-Rabīʿ see Chapter 2.

students to Hushaym b. Bashīr, a colleague with whom he had a longstanding playful rivalry.[17] When Hushaym came to Basra, Shuʿba encouraged his students to learn from him by telling them that they should believe him even if he narrated to them from Jesus. The students then began to prefer Hushaym to Shuʿba, presumably because Hushaym, for all his reliability, was more relaxed in his standards than Shuʿba, and the students found in his alacrity a welcome relief from Shuʿba's rigor.[18]

Within the broad hadith milieu, an acute sense of ethical dilemma developed as a result of the increasing prestige that accrued to those with a superior knowledge of hadith. Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān said that his teacher Sufyān al-Thawrī was "overcome by [his] appetite for hadith (*qad ghalabat ʿalayhi shahwat al-ḥadīth*)."[19] Al-Thawrī's usual solemn demeanor would change when he started narrating, to the extent that he appeared a different person altogether to his students.[20] During a sojourn in Ascalon, al-Thawrī would occasionally narrate without being asked and then marvel at his abilities, exclaiming, "The springs have gushed forth!"[21] Perhaps later in their lives, al-Thawrī and Shuʿba are both reported to have considered the motivations behind their attachment to hadith to have been suspect, doubting whether their efforts would be of any benefit to them in the afterlife.[22]

[17] The rivalry between Shuʿba and Hushaym is attested in several anecdotes. While traveling together to learn hadith, Shuʿba failed to properly introduce Hushaym to Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī in Kūfa, identifying him simply as "the poet of Sabīʿ." Hushaym retaliated by hiding the identity of al-Zuhrī from Shuʿba in Mecca, calling him "a *shurṭī* of Banū Umayya." Shuʿba had the last laugh when he tore up the notes that Hushaym had written from al-Zuhrī. See *SAN*, 7/226, 8/292. For another anecdote see *SAN*, 7/221.
[18] *SAN*, 7/222. Although Hushaym was held in high regard, he was widely known to practice *tadlīs*, which was anathema to Shuʿba. See Hushaym's biography in *SAN*, 7/287-94.
[19] *SAN*, 7/255-6.
[20] Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ wa ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyāʾ* (Cairo: Dār al-Saʿāda, 1974), 6/371; *SAN*, 7/267, 276.
[21] Isfahānī, *Ḥilya*, 6/369-70; *SAN*, 7/256.
[22] See a large number of reports in *SAN*, 7/213, 256, 274, 279.

The value accorded to hadith is illustrated nowhere more vividly than in anecdotes indicating that hadiths were frequently narrated in various kinds of compensatory exchanges. Although the literal sale of hadith for money was widely condemned, jocular transactions in which hadiths were traded for favors, or even offered as reparation for injuries, were not uncommon.[23] Al-Aʿmash would narrate five hadiths to Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ once a month in exchange for Wakīʿ bringing him his stipend from the Kūfan treasury, which was headed by Wakīʿ's father.[24] After Wakīʿ had become a prominent narrator in his own right, he once narrated hadiths at a gathering only as long as the host could continue to fill his glass with *nabīdh*.[25] Mālik b. Anas reportedly disciplined a youth for a breach in the conduct appropriate to a hadith circle by having fifteen blows administered to him with a stick (*durra*). However, when he learned of the sacrifices made by the boy's father to send him from Kūfa to study in Medina, he narrated fifteen hadiths to him as compensation.[26]

While we have spoken up to this point of the value of hadith in the abstract, it is important to highlight the fact that the value of an individual hadith report was closely intertwined with its provenance. This value was maximized if the report was obtained from a reputable narrator via a short *isnād* and it decreased if it was obtained from a suspect narrator or had an overly long *isnād*.[27] Various kinds of subterfuge, known collectively as *tadlīs*, were used to buoy the value of subpar reports. Thus, if a narrator omitted one or more intermediaries from his *isnād*, the value of his report increased so long as the omission went

[23] On this issue see Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Al-Kifāya fī ʿilm al-riwāya* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Saʿāda, 1972), 240-4.
[24] *TB*, 13/473; *TMD*, 63/73.
[25] *TMD*, 63/80.
[26] *SAN*, 11/428-9.
[27] In the words of Shuʿba, the hadiths of Ibn ʿAwn were "butter and honey," the hadiths of Hishām b. Ḥassān were "oil and vinegar" and the hadiths of Abū Bakr al-Hudhalī were liable to make one vomit (Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 4/340).

undetected, especially if those intermediaries were of questionable repute. Similarly, if a narrator concealed the identity of a questionable source for his report, often by using an unusual name for him, that report would retain a higher value than if the identity of the source was revealed.[28]

What is of particular concern for us here is how all of this played out in the reception of Shīʿite narrators. We have already seen that the appropriate limits of Shīʿite sentiments were the subject of considerable disagreement in the proto-Sunnī milieu. The notion that limits existed, however, was not in dispute. Association with Shīʿite sentiments therefore potentially had a deleterious effect on the value of a narrator's hadiths. This was especially so for those critics for whom this value was tightly indexed to his adherence to particular standards of orthodoxy. As we will see throughout this chapter, significant dilemmas arose in the case of prominent narrators who pushed the limits of Shīʿite sentiment without placing themselves unambiguously beyond the pale. Figures occupying such a liminal position were inevitably unacceptable to some critics but merely less than ideal to others, and the value of their hadiths was a point of controversy. If someone had learned a large number of reports from such a figure, he faced a number of unpalatable prospects: he could abandon his hadiths altogether, possibly squandering years of persistent effort, or continue to narrate from him while deflecting criticism for doing so, or hide his identity through *tadlīs* when possible. On the other hand, so long as he had not learned anything particularly valuable from him, there was little to be lost in joining the chorus of critics.

[28] For a discussion of the different kinds of *tadlīs* and examples see Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥākim al-Naysabūrī, *Maʿrifat ʿulūm al-ḥadīth* (Madina: Al-Maktaba al-ʿilmiyya, 1977), 103-12; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Kifāya*, 510-27; Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, index s.v. '*tadlīs*'; Brown, *Hadith*, 91, 222-4.

In the long-term negotiation of the reception of Shīʿite narrators, the intrinsic value of their hadiths was balanced against the extrinsic value of maintaining communal and creedal boundaries. In what follows, we will see numerous examples of individuals who clearly prioritized one of these values over the other. Those who prioritized boundary maintenance were more likely to take a dichotomous view of the issue, rejecting the hadiths of Shīʿites and other "innovators" wholesale in an effort to clearly demarcate orthodoxy. In the long term, however, many Sunnī hadith critics would have it both ways, as they preserved those elements of the legacy of Shīʿite narrators that supported their view of orthodoxy and marginalized those that did not.

IV.3. Shīʿite Narrators in the Proto-Sunnī Milieu

Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778) and Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 160/777)

Among ʿIrāqī narrators of the early ʿAbbāsid era, there are no two narrators who had a greater impact on the developed Sunnī hadith tradition than Sufyān al-Thawrī and Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj, both of whom were associated with a mild Shīʿite sentiment. Although both were counted among the companions of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq by Imāmīs and Shuʿba reportedly supported the revolt of Ibrāhīm al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, there is no doubt regarding their solidly proto-Sunnī identity and credentials.[29] It is instructive to consider them together because of the significant amount of interaction between them on the one hand and the contrast in their respective methodologies in narrating hadith on the other. Al-Thawrī was more respected for his legal

[29] On Shuʿba see Ṭabasī, *Rijāl al-shīʿa*, 195; ʿAzīzī, et. al., *Al-Ruwāt al-mushtarakūn*, 478. Although the Imāmī view of al-Thawrī was overwhelmingly negative, al-Ṭūsī nonetheless counted him as a companion of al-Ṣādiq, a category that, as noted above, included many non-Imāmīs. See Khūʾī, *Muʿjam rijāl al-ḥadīth*, 9/158-62.

acumen than Shuʿba, but his methods of hadith criticism were lax in comparison to those of Shuʿba, who was among the pioneers who developed increasingly systematic and rigorous standards for hadith narration.[30]

Al-Thawrī's Shīʿite sentiments were more widely reported than Shuʿba's but, as is often the case, divergent reports regarding their positions are numerous. Ibn Qutayba included both men in his list of Shīʿites and Abū al-Faḍl al-Sulaymānī included Shuʿba in his list of narrators who preferred ʿAlī over ʿUthmān.[31] The reports regarding al-Thawrī's position on the question of preference are contradictory. Two of his Kūfan students, Abū Bakr b. ʿAyyāsh and Zayd b. al-Ḥubāb, reported that he preferred ʿAlī over ʿUthmān, although Zayd also reported that he left *tashayyuʿ* after meeting prominent narrators in Baṣra.[32] Maʿmar b. Rāshid alluded to the ubiquitous Shīʿism of Kūfan narrators after meeting privately with al-Thawrī, suggesting that he was characterized by it as well.[33] On either extreme of these reports, all of which are plausible enough in themselves, we find the unlikely assertions that al-Thawrī only ranked the first three caliphs in order without mentioning ʿAlī, and that he preferred ʿAlī over Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.[34]

A number of anecdotes suggest that Abū Bakr and ʿUmar in fact constituted a red line for al-Thawrī. He asserted that preferring ʿAlī over them was tantamount to belittling the 12,000 Companions who had chosen them as the Prophet's successors, and wondered how the

[30] For a comparison of the methods of Shuʿba and al-Thawrī see Lucas, *Constructive Critics*, 133-43. Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān, a student of both men, noted that Sufyān had a better memory and that Shuʿba was more skilled in collating hadiths by their *isnād*s while al-Thawrī was more skilled in collating them by subject ("*kāna Shuʿba aʿlam bil-rijāl, fulān ʿan fulān, kadhā wa kadhā, wa kāna Sufyān ṣāḥib abwāb*" in Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā al-Tirmidhī, *ʿIlal al-Tirmidhī* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1983), 405).
[31] Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 624; Dhahabī, *Mīzān*, 2/588.
[32] *SAN*, 7/252-3, 273.
[33] *MT*, 2/806.
[34] See *MT*, 2/806 and *TMD*, 42/531, respectively.

deeds of one who believed in this could be accepted.[35] The matter was worse in the case of those who insulted Abū Bakr and ʿUmar; al-Thawrī declared that they were disbelievers and instructed a questioner not to participate in their funeral prayers.[36] Al-Thawrī's position on ʿUthmān was almost certainly conciliatory. His relations with Baṣran ʿUthmānīs were close and he is credited with saying that only noble men loved both ʿUthmān and ʿAlī.[37]

The historicity of the anecdote that suggests that al-Thawrī left Shīʿism after meeting Baṣran ʿUthmānīs is a moot point[38], but there is strong evidence to support the notion that cross-pollination between different centers of learning contributed to the increased prominence of centrist positions. Yazīd b. Zurayʿ also claimed that Shuʿba held a "deplorable, despicable opinion" – almost certainly a reference to Shīʿism – when he arrived in Baṣra but left it due to the Baṣrans' influence.[39] Shuʿba indeed seems to have resisted the ʿUthmānī sentiments of the Baṣrans initially. When he first arrived there, he was asked to narrate on the authority of his trustworthy companions. In a thinly veiled rebuke of the Baṣrans' intolerance for Shīʿites, he replied that if he narrated from his trustworthy companions, then he would only narrate from "a few individuals from these Shīʿites (*nafar yasīr min hādhihi al-shīʿa*)," and went on to name some of the most reputable Shīʿite narrators of the preceding generation, al-

[35] *TMD*, 44/384.
[36] *SAN*, 7/253. On the significance of funeral prayers as markers of communal and sectarian identity see Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Death, Funeral Processions, and the Articulation of Religious Authority in Early Islam," *Studia Islamica* 93 (2001), esp. 32-6.
[37] *TB*, 5/219; *TMD*, 39/501.
[38] Hans-Peter Raddatz accepts the historicity of these reports in his study of al-Thawrī while Van Ess suggests that al-Thawrī's own context-based prudence likely accounts in part for the divergent portrayals of his Shīʿite tendencies. See Hans-Peter Raddatz, "Die Stellung und Bedeutung des Sufyān aṯ-Ṯaurī" (Ph.D. dissertation, Bonn, 1967), 10-15,180-7; *Th&G*, 1/225-6.
[39] *TB*, 9/260; G.H.A. Juynboll, "Shuʿba b. al-Ḥadjādj" in *EI*[2]. The full quote states, "*qadima ʿalayna Shuʿba al-Baṣra wa raʾyuhu raʾy sūʾ khabīth – yaʿnī al-taraffuḍ - fa-mā zilnā bihi ḥattā taraka qawlahu wa rajaʿa wa ṣāra maʿanā.*" The word *taraffuḍ* is almost certainly an insertion of a later narrator or of al-Khaṭīb, as this term is not attested in early sources.

Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba, Salama b. Kuhayl, Ḥabīb b. Abī Thābit and Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir.[40] Al-Thawrī also exhibited an awareness of the proclivities of narrators in different regions and resisted what he viewed as their parochialism, advising students to mention the virtues of ʿAlī when in Syria and to mention the virtues of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar when in Kūfa.[41]

These were hardly the only instances in which al-Thawrī and Shuʿba sought to sway the opinions of fellow narrators. Al-Thawrī in particular seems to have attempted to stem the rising tide of Shīʿite sentiment in Kūfa by suppressing certain hadiths. He and his teacher, ʿAmr b. Qays al-Mulāʾī, tried to convince a less prominent Shīʿite narrator to stop narrating the hadith in which the Prophet tells ʿAlī, "Your position with respect to me is like that of Aaron with respect to Moses," by telling him that "the people had become corrupted."[42] As noted above, al-Thawrī also refrained from narrating ʿAlī's virtues in certain contexts because of the Rāfiḍīs.[43]

A problem arose when some of the proponents of the very Shīʿite trends that al-Thawrī, Shuʿba and their proto-Sunnī counterparts considered to be too extreme were also indispensable sources of hadith. An emblematic example of this conundrum is found in none other than Jābir al-Juʿfī. We have already seen that Jābir was viewed with considerable suspicion by his proto-Sunnī peers and students due to the character of his Shīʿite beliefs (some of which were noted with disapproval by al-Thawrī himself), but Shuʿba, and especially al-Thawrī, continued to narrate from him and defend him in spite of all objections. For al-

[40] *IAH*, 1/138-9, 143-4; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 1/71. Lucas misses the import of this anecdote, translating *shīʿa* as "small party." See *Constructive Critics*, 133.
[41] *TMD*, 1/364; *SAN*, 7/260. A statement from al-Awzāʿī suggests that figures from the previous generation already held this sentiment concerning Syria (*TMD*, 1/364; Abū ʿAmr Yūsuf b. ʿAbd al-Barr, *Jāmiʿ bayān al-ʿilm wa faḍlihi* (Riyadh: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 1994), 2/1098). Read *yastaḥibbūn* for *yastaḥyūn* in the latter.
[42] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/141-2.
[43] *SAN*, 7/253.

Thawrī and several others, Jābir's narrations were perfectly acceptable as long as he stated explicitly that he had "heard" from his source, rather than simply ascribing it to him.[44] Al-Thawrī is in fact purported to have said that he never saw anyone more scrupulous (*arwaʿ*) in his narration of hadith than Jābir.[45] This seems far-fetched coming from a man who narrated from the most illustrious figures of the previous generation, but such a spirited defense of Jābir may have been occasioned by the criticism that was heaped upon him as his reputation declined in the proto-Sunnī milieu, and upon al-Thawrī himself for narrating from him.[46] Even Shuʿba seems to have contemplated public criticism of Jābir, which caused al-Thawrī to threaten that he in turn would criticize Shuʿba (*in takallamta fī Jābir al-Juʿfī la-atakallamanna fīka*).[47]

On the whole, however, Shuʿba's position on Jābir seems to have been similar to that of al-Thawrī. He gave a straightforward endorsement to Jābir and Ibn Isḥāq, author of the famous Prophetic biography, saying that both men were honest.[48] In another narration he stated simply that Jābir did not lie.[49] What is somewhat unique to Shuʿba is that he also invoked a consequentialist logic to justify his narration from Jābir, likely due to the fact that his acceptance of Jābir seemed anomalous in relation to his otherwise rigorous selection of

[44] *DU*, 1/193. For others who shared this opinion see Alī b. al-Jaʿd, *Musnad Ibn al-Jaʿd* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1996), 291; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/117-8. Without such specification, the narration was, of course, susceptible to the infamous practice of *tadlīs*.
[45] Ibn al-Jaʿd, *Musnad*, 291; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/117. Some versions of this statement include Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir alongside Jābir and some imply that Jābir was even more scrupulous than Manṣūr.
[46] For instances of Sufyān being criticized for narrating from Jābir see *DU*, 1/193; Ibn al-Jaʿd, *Musnad*, 292; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/113. The sense that Jābir's reputation declined over time is derived from countless anecdotes throughout his biography, and several instances of later narrators, such as ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī and Yaḥyā al-Qaṭṭān, "abandoning him" (*DU*, 1/194-5).
[47] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/117.
[48] Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 3/214; ʿIbn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/117. The common denominator between Jābir and Ibn Isḥāq would seem to be their vast knowledge coupled with controversial beliefs and questionable practices of transmission. On Shuʿba's defense of Jābir see also Lucas, *Constructive Critics*, 138, 143.
[49] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/117.

narrators. He was once asked how he could leave so many narrators but narrate from Jābir, and replied that Jābir narrated things that he could not bear to miss (*rawā ashyāʾ lam aṣbir ʿanhā*).[50] He also told students not to pay any mind to those who criticize Jābir since there was no one that did not take hadith from him.[51]

Although the differences between al-Thawrī and Shuʿba regarding Jābir appear to have been limited, the differences in their overall approach to narrating hadith were considerable and had significant consequences for their respective approaches to other Shīʿite narrators. As noted above, al-Thawrī practiced *tadlīs* of more than one kind and relied on an informal sense of his own expertise, rather than a strict selection of reliable narrators. His lax approach to selecting narrators is illustrated by the cases of Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa and Muḥammad b. al-Sāʾib al-Kalbī (d. 146/763).[52] He used the *kunyas* of both men when narrating from them in an attempt to circumvent the controversy surrounding them, although this technique was not always successful as students sometimes called him on it. He was also, however, well aware of the potential drawbacks of each man as a source of hadith. We have already seen that he would tell students to be wary of Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa when he would begin narrating the virtues of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, since his true intention was to create a triumphant portrait of ʿAlī. The case of

[50] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/116, 118. Ibn Ḥibbān identified this as a key distinction between the approach of Shuʿba and al-Thawrī in narrating from Jābir: "It is not from the *madhhab* of al-Thawrī to abandon narrating from weak narrators. Rather, he would pass on the hadith as he heard it in order to encourage people to record reports and seek them out in the [various] cities and provinces. As for Shuʿba and others among our *shuyūkh*, they saw that he [Jābir] had something they could not bear to miss, so they wrote it down in order to know it. Then sometimes one of them would mention one thing after another from Jābir as an oddity (*ʿalā jihat al-taʿajjub*), but people would circulate it amongst themselves [as if it were meant in earnest]" (*Majrūḥīn*, 1/246).

[51] Ibn al-Jaʿd, *Musnad*, 291; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/117. This statement is also narrated with an alternate meaning, namely that Jābir did not narrate from people he had not met. Since this was not the case, the first meaning is more likely to be accurate. See *IAH*, 1/136; al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*, 1/382. The notion that nearly everyone who met Jābir narrated from him was also quite widespread.

[52] On Ibn al-Kalbī, a prominent but controversial Shīʿite scholar who contributed to several disciplines, especially *tafsīr*, see W. Atallah, "al-Kalbī," *EI²*.

Ibn al-Kalbī was worse, and Sufyān simply told students to avoid narrating from him (*ittaqū al-Kalbī*). One of the students confronted al-Thawrī with the fact that he narrated from him himself, and he explained that he did so because he was able to distinguish his truthful narrations from his lies.[53] His informal approach to hadith narration is epitomized in a statement narrated by al-ʿUqaylī: "I narrate hadith in three ways (*ʿalā thalāthati awjuh*): I hear a hadith from a man and base my religion on it (*attakhidhuhu dīnan*), I hear a hadith from a man and suspend judgment (*ūqifuhu*), and I hear a hadith from a man that I care nothing for but I [still] like to know it."[54]

Although Shuʿba recognized al-Thawrī's expertise in hadith, he considered it to be marred by his relatively indiscriminate selection of narrators and his loose transmission practices.[55] We have seen that Shuʿba took pride in his exacting selection of narrators and the differences between his own approach and that of al-Thawrī are on evidence in their reception of particular Shīʿite narrators. Al-Thawrī narrated from Ḥakīm b. Jubayr al-Asadī (d. mid-second/eighth c.), a Shīʿite narrator of generally low repute, but Shuʿba rejected him because of a certain hadith that he narrated about charity.[56] More telling is the case of Abū Hārūn al-ʿAbdī (d. 134/752), a Shīʿite narrator from Wāsiṭ from whom al-Thawrī and several other prominent proto-Sunnī narrators transmitted with approval. Even Ibn ʿAwn (d. 151/768), a prominent Baṣran ʿUthmānī, continued to transmit from Abū Hārūn until his death.[57] Shuʿba had eagerly anticipated the arrival of Abū Hārūn in Baṣra, but upon meeting him found him to be woefully unreliable as a narrator and abruptly cut off relations with him. Abū Hārūn was

[53] Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūḥīn*, 2/256.
[54] *DU*, 1/15.
[55] See the comments of Shuʿba in Balkhī, *Qabūl al-akhbār*, 1/347, 352. See also Lucas, *Constructive Critics*, 133.
[56] *DU*, 2/316-17; *IAH*, 3/201-2; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/216-19.
[57] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 5/77, 79.

known to narrate extensively from the Companion Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī (d. 64/684) and Shuʿba went to him to ask about these hadiths in particular. Abū Hārūn gave him a notebook of hadiths from Abū Saʿīd which contained a report asserting that ʿUthmān was buried in his grave as a disbeliever. After ascertaining that Abū Hārūn actually believed this, Shuʿba thrust the notebook in his hand and left. He would later say that he would rather be beheaded than to narrate anything from Abū Hārūn.[58]

Although Shuʿba was clearly disturbed by Abū Hārūn's extreme position on ʿUthmān, it is unlikely that his rejection of him was due to this exclusively. He also implied that many of Abū Hārūn's narrations from Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī were fabricated by the people of Wāsiṭ.[59] Moreover, Shuʿba narrated extensively from a number of figures who were critical of ʿUthmān to one degree or another. These included al-Aʿmash and Abān b. Taghlib, as well as Abū Maryam al-Anṣārī (d. mid-second/eighth century), who was criticized for narrating "calamities (*balāyā*)" against ʿUthmān[60] and was an important early teacher of Shuʿba.[61] Shuʿba may have even learned his critical method of examining narrators in order to detect *tadlīs* from Abū Maryam, who was also known for his expertise in narrator criticism.[62]

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[58] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 5/77-8. In the report indicating Shuʿba's anticipation of Abū Hārūn's arrival, Abū Hārūn has a notebook with unusual hadiths about ʿAlī, but there is no suggestion that this caused Shuʿba to cut off relations with him.
[59] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 5/78.
[60] *IAH*, 6/54; *DU*, 3/102.
[61] On Abū Maryam see *TS*, 135-7.
[62] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 5/326. Ibn ʿAdī writes that "some people claim that [Shuʿba] learned *tawqīf al-rijāl* from him." An instance of this method is reported by al-ʿUqaylī, where Abū Maryam makes a narrator specify the verbal mode of direct transmission, *ḥaddathanā*, after he has used the more ambiguous *ʿan* (*DU*, 3/101). For an instance of Shuʿba applying a similar standard with his teacher Qatāda b. Diʿāma (d. 117/735) see *IAH*, 1/169, 4/370. The exact nature of the relationship between Shuʿba and Abū Maryam is somewhat unclear. Ibn ʿUqda (d. 332/944), a prominent Zaydī scholar of hadith, asserted that if Abū Maryam's knowledge became widespread then people would have no need of Shuʿba, suggesting a large degree of overlap between the two. Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī said that Shuʿba had a good opinion of Abū Maryam (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *al-Jarḥ wa al-taʿdīl*, 6/54). Ibn ʿAdī, however, asserted that Shuʿba abandoned Abū Maryam's hadiths after his *rafḍ* became apparent (*Kāmil*, 5/326). This may have been the referent of

A final point of interest regarding al-Thawrī and Shuʿba is their attitude towards the revolt of Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, which took place around the peak of their scholarly careers. With respect to Shuʿba, the reports in Sunnī and Zaydī literature are in agreement regarding his support of Ibrāhīm. Zaydī sources report that he pledged allegiance to Ibrāhīm in Baṣra and encouraged questioners to support him, calling the impending battle a second Badr.[63] Much of the information in Zaydī literature is confirmed in general terms by reports recorded by al-Dhahabī and attributed to the early Sunnī historians ʿUmar b. Shabba (d. 264/877) and Khalīfa b. al-Khayyāṭ (d. 240/854), although they also specify that Shuʿba did not participate directly in the battle.[64] It is also noteworthy that three of the four "trustworthy companions" – al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba, Salama b. Kuhayl and Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir – whom Shuʿba had touted before the Baṣrans had been supporters of Zayd b. ʿAlī, which may account in part for his continued sympathy for the ʿAlid cause.

Sunnī and Zaydī sources are not nearly as univocal regarding the position of al-Thawrī. Zaydī sources portray him as a sympathizer who recognized the virtue of the ʿAlid cause and the tragic nature of its failure, although they do not claim that he was an active supporter. Several reports in al-Iṣfahānī's *Maqātil* attempt to appropriate the stature of al-Thawrī for the Zaydī cause. The fact that some of his students fought alongside Ibrāhīm in Baṣra is noted with emphasis.[65] In a contrived report, al-Thawrī purportedly expressed strong sympathy for Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya five years before his rebellion but lamented that the *rāfiḍīs* and

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an ambiguous statement by Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, who suggested that Shuʿba narrated from Abū Maryam only because he had known him prior to "what happened to him" (*DU*, 3/102).

[63] Al-Hārūnī, *al-Ifāda*, 65; al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 365; Van Arendonk, *Les débuts*, 315.

[64] ʿAbd al-Wārith b. Saʿīd, a Baṣran narrator, reported that Shuʿba encouraged him and others to rebel with Ibrāhīm. Shuʿba's comparison of the battle of Bākhamrāʾ to Badr is reported both by al-Iṣfahānī and al-Dhahabī through Ibn Shabba, although the authority quoted by Ibn Shabba in each case is different. See *SAN*, 6/223-4.

[65] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 382-3.

Muʿtazilīs had alienated people from his cause.[66] Al-Iṣfahānī also includes more plausible reports regarding al-Thawrī's regret over the fate of the ʿAlids. In a hyperbolic expression of disgust, he reportedly said that he thought that prayer would no longer be accepted after Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd Allāh was killed. In a chance meeting with Zayd b. ʿAlī's son ʿĪsā during the pilgrimage, he expressed his deep grief at the fate of his father and his family as well as his desire that ʿĪsā should remain safe from the menacing ʿAbbāsids.[67]

Al-Thawrī's staunch opposition to the ʿAbbāsids, due to which he died in hiding, is widely reported in Sunnī sources and has been discussed in detail elsewhere.[68] Despite the uncompromising nature of his stance, Sunnī sources also portray him as being almost equally opposed to armed rebellion against political authority. He disapproved of several narrators of otherwise good repute on no other grounds than their participation in al-Nafs al-Zakiyya's rebellion, or their holding of other politically activist views.[69] He seems to have particularly disliked the famous Zaydī narrator al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy, about whom he said simply, "That is a man who believes in [raising] the sword against the *umma* of Muḥammad."[70] Al-Thawrī's quietism is further underscored by his position on the *mahdī*, an issue that became particularly relevant in the period leading up to the revolt of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya. He reportedly instructed a

[66] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 292.
[67] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 383, 415-16.
[68] Dickinson, *Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism*, 75-7; Zaman, *Religion and Politics*, 79-80; Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 212-13; Raddatz, *Stellung und Bedeutung*, 35-50.
[69] Examples include the Medinese ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Jaʿfar b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī (d. 153/770), who joined Muḥammad (*SAN*, 7/21), and the Kūfan Abū Khālid al-Aḥmar (d. 189/805), who joined Ibrāhīm (*TB*, 9/22).
[70] Ibn al-Jaʿd, *Musnad*, 304. For more anecdotes on the relationship between Sufyān and al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ see *SAN*, 7/362-5.

questioner who was confused by the clamor over the issue: "[Even] if he passes by your door, do not follow him in anything until people agree upon him."[71]

Zāʾida b. Qudāma (d. 161/778)

If the relationship of Sufyān al-Thawrī and Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj to some of the Shīʿite trends of their day was characterized by a certain degree of ambiguity, Zāʾida b. Qudāma's xenophobic rejection of Shīʿite narrators left little doubt as to where he stood. Zāʾida was a highly respected narrator in his own right, although his scholarly reputation was not equal to that of either al-Thawrī or Shuʿba. Despite this, his idiosyncratic approach to narrator criticism would eventually come to frame the discourse in which the Shīʿism of early narrators would be discussed by Sunnī hadith critics.

In spite of the respect accorded to Zāʾida for his accurate and assiduous transmission of hadith, the extent of his intolerance for *bidʿa* (blameworthy innovation) in all its forms was by all accounts anomalous within the proto-Sunnī Kūfan milieu of mid-second/eighth century Kūfa. We have seen an abundant amount of evidence indicating that it was a standard, if not ubiquitous, practice for students to learn from teachers with whom they disagreed in matters great or small, provided that these teachers possessed useful material. Thus, Zāʾida was purported to have been the *only* narrator who met Jābir al-Juʿfī but did not narrate anything from him.[72] As noted above, al-Thawrī, Shuʿba and Sufyān b. ʿUyayna all shared Zāʾida's

[71] *MT*, 1/726; Zaman, *Religion and Politics*, 184-185. The movement of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya is not specified as the context for the question, although it is certainly the most likely occasion for the questioner's statement, "*inna al-nās qad aktharū fī al-mahdī...*" See also note 10 in Chapter 2.

[72] Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, 1/216; DU, 1/195; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/114-5. Superlative statements of this sort are very common in the biographical literature but are rarely absolute in their import. They usually express a general impression about a unique characteristic that distinguishes one or more individuals within their overall milieu. In the case at hand, Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (on whom see chapter 1) also noted that he began learning hadith while Jābir was still alive but did not write any hadiths from him (*DU*, 1/192).

awareness of Jābir's failings, but they were unable to resist the temptation of drawing from his apparently vast and unique reservoir of reports.

As might be expected, Zāʾida's stances against his peers and students were harsher than his stances against his teachers. A paradigmatic example is found in the case of Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy. Despite the aspersions cast upon him for his rebellious activities and his central role in the nascent Zaydī movement, Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ was undoubtedly an established fixture of the proto-Sunnī Kūfan milieu. Notwithstanding the aforementioned friction with al-Thawrī, his most prominent students still held Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ in high regard and narrated from him extensively.[73] Even al-Thawrī's aversion towards Ḥasan was not absolute. He could discuss a fine point of history with him, or be moved to tears when confronted with the fact that his remarks about Ḥasan's rebellious views were liable to cost him his life.[74] Zāʾida, however, had no such compunctions. On the contrary, he lamented that Ibn Ḥayy had been "asking to be crucified" for some time and that there was simply no one to do the job.[75] Even if this statement was purely rhetorical, Zāʾida's antipathy for Ḥasan was quite real in practice. On one occasion, he swore off narrating to ʿAlī b. al-Jaʿd, the author of a *musnad* collection, simply because he had mentioned Ḥasan in the course of narrating a hadith.[76] He also used to sit in the

[73] These were Abū Nuʿaym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn and Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ, both of whom are discussed in more detail below.
[74] Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 415-416; *DU*, 1/230. Elements of these reports appear embellished and their historicity is open to question; the latter seems to suggest, for example, that al-Thawrī did not recognize Ḥasan and had to be told who he was. Nonetheless, the overall import of the reports – that al-Thawrī's aversion to Ḥasan was not so absolute as to preclude any amicable interaction – is likely sound. See also *SAN*, 7/363.
[75] *DU*, 1/229, "*Ibn Ḥayy hādhā qad istaṣlaba mundhu zamān wa mā najid aḥadan yaṣlubuhu*."
[76] *DU*, 1/231.

mosque and warn people about Ḥasan and his brother, and insisted that all those who frequented his gathering must repent for doing so.[77]

There was, however, something more to Zāʾida's approach than the provincialism that is so readily apparent in these anecdotes. His intolerance was in fact a calculated response to perceived shifts in his milieu that was designed to achieve specific ends. Zāʾida once asked a colleague if one of his students was a *ṣāḥib sunna*. The man replied that he did not know him to be associated with any innovations. Unsatisfied, Zāʾida repeated the question and his exasperated colleague asked in turn, "When were people like this?" Without disputing the anomaly of his approach, Zāʾida retorted, "When did people insult Abū Bakr and ʿUmar?"[78] The logic (and extent) of Zāʾida's probing examinations of narrators is clarified even further in the following anecdote:

> Zāʾida did not narrate to anyone until he put him to the test. If he was a foreigner he would ask, "Where are you from?" If he was a native of the city he would ask, "Where do you pray?" He would inquire like a judge inquires about evidence... If he was an innovator (*ṣāḥib bidʿa*) he would say, "Never return to this gathering," but if he heard good things about him he would bring him close and narrate to him. Someone asked him, "Abū al-Ṣalt, why do you do this?" He said, "I hate that they [the innovators] should have knowledge and become Imāms who people are in need of. Then they will [be able to] change things as they wish."[79]

Zāʾida's justification of his approach exhibits a shrewd understanding of the milieu in which he operated. He had, perhaps, seen in his youth that no amount of *bidʿa* could prevent his peers from flocking to Jābir al-Juʿfī to hear what they could not hear from anyone else. In order to avoid things getting out of hand any further, it was best to err on the side of caution. Although

[77] *DU*, 1/231-2. The feeling, it seems, was at least partially mutual. An awkward lull came over Ḥasan's gathering when one of Zaʾida's students entered it. When he inquired as to what the problem was, he was told that everyone disapproved of his love of Zāʾida and Mālik b. Mighwal (*DU*, 1/229-30).
[78] *SAN*, 7/377; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 9/277.
[79] Al-Ḥasan b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Rāmahurmuzī, *al-Muḥaddith al-fāṣil bayna al-rāwī wa al-wāʿī* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1984), 574-5.

Zāʾida's methods clearly seemed overbearing and irksome to his contemporaries, they would ultimately make a significant contribution to the terms in which narrating from Shīʿites and other groups deemed heretical would be theorized and debated.

Sharīk b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Nakhaʿī (95-177/714-794)

Sharīk b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Nakhaʿī was a prominent judge, jurist and hadith narrator of mid-second/eighth century Kūfa. He was one of the most prolific narrators of his time but was known to be unreliable and imprecise in his transmission. His reception among hadith critics was mixed, with Muslim narrating from him only sparingly and al-Bukhārī excluding him from his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. His reputation was also marred by the fact that he accepted a judicial appointment from al-Manṣūr, although he was reluctant to do so and considerable tension persisted between him and the Caliphs under whom he served.[80]

Sharīk was not widely identified as a Shīʿite by hadith critics but many anecdotes indicate that his Shīʿite sentiments were a significant point of controversy. Ibn Qutayba included him in his list of Shīʿites and al-Jūzajānī called him deviant (*māʾil*).[81] Several reports suggest that he was denounced as a *rāfiḍī* by rivals before al-Mahdī and al-Rashīd.[82] There is little to suggest that he directly supported any of the ʿAlid revolts that occurred during his lifetime, although he was not totally removed from them either. He was with al-Aʿmash while the latter received an emissary from Zayd b. ʿAlī seeking his support and he once spent the night with with Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ and his brother ʿAlī while they plotted rebellion.[83]

[80] ʿIjlī, *Thiqāt*, 1/454-6; *DU*, 2/193-5; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 4/6-11; *TB*, 9/280-94; *SAN*, 8/200-16.
[81] Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 624; Jūzajānī, *Aḥwāl al-rijāl*, 92.
[82] Muḥammad b. Khalaf Wakī, *Akhbār al-quḍāt* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-istiqāma, 1947), 3/155-6, 159-60.
[83] For the first report see Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 147-8. For the second see *DU*, 1/232. The printed version of ʿUqaylī has "*shahidtu Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ wa akhā Sharīkin maʿahum*," but al-Dhahabī and al-Mizzī give the more

Some reports suggest that Sharīk held relatively strong Shīʿite views. He objected to a colleague who called Muʿāwiya forbearing, saying that someone who fought against ʿAlī could hardly be described in such a manner.[84] Two Shīʿites once approached him and accused him of being "a wavering doubter (*shākk*)," employing a quasi-technical term used by different factions to denigrate those who were not sufficiently committed to their religio-political vision.[85] Sharīk defended himself against this accusation by saying that he wished that he could have participated in all of ʿAlī's battles, bloodying his hands in combat with his enemies.[86] A solitary narration suggests that Sharīk believed that ʿAlī was the best of the Companions and he narrated the controversial "*khāṣif al-naʿl*" hadith, which seems to imply that the Prophet gave preference to ʿAlī over Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.[87] His Shīʿite sentiments also seem to have impacted relations with his contemporaries. He used his position as judge to humiliate the younger ʿUthmānī, ʿAbd Allāh b. Idrīs (d. 192/808).[88] A rift also developed between Sharīk and Mālik b. Mighwal, the aforementioned student of al-Shaʿbī known for his opposition to Shīʿites, on account of Mālik's criticism of ʿAmmār b. Yāsir and ʿAlī.[89]

There is, however, another side to the portrayal of Sharīk's sentiments, and many narrations suggest that they were of a more mild character. Several reports suggest that he was strongly opposed to ranking ʿAli over Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.[90] He was reportedly not fond of the Kūfan disciples of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, whom he derided initially when they appeared before

likely reading of "*shahidtu Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ wa akhāhu wa Sharīk maʿahum*" (*SAN*, 7/364; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 6/182).

[84] *DU*, 2/194.

[85] See Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, 45-46, 95.

[86] *DU*, 2/194.

[87] Ibn ʿAdī reported that Sharīk said, "'*Alī khair al-bashar, fa-man abā fa-qad kafara*" (*Kāmil*, 4/10). See V.4. below for a discussion of the "*khāṣif al-naʿl*" hadith.

[88] *DU*, 2/194. After having Ibn Idrīs struck on the back of his neck, Sharīk said wryly "He is from my *shīʿa* as far as I know!"

[89] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 4/10-11; Wakīʿ, *Akhbār al-qudāt*, 3/160.

[90] Wakīʿ, *Akhbār al-qudāt*, 3/160-1; *SAN*, 8/214.

him as witnesses in court, although he softened towards them upon witnessing their humility.[91] There are several versions of an encounter between Sharīk and another scholar of hadith, ʿAbd Allāh b. Muṣʿab al-Zubayrī, in which the latter accused him of insulting Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. Sharīk replied that he would not even insult ʿAbd Allāh b. Muṣʿab's forefather al-Zubayr despite the fact that he had broken his pledge to ʿAlī by fighting against him at the Battle of the Camel.[92] A number of narrations suggest that Sharīk held to the theory that the relative merit of the Caliphs followed the order of their succession, and that any suggestion otherwise was tantamount to accusing the Companions of collective error.[93] He is even reported to have stated explicitly that ʿUthmān was the best of the Companions when he was elected caliph.[94] If this is correct, Sharīk's position on the early Caliphs would have been similar to that of some of his ʿUthmānī contemporaries, who had begun to evolve towards a more explicit acknowledgement of ʿAlī.[95]

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī reports an interesting encounter between Sharīk and al-Mahdī (r. 158-169/775-785) in which Sharīk is cast as a figure who reconciles between the *jamāʿa* and the Imāmate of ʿAlī. As noted in the first chapter, the idea of the *jamāʿa* was invoked frequently by Umayyad supporters and thus sat in uneasy tension with a strong endorsement of ʿAlī's caliphate throughout the second/eighth century. Al-Mahdī reportedly told Sharīk that he was not fit to serve as a judge because he was at odds with the *jamāʿa* and held an improper position

[91] Kashshī, *Rijāl*, 239-40.
[92] Wakīʿ, *Akhbār al-quḍāt*, 3/156; *TB*, 9/287-288.
[93] *DU*, 2/194; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 4/9-10.
[94] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 4/10.
[95] Ibn ʿAwn (d. 151/768) and ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Mubārak (d. 181/797) were both known as ʿUthmānīs but are also reported to have regarded ʿAlī as a legitimate caliph. On Ibn ʿAwn see Judd, *Religious Scholars and the Umayyads*, 66. On Ibn al-Mubārak see Crone, "ʿUthmāniyya," *EI*^{2}; Feryal Salem, "ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Mubārak between *Ḥadīth*, *Jihād* and *Zuhd*: An Expression of Early Sunni Identity in the Formative Period" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2013), 38-45, citing poetry from Ibn al-Mubārak's *dīwān*.

on the Imāmate. Sharīk replied that he had learned his religion from the *jamāʿa* and that the ʿAbbāsid progenitors, ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib and his son ʿAbd Allāh, had been among the most ardent supporters of ʿAlī's Imāmate. The report goes on to state that Sharīk was removed from his post as judge shortly after this exchange.[96]

This anecdote scores too many apologetic points in the language of mature Sunnī theology for it to be accepted at face value, but it indicates that Sharīk's positions on such issues made him a plausible early spokesperson for the solutions that were eventually formulated. His overall profile suggests that although he was highly sympathetic towards the figure of ʿAlī, he was also an early proponent of the equal acceptability of all of the first four caliphs. It is possible that the contradictions in reports regarding his position were due in part to his own activities, as was the case with al-Aʿmash, to whom Sharīk was apparently similar in many respects. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal himself said that he did not know what Sharīk's position was regarding ʿAlī and ʿUthmān, even though he had interacted extensively with many of his students.[97]

Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ (128-197/746-813)

Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ succeeded Sufyān al-Thawrī as one of the most prominent traditionalist scholars of Kūfa. He had a profound influence on the subsequent generation of scholars, especially Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, and was a major source for his *musnad* collection. His scholarly reputation is epitomized by his moniker, "the dragon," which was given to him because seekers of hadith flocked to him in such great numbers that he left other scholars bereft of their students. He was widely remembered for his impressive regimen of fasting and

[96] *TB*, 9/291-292.
[97] *DU*, 2/194.

prayer, as well as his fondness for date-wine (*nabīdh*). Much like al-Thawrī, he was vigilant in maintaining his distance from power, not only refusing his own judicial appointment but cutting off his ties with a close colleague who accepted one.[98]

Among early authors, Ibn Qutayba and Pseudo-al-Nāshiʾ were alone in explicitly associating Wakīʿ with Shīʿism but numerous anecdotes corroborate this association.[99] As noted above, Wakīʿ was a student of Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy. Their relationship was apparently not limited to mere narration of hadith, which frequently cut across wide doctrinal gulfs as we have seen, but included a significant level of personal and doctrinal affinity. Yūsuf b. Asbāṭ,[100] yet another opponent of Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ, said that Wakīʿ was similar to Ḥasan with respect to "*fitan*."[101] This is a vague assertion to be sure, and to whatever extent Wakīʿ may or may not have shared his teacher's rebellious views, he seems to have recognized that defending them in a milieu that was increasingly hostile to them was a losing battle. He once narrated a hadith to his students from Ḥasan and noticed that they stopped writing. When he enquired why and they indicated that Ḥasan "believed in the sword," Wakīʿ was reduced to silence.[102]

In another instance in which Wakīʿ encountered resistance to his narrations from Ḥasan, he offered a more vigorous defense of him. Al-Fasawī includes a telling anecdote in this

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[98] On Wakīʿ see *SAN*, 9/140-168; R.G. Khoury, "Wakīʿ," *EI²*.
[99] Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 624; Pseudo-al-Nāshiʾ al-Akbar, *Masāʾil al-Imāma*, 65; Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*, 4/336.
[100] Yūsuf b. Asbāṭ was a student of al-Thawrī and Zāʾida b. Qudāma who was known primarily as an ascetic. He was not a prominent hadith transmitter and functions mainly as a transmitter of al-Thawrī's pious sayings. He held Ibn al-Mubārak in high regard and like him went to the Byzantine frontier (*al-thughūr*) to participate in jihad, which would likely place him in the warrior-ascetic milieu of the early ʿAbbāsid period that was not particularly friendly to Shīʿism. See Michael Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence and Holy War: Studies in the Jihad and the Arab-Byzantine Frontier* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1996). For Yūsuf's biography see *SAN*, 9/169-70.
[101] *SAN*, 7/363. There is no further evidence that Wakīʿ engaged in or even flirted with rebellious activities, but it should also be borne in mind that the opportunity for him to do so was extremely limited. The last major ʿAlid revolt to occur in ʿIrāq during his lifetime, that of Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd Allāh, took place when he was only 16 or 17 years old.
[102] *DU*, 1/232.

regard on the authority of Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Idrīs, the son of a prominent Kūfan ʿUthmānī:

> I entered upon Wakīʿ so that he would read something from his books to me. The subject of Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ came up, so I said to him, "Won't you leave his hadiths?" He said, "Why should I leave his hadiths while I consider him an Imām?" I said, "He used to refrain from invoking mercy on ʿUthmān." Wakīʿ said to me, "Do you invoke mercy on [the infamous Umayyad governor] al-Ḥajjāj? Do you invoke mercy on [the ʿAbbāsid caliph] Abū Jaʿfar [al-Manṣūr]?"[103]

Van Ess cites this anecdote as evidence that Ḥasan omitted the formula "*raḥimahu Allāh* (God have mercy on him)" from ʿUthmān's name, but says nothing of its implications for Wakīʿ, whom he had categorized, following Pseudo-al-Nāshiʾ, as one of those "Schiisierende Traditionarier" who would not even engage in criticism of Muʿāwiya.[104] It is admittedly marginally arguable whether Wakīʿs riposte constituted an explicit criticism of ʿUthman, but the comparison implicit in his question was certainly less than flattering for ʿUthmān, a fact which was not lost on later authors who took Wakīʿ to task for it.[105]

Nor is this anecdote the only evidence that Wakīʿ occasionally failed to observe propriety with the Companions. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal explained his preference for ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Mahdī's narrations from Sufyān al-Thawrī over those of Wakiʿ by citing the fact that, among other things, Ibn al-Mahdī did not criticize the *salaf*.[106] In a widely reported scandal, Wakīʿ was imprisoned and nearly executed by the governor of Mecca after he narrated that the

[103] *MT*, 2/806. The report does not inspire total confidence; the narrator from Muḥammad, Ḥasan b. al-Rabīʿ b. Sulaymān (d. 221/836), felt it necessary to preface his narration by stressing that Muḥammad was "more virtuous than his father... a man of honesty." Ḥasan b. al-Rabīʿ was closely associated with ʿUthmānīs such as Muḥammad's father and ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Mubārak (al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 6/147-151; Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 6/409). Muḥammad himself was fairly obscure and one of the few things remembered about him was his zealous commitment to "forbidding wrong" (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-thiqāt* (Hayderabad: Dāʾirat al-maʿārif al-ʿuthmāniyya, 1973), 9/70).
[104] *Th&G*, 1/236, 249.
[105] *SAN*, 7/369. Note the comments of al-Dhahabī after this report.
[106] *SAN*, 9/154.

Prophet was not buried until "his belly became swollen and his little finger bent." As noted by Muhammad Qasim Zaman, the import of this narration is somewhat ambiguous, but it is difficult not to perceive in it an intimation of the well known Shīʿite charge that the leading Companions were so consumed by their desire to settle the matter of succession to the Prophet that they left preparations for his burial to his kin, foremost among them ʿAlī.[107]

Collectively, all of these reports suggest strongly that Wakīʿ believed that the Companions, including the Caliphs, were not immune to a reasonable measure of criticism. At the same time, it is quite unlikely that he was hostile to ʿUthmān in any overt sense. He narrated reports on ʿUthmān's virtues and was said to have composed a *faḍāʾil* collection that included a chapter on ʿUthmān, although it was placed after the chapter on ʿAlī.[108] However moderate Wakīʿs position may have been, it still went far beyond the boundaries of what was acceptable to some of his peers. At least one narrator charged Wakīʿ with *rafḍ*, as indicated in the following report from Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn regarding an encounter with Marwān b. Muʿāwiya (d. 193/809),[109] a Kūfan native who settled in Damascus:

> I saw Marwān b. Muʿāwiya with a slate on which hadiths and the names of scholars were written: so-and-so is a Rāfiḍī, so-and-so is such-and-such. Then he went over a name and said, "Wakīʿ is a Rāfiḍī." I said to Marwān b. Muʿāwiya, "Wakīʿ is better than you!" "Better than me?", Marwān exclaimed. "Yes," I said. Yaḥyā was asked if Marwān had not responded to that. He said, "If he had said anything the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth* would

[107] See Zaman, *Religion and Politics*, 142-3 and the sources cited there. It is important to point out that the chief objection raised against the narration was its portrayal of the Prophet, and not the Companions, as evinced by the governor's citation of a hadith indicating that the bodies of martyrs do not decompose (*MT*, 1/176). This does not render the report irrelevant to the discussion here, however, since the issue of succession to the Prophet was quite central in shaping accounts of his death and burial. See Leor Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave: Death Rites and the Making of Islamic Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 45-48; Madelung, *Succession*, 26-7, 356-60. For a representative Shīʿite portrayl of the events see al-Shaykh al-Mūfīd, *al-Irshād* (Qumm: Muʾassasat Āl al-bayt, 1413), 1/186-90.
[108] *SAN*, 9/154. This work would likely have been included within either his *Sunan* or his *Muṣannaf* collection, both of which are mentioned by Sezgin in *GAS*, 1/96-7. For some of his narrations on the virtues of ʿUthmān see Ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 1/474, 494.
[109] On Marwān, a moderately prominent narrator, see Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 27/403-410.

have pounced on him and beaten him up." And after that Wakīʿ favored me and brought me close to him.[110]

This anecdote is instructive on several levels. Ibn Maʿīn is on record as having issued a vituperous denunciation of anyone who insulted ʿUthmān,[111] but in the incident in question he vigorously defended Wakīʿ against his detractor. Much as we saw in the case of al-Aʿmash, if a narrator reached a certain level of prominence due to his learning without blatantly violating broadly recognized boundaries, he would be virtually immune to critiques leveled against him for promoting marginal positions. At the same time, Marwān's ill-fated attempt to disqualify Wakīʿ as a *rāfiḍī* offers a vivid illustration of the elastic nature of the polemical terminology deployed in an effort to draw boundaries on issues of sectarian dispute. For Marwān to call Wakīʿ a *rāfiḍī* violated a widely shared communal sense of his stature. However, as we saw in the case of Zāʾida b. Qudāma, Marwān's association of even mild criticism of the Companions with *rafḍ* would shortly become standard Sunnī doctrine.

ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām al-Ṣanʿānī (126-211/744-827)

ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī was in all likelihood the most important hadith narrator of late second/eighth century Yemen. The most illustrious scholars of the following generation, including Ibn Ḥanbal, Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn and ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī, traveled to Yemen to study with him and he was the author of a voluminous *muṣannaf* collection. He was remembered and respected above all for this work, which remains one of the most important pre-canonical collections of Prophetic and Companion reports. Like Sufyān al-Thawrī, who was one of his most important

[110] Zaman, *Religion and Politics*, 143-144.
[111] *DU*, 2/86, "...anyone who denigrates ʿUthmān or one of the Companions of the Messenger of God is an anti-christ (*dajjāl*), a cursed transgressor. His hadith should not be written and the curse of God and all of humanity rests upon him."

teachers, ʿAbd al-Razzāq at times engaged in transmission practices that violated the strict standards of hadith critics, the development of which accelerated during his lifetime but only became standard in the course of the third/ninth century. Despite a handful of reservations, ʿAbd al-Razzāq was well received by Sunnī hadith critics on the whole and his narrations certainly left an indelible mark on the Sunnī hadith tradition.[112]

Among early *rijāl* authors, ʿAbd al-Razzāq's Shīʿism was noted by al-ʿIjlī, ʿAbd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and Ibn Qutayba.[113] His colleague and fellow Shīʿite Wakīʿ alluded to his Shīʿism as well, stating that he was "similar to the narrators from the people of ʿIrāq."[114] However, unlike the majority of Kūfan narrators examined thus far, ʿAbd al-Razzāq's Shīʿism could not have been a natural extension of the environment in which he was raised and educated. This was noted by Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn, who asked ʿAbd al-Razzāq how he had adopted this opinion (*madhhab*) after hearing him make a statement that smacked of Shīʿism. Ibn Maʿīn enumerated ʿAbd al-Razzāq's teachers and noted that they had all been "*aṣḥāb sunna*," as if to express his disappointment in ʿAbd al-Razzāq. In his response, ʿAbd al-Razzāq did not protest that his views were perfectly in line with those of his teachers, as one might have expected, but rather admitted that he had adopted Shīʿism after he was impressed by the Baṣran Shīʿite Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān al-Ḍubaʿī (d. 178/794) during the latter's visit to Yemen.[115]

The connection to Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān al-Ḍubaʿī in particular is not without significance, since the specific character of his Shīʿism is reflected in that of ʿAbd al-Razzāq. There were other possible conduits by which tinges of Shīʿism might have reached ʿAbd al-Razzāq – Sufyān

[112] On ʿAbd al-Razzāq and his *muṣannaf* see Motzki, *Origins*, esp. 62-71.
[113] al-ʿIjlī, *Thiqāt*, 2/93; Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 2/58; Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 624.
[114] Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 2/59.
[115] *TMD*, 36/187. See also *DU*, 3/109.

al-Thawrī and Ibn Jurayj were two of his three principal teachers.[116] However, unlike either of the former, ʿAbd al-Razzāq's Shīʿism led him to be critical of the Companions on certain occasions, which is better explained by the influence of Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān. It is from him that ʿAbd al-Razzāq narrated the controversial hadith, "If you see Muʿāwiya on my pulpit then kill him."[117] Al-ʿUqaylī also reports that ʿAbd al-Razzāq rebuked a man who mentioned Muʿāwiya in front of him, saying, "Don't defile our gathering by mentioning the son of Abū Sufyān."[118] ʿAbd al-Razzāq's criticism of the Companions was apparently not reserved for the controversial figure of Muʿāwiya, but extended to the early Caliphs on occasion as well. Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn remembered that he and Ibn Ḥanbal had heard ʿAbd al-Razzāq criticize ʿUthmān (*tanāwala ʿUthmān*) during their sojourn in Yemen.[119] ʿAbd al-Razzāq also called ʿUmar an idiot (*al-anwak*) in the course of narrating the famous episode in which ʿUmar rebuked ʿAlī and al-ʿAbbās for quarrelling over their rights to the oasis of Fadak after he had restored it to their control.[120]

Such statements naturally gave raise to a certain level of controversy surrounding ʿAbd al-Razzāq. For some scholars, this controversy was sufficient cause to abandon his hadiths altogether. When Zayd b. al-Mubārak (d. mid-third/ninth c.), a native of Ṣanʿāʾ who moved to Ramla, heard ʿAbd al-Razzāq call ʿUmar an idiot, he left his gathering and resolved that he

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[116] On ʿAbd al-Razzāq's principal teachers see Motzki, *Origins*, 58-62. The Shīʿism of al-Thawrī has been discussed at length above. Ibn Jurayj was not explicitly associated with Shīʿism but was educated in a Ḥijāzī milieu in which the influence of students of the Hāshimī Companion Ibn ʿAbbās was paramount. This is reflected, for example, in his reportedly extensive practice of temporary marriage (*zawāj al-mutʿa*), regarding which he also sought out the opinion of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (I.K.A. Howard, "*Mutʿa* Marriage Reconsidered in the Context of the Formal Procedures for Islamic Marriage," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 20 (1975), 85 n. 5).

[117] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 5/313-14. As noted by Ibn ʿAdī, ʿAbd al-Razzāq also narrated this hadith from Sufyān b. ʿUyayna, although the latter was not known otherwise to criticize the Companions. Ibn ʿAdī also stated that ʿAbd al-Razzāq narrated *mathālib* ("demerits") that he did not mention in his book (*Kāmil*, 5/315).

[118] *DU*, 3/110.

[119] *TMD*, 36/188-9.

[120] *DU*, 3/110. For the context of this dispute see L. Veccia Vaglieri, "Fadak," *EI²*. This well-known report is not found in ʿAbd al-Razzāq's *muṣannaf*, but his narration of it is confirmed in Abū Zayd ʿUmar b. Shabba, *Tārīkh al-madīna al-munawwara* (Jedda: 1979), 1/208-9.

would never narrate another hadith from him.[121] When ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm (d. 240/853), a respected Baṣran scholar, returned home from a trip to Ṣanʿāʾ, he found a group of students eagerly waiting to be regaled with the news of his trip to the most prominent narrator in Yemen. Much to their surprise, ʿAbbās noted the great effort that he expended in traveling to ʿAbd al-Razzāq and then swore an oath that he was a liar.[122]

Such complete rejection of ʿAbd al-Razzāq was not, however, the choice of the most influential hadith critics. A student who had traveled to study with ʿAbd al-Razzāq was deeply disturbed when he heard a rumor that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn had abandoned his hadiths, only to be consoled when Yaḥyā personally reassured him that "if ʿAbd al-Razzāq apostized from Islam we would not abandon his hadiths."[123] Ibn Ḥanbal seems to have attempted to minimize his exposure to ʿAbd al-Razzāq's controversial views while continuing to benefit from his study with him. Several narrators who accompanied him on his trip to Yemen noted that when ʿAbd al-Razzāq began reading "those hadiths," Ibn Ḥanbal would retreat to a corner or cover his ears until he moved on to another subject.[124]

Other reports suggest that Ibn Maʿīn and Ibn Ḥanbal were only vaguely aware of ʿAbd al-Razzāq's Shīʿism. At a certain point, Ibn Maʿīn had merely heard *about* ʿAbd al-Razzāq's views, but it was only when he heard a statement suggesting a Shīʿite inclincation from him directly that he was prompted to inquire regarding where this "opinion" derived from.[125]

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[121] *DU*, 3/110. On Zayd see Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 10/106; *TT*, 3/366.
[122] *DU*, 3/109. ʿAbbās did not specify that this accusation of mendacity was related to Shīʿism, but several considerations suggest that this was the case: 1) ʿAbbās would have met ʿAbd al-Razzāq at a relatively advanced age, at which point his adoption of Shīʿism would have already taken place, 2) there was a close link between ʿAbbās and the aforementioned Zayd b. al-Mubārak, who had left ʿAbd al-Razzāq due to his Shīʿism and 3) most of the controversy surrounding ʿAbd al-Razzāq was related to this issue. On ʿAbbās and his esteem for Zayd see *TB*, 12/136-7.
[123] *DU*, 3/110; Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, 5/311.
[124] Khallāl, *Musnad*, 225-6. One of these narrations specifies "*aḥādīth al-mathālib*."
[125] *TMD*, 36/187.

Likewise, when Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's son asked him about ʿAbd al-Razzāq's "excessive" Shīʿism, he replied that he had not personally heard anything from him in that regard and that it may simply have been that ʿAbd al-Razzāq was an eclectic collector of reports (*kāna rajulan tuʿjibuhu akhbār al-nās*).[126] Given the large number of reports indicating that Ibn Ḥanbal had indeed heard statements from ʿAbd al-Razzāq suggestive of Shīʿism, his statement to his son is best understood as implying that he was not entirely sure what ʿAbd al-Razzāq's personal commitments were, an idea that finds some support in the sources.

Two factors likely contributed to the ambiguity surrounding ʿAbd al-Razzāq's Shīʿite sentiments. On the one hand, he is reported to have made a number of statements confirming his veneration for all of the first four Caliphs.[127] It would be a mistake to assume that because he criticized some of them on certain occasions he therefore considered them to be entirely blameworthy or wholly illegitimate. He was, on the contrary, staunchly opposed to the position of the *rāfiḍī*s, to the extent that he declared them to be disbelievers.[128] In addition, this ambiguity may well have been deliberately cultivated by ʿAbd al-Razzāq himself. When a certain narrator asked him about his position on the question of preference among the Companions (*ṭafḍīl*), he refused to tell him and enumerated the positions of some of his teachers.[129] There is also more than one indication that ʿAbd al-Razzāq was selective in what he narrated to whom. Abū al-Azhar al-Naysābūrī (d. 263/877) said that ʿAbd al-Razzāq intentionally narrated a certain pro-ʿAlid hadith to him in the early morning when no other students were present.[130] When ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī departed from Ṣanʿāʾ, ʿAbd al-Razzāq told him

[126] Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 2/59; *TMD*, 36/190.
[127] Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 2/59; *TMD*, 36/189-90.
[128] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 5/312.
[129] *MT*, 2/806.
[130] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 1/193; *TB*, 4/262.

that if he heard hadiths attributed to him that were unfamiliar, he should not reject them because there were things that he had kept from him.[131]

Abū Nuʿaym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn (130-218/748-833)

Abū Nuʿaym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn was one of the last Shīʿite narrators of Kūfa to occupy a central position within the proto-Sunnī milieu. He bridged multiple generations, having learned from al-Aʿmash, al-Thawrī and Shuʿba and taught the likes of al-Bukhārī and Ibn Ḥanbal. He was one of the first teachers of al-Bukhārī, which likely accounts for his extensive narration from him in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.[132] He was also one of the few Kūfan Shīʿite traditionists who lived to witness the inquisition (*miḥna*) inaugurated by al-Maʾmūn (r. 198-218/813-833) and reportedly successfully avoided assenting to the doctrine of the createdness of the Qurʾān.[133]

Both Ibn Qutayba and Pseudo-al-Nāshiʾ included Abū Nuʿaym in their lists of Shīʿite narrators.[134] Al-Jūzajānī also alluded to his Shīʿism, noting that he was "of the Kūfan school (*Kūfī al-madhhab*)" even though he was honest.[135] A fellow stalwart in the *miḥna* in Kūfa, Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Yūnus (d. 227/842), reportedly kept his distance from Abū Nuʿaym because of his Shīʿism.[136] Abū Nuʿaym narrated extensively from a large number of Kūfan Shīʿites and seems to have functioned as a sort of unofficial repository for the pro-ʿAlid material narrated by his predecessors. Although he was remembered primarily as a hadith narrator, his narrations on the history of the ʿAlids are found in historical and biographical sources as

[131] See two separate narrations in *TMD*, 36/185.
[132] According to Sūdānī, al-Bukhārī includes 181 reports from him (*Manhaj*, 316).
[133] For a comprehensive biography of Abū Nuʿaym see ʿAlī Bahramian, "Abū Nuʿaym," *EIo*. For reports on his refusal to submit during the *miḥna* see *TB*, 12/234-5; *SAN*, 8/153.
[134] Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 624; Pseudo-al-Nāshiʾ al-Akbar, *Masāʾil al-Imāma*, 65.
[135] Jūzajānī, *Aḥwāl al-rijāl*, 81.
[136] "*bāʿada Abā Nuʿaym lil-tashayyuʿ*." Abū al-ʿArab Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Tamīmī, *Kitāb al-miḥan* (Beirut: 1983), 448. Bahramian confuses this Aḥmad for Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, who held Abū Nuʿaym in high esteem ("Abū Nuʿaym").

well.[137] Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn suggested that if Abū Nuʿaym praised a certain narrator, then he was likely to be a Shīʿite, but that if he called a narrator a Murjiʾī, then he was in fact a *ṣāḥib sunna*.[138] It thus comes as no surprise that Abū Nuʿaym defended Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy against critics and even considered him equal to al-Thawrī, who had also been one of his principal teachers.[139]

Aside from his association with Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ, which was politically innocuous in itself, Sunnī literature is silent regarding any association of Abū Nūʿaym with rebellious views or activities. Zaydī sources, however, assert that he was one of a handful of prominent traditionists who pledged allegiance to Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Ṭabaṭabāʾī before his revolt with Abū al-Sarāyā in 199/815.[140] Nothing, however, is reported regarding his activity during the rebellion itself. He was also associated with the Zaydīs in later heresiographical and biographical works and a number of reports from him are recorded in Zaydī literature.[141]

In spite of his Zaydī connections, the picture of Abū Nuʿaym's Shīʿism that comes through the sources is a mild one. He purportedly claimed that no one could reliably report

[137] Bahramian, "Abū Nuʿaym." See also the discussion in Chapter 4.
[138] Yahyā b. Maʿīn, *Suʾālāt Ibn al-Junayd li-Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn* (Madina: Maktabat al-dār,1988), 469.
[139] *TT*, 2/250-251. See also Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3/375-6, where Abū Nuʿaym explains Ḥasan's controversial absence from Friday prayers.
[140] Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 552; al-Hārunī, *al-Ifāda*, 84; Ḥumayd b. Aḥmad al-Maḥallī, *Al-Ḥadāʾiq al-wardiyya fī manāqib al-aʾimma al-Zaydiyya* (Sanʿa: Markaz Badr, 2002), 1/365-6; Van Arendonk, *Les débuts*, 89, 97. Others purported to have pledged allegiance include Yaḥyā b. Ādam (d. 203/818), Abū Bakr b. Abī Shayba (d. 235/849), the author of the *muṣannaf*, and his brother ʿUthmān (d. 239/854).
[141] Al-Khwārizmī (d. 387/997) identified Abū Nuʿaym as the leader of a Zaydī sub-sect, the "Dukayniyya," in the heresiographical section of his *Miftāḥ al-ʿulūm* (Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Khwārizmī, *Miftāḥ al-ʿulūm* (Cairo: 1930), 21). A reference to him as a Jārūdī author by al-Shahrastānī is of little worth given the desultory manner in which the section on Shīʿite authors appears to have been compiled (Wakīʿ and Abū Ḥanīfa are mentioned in the same category) (Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shahrasatānī, *Al-Milal wa al-Niḥal* (Cairo: Muʾassasat al-Ḥalabī, 1968), 1/190). The Zaydī Ibn Abī al-Rijāl (d. 1092/1681) included Abū Nuʿaym in a biographical work on Zaydī scholars citing al-Ḥākim al-Jushamī (d. 494/1101) (Bahramian, "Abū Nuʿaym"). For examples of Abū Nuʿaym's narrations concerned with Zaydī tradition see Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 31, 46, 419. Although some scholars have taken these Zaydī associations at face value, Van Ess is correct to assert that Abū Nuʿaym and similar figures could only be considered Zaydīs "im weiteren Sinne" (*Th&G*, 1/239). Cf. Madelung, *Der Imam*, 79; Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, 58.

from him that he had ever denigrated Muʿāwiya.[142] He appears to have been taciturn at times on subjects related to Shīʿism. He denied that the location of Ḥusayn's grave was known, for example, although Abū al-Sarāyā had visited it in preparation for his revolt.[143] A particularly poignant illustration of his reticence concerning his Shīʿism is found in an anecdote regarding him visiting Baghdad, narrated by his grandson:

> My grandfather, Abū Nuʿaym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn, came to Baghdad and we were with him. He stopped in [the neighborhood of] al-Ramliyya[144] and a great throne was set up on which he sat to narrate hadiths. A man stood up – I think he was from the people of Khurasān – and said, "Abu Nuʿaym! Are you a Shīʿite (*a tatashayyaʿ*)?" The shaykh [Abū Nuʿaym] disliked what he said, so he turned away from him and cited the statement of [the poet] Muṭīʿ b. Abī Iyās, "Your love remained with me until it was as if / I was unable to reply to the one who asked about you / In order that we both be spared the slander of critics / I submitted – but is any living person safe from the people?" The man did not understand what he meant, so he repeated the question: "Abū Nuʿaym! Are you a Shīʿite?" The shaykh said, "Imbecile (*yā hādhā*)! How have I been afflicted with you? And what ill-omened wind has brought you to me? I heard Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ say, 'I heard Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad [al-Ṣādiq] say, 'The love of ʿAlī is worship, and the best of worship is that which is concealed.'"[145]

Whether this anecdote is genuine or was concocted by someone who knew that the *ahl al-ḥadīth* would savor its subtle allusions, it registers some of the most important developments that led to a decline in the prominence of Shīʿite narrators in the beginning of the third/ninth century. We have seen in the first chapter that this decline was contemporaneous with a shift in the center of hadith activity from Kūfa towards Baghdad. Within Kūfa, Shīʿite sentiments were standard, but in most other urban centers they stood somewhere on a spectrum between

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[142] *TB*, 12/345.
[143] For Abū Nuʿaym's denial see *TB*, 1/154. For Abū al-Sarāyā's visit to Ḥusayn's grave see *Maqātil*, 521-2.
[144] This was in all likelihood a neighborhood of the northwestern Ḥarbiyya quarter of Baghdad. See G. Le Strange, *Baghdad during the Abbasid Caliphate* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1900), 134 (the vocalization "al-Ramalīyah" is errant). The neighborhood is also sometimes referred to – in this anecdote and others – as al-Rumayla, as in Majlisī's version cited below. None of the various locations given for al-Rumayla, however, correspond well to this anecdote.
[145] *TB*, 12/346. A Shīʿite version of the same story specifies that this occurred during "difficult days in the matter of *taqiyya*." See Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār* (Beirut: Dār iḥyāʾ al-turāth al-ʿarabī, 1983), 39/279-80.

anomaly and anathema. Some of the residents of Baghdad would have been particularly hostile to Shīʿism, and the reference to Abū Nuʿaym's questioner being from "the people of Khurasān" is of significance in this connection. The exchange took place in the Ḥarbiyya quarter of Baghdad, which was populated by the *abnāʾ*, or the military aristocracy made up of the descendants of the original Khurasānī supporters of the ʿAbbāsid revolution. The "people of Khurasān" within Baghdad were associated with strong pro-Muʿāwiya views and the *abnāʾ* formed a traditionalist, anti-ʿAlid bloc that was consistently opposed to the reign and policies of Maʾmūn.[146] If this incident took place any time after Maʾmūn's appointment of ʿAlī al-Riḍā as his heir-apparent, Abū Nuʿaym would have been questioned about his *tashayyuʿ* in a socio-political environment increasingly defined by the polarization of the *ahl al-sunna* and the *shīʿa*. This polarization, more than anything else, accounts for the fact that Abū Nuʿaym and his peers were the last generation of Kūfan Shīʿites to leave a considerable footprint in the Sunnī hadith tradition.

IV.4. "The Four-Caliph Thesis" and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal

In his work on early Zaydī thought, Wilferd Madelung has argued that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, as a chief architect of the doctrines of *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamāʿa*, played a central role in

[146] The *abnāʾ* and the *ahl Khurasān* were overlapping but not identical groups. Both were closely associated with political opposition to Maʾmūn and a traditionalist, anti-ʿAlid religious orientation. On the *abnāʾ* in general and their connections with and distinctions from other ethnic and religious groups see Patricia Crone, "The ʿAbbāsid Abnāʾ and Sāsānid Cavalrymen," *JRAS* 8 (1998), 1-19; John P. Turner, "The *abnā al-dawla*: The Definition and Legitimation of Identity in Response to the Fourth *Fitna*," *JAOS* 124 (2004), 1-22. Crone and Turner both suggest that the civil war between al-Amīn and al-Maʾmūn was decisive in the consolidation of a collective identity for the *abnāʾ*. On the pro-Muʿāwiya views of the *ahl Khurasān* see Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, 39, 46-7; Charles Pellat, "Le Culte de Muʿāwiya au IIIe siècle de l'hégire," *Studia Islamica* 6 (1956), 55. For arguments in favor of viewing the anti-Maʾmūn, anti-ʿAlid, traditionalist views of the *abnāʾ* and the Khurasānīs as part of a unitary, if messy, phenomenon see Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, 36-40; Ira Lapidus, "Separation of State and Religion in the Development of Early Islamic Society," *IJMES* 6 (1975), 363-85.

the formulation and propagation of the "four-caliph thesis" that has been a central doctrine of Sunnism for more than a millennium. He argues convincingly that Ibn Ḥanbal had at first restricted a legitimate claim to the caliphate to Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and ʿUthmān in line with the views of the ʿUthmānīs, and that he later appended ʿAlī to the list, helping to bring about a comprehensive transformation in the proto-Sunnī doctrine to which he was heir. He also stated that in so doing, Ibn Ḥanbal was able to fully incorporate the Shīʿite wing of Kūfan traditionalism into the broad tent of Sunnī traditionalism.[147]

Madelung's argument has exercised a pervasive influence on subsequent scholarship, with an array of authors confirming and building upon its general outlines. Some of these scholars have been careful to introduce nuance into their discussions, noting that the acceptance of this idea must have been a protracted process that cannot be attributed to any single individual or moment. Madelung himself briefly implies as much in a subsequent article on the concept of Imāma.[148] Crone points out that some prominent proto-Sunnī figures of the latter half of the second/eighth century are purported to have recognized ʿAlī as a fourth caliph and Zaman also notes that figures of the previous generation hailing from different urban centers of Iraq contributed hadiths that lent support to the legitimacy of ʿAlī's caliphate.[149] In the hands of other scholars, however, Madelung's argument has been used to paint stark contrasts and a moment of decisive transition. Nagel, for instance, asserts that Ibn Ḥanbal's inclusion of ʿAlī as a fourth caliph averted the possibility of a thorough polarization of Muslims into "Rāfiḍīs and Nābita" that loomed at the beginning of the third/ninth century.[150] Most recently, Abbas Barzegar has sought to demonstrate how the Sunnī inclusion of ʿAlī

[147] Madelung, *Der Imam*, 223-8.
[148] Madelung, "Imāma" in *EI²*.
[149] Crone, "Uthmāniyya" in *EI²*; Zaman, *Religion and Politics*, 50-4.
[150] Tilmen Nagel, "Das Problem der Orthodoxie im frühen Islam," in *Studien zum Minderheitenporblem im Islam 1* (Bonn: Otto Spies, 1973), 40-3.

alongside his predecessors "creates a tension in the narrative of early Islamic history that requires constant discursive maintenance," of which "the idea of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs is but one expression."[151] Due to his emphasis on the continual revision of historical narrative in a dialectic process between Sunnīs and Shīʿites, Barzegar is careful to avoid overemphasizing the role of any individual or the centrality of any moment in this process, but the notion of a radical shift towards Sunnī inclusion of ʿAlī nonetheless frames a significant portion of his project.[152]

Much of the force of the argument for the novelty of Ibn Ḥanbal's four-caliph thesis derives from exchanges recorded in Ḥanbalī literature in which phrases such as "*al-tarbīʿ bi-ʿAlī*" and "*rabbaʿta bi-ʿAlī*" are used, which leave little doubt that Ibn Ḥanbal had promoted ʿAlī to a status that he had previously reserved for the first three caliphs. These phrases are of course significant, but equally significant is the fact that expressions like "*tarbīʿ bi-ʿAlī*" seem to have been employed exclusively by Syrian narrators, a point that has been overlooked in previous scholarship. The only attestations for the use of such phrases are from Wazīra b. Muḥammad al-Ḥimṣī, Ibn Ḥanbal's inquisitive interlocutor in the aforementioned reports[153], and Muḥammad b. al-Fayḍ al-Ghassānī (d. 315/927), who used it in reference to several Damascene narrators of the mid-third/ninth century.[154] This suggests that the move towards considering ʿAlī as a "Rightly-Guided Caliph" was particularly jarring for Syrians, which would

[151] Barzegar, "Remembering Community," 172.
[152] Barzegar, "Remembering Community," 127-76.
[153] Madelung, *Der Imam*, 226; Zaman, *Religion and Politics*, 51. I am unable to find discrete entries on Wazīra b. Muḥammad in the sources, but, in addition to his *nisba*, the body of reports attributed to him in *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq* makes it clear that he was active primarily in a Syrian milieu. See *TMD*, 36/132, 37/85, 48/53.
[154] On Muḥammad b. al-Fayḍ al-Ghassānī see *TMD*, 55/96-8. In several separate narrations he noted that the following Syrian scholars "did *tarbīʿ*" with ʿAlī: Maḥmūd b. Khālid b. Yazīd (d. 249/863) (*TMD*, 57/109), Abū ʿĀmir Mūsā b. ʿĀmir (d. 255/869) (*TMD*, 60/441) and Hishām b. ʿAmmār (d. 245/859) (*SAN*, 11/433). See in particular his statement "*adraktu shuyūkhanā min shuyūkh Dimashq mimman yurabbiʿ bi-ʿAlī Maḥmūd b. Khālid b. Yazīd wa dhakara ghayrahu*" (*TMD*, 57/109).

hardly be surprising, given that Syria remained a bastion of anti-ʿAlid sentiment well into the third/ninth century. It also suggests that the broad conclusions proposed on the basis of such statements may have been overstated.

In the previous chapter, we have seen ample evidence that proto-Sunnīs of the late Umayyad period were located at various points along a broad spectrum with respect to their views on ʿUthmān and ʿAlī and that the notion of a total polarization of ʿUthmānīs and ʿAlawīs in this period is chimerical. Although true centrists may have been few relative to the partisans, there was no dearth of figures whose ʿUthmānī or ʿAlawī/Shīʿī alignments were coupled with a guarded respect for the eponym of the other side. This was not, at that point, a standard position, but it was far from being a novel one in the third/ninth century. Before Ibn Ḥanbal "proclaimed *tarbīʿ*," a great deal of groundwork had been laid by figures like al-Thawrī and Shuʿba, who had traversed the distance between Kūfa and Baṣra and found a middle ground that rendered them not only acceptable but authoritative figures in both milieus. Al-Thawrī was admired as much by ʿUthmānīs like Ḥammād b. Zayd and ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Mubārak was he was by fellow Kūfans like Wakīʿ and Abū Nuʿaym.[155] Likewise, Shuʿba received the approval of no less an inveterate enemy of Shīʿites than Yazīd b. Zurayʿ.[156] Even al-Jūzajānī, whose invective against the previous generation of prominent Kūfan Shīʿites was by all appearances meant to undercut the legitimacy of narrations on ʿAlī's virtues, could not question the status of figures like al-Thawri, Shuʿba and Wakīʿ.[157] Far from being in need of Ibn Ḥanbal doing them the favor of incorporating them into Sunnism, it was this generation, in

[155] For Ḥammād b. Zayd see Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilya*, 6/371. For Ibn al-Mubārak see Salem, "ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Mubārak," 17, 34.
[156] *SAN*, 7/255.
[157] Jūzajānī, *Aḥwāl al-rijāl*, 103-4.

which boundaries between Baṣra and Kūfa, ʿUthmānīs and ʿAlawīs/Shīʿites faded, that had created the possibility for his intervention.

Indeed, what we have record of in the narrations regarding Ibn Ḥanbal's discussions with his students on *tarbīʿ* seems to be more of a question of systemization and synthesis than of the wholesale introduction of a novel doctrine. In part, the notion of a "four-caliph thesis" rests on the assumption that there are a certain number of slots for legitimate caliphs waiting to be filled, but it seems unlikely that this is how the early Muslims conceived of things. The narrations generally referred to in order to demonstrate that ʿAlī was not initially considered a Rightly-Guided Caliph do not in fact make explicit reference to a caliphate or caliphs but rather only to a relative ranking of Companions in order of virtue. The question of whether or not ʿAlī had been a caliph would have become more poignant as doctrines regarding the caliphate itself became more developed.[158]

IV.5. Expanding and Hardening Boundaries

In one of the paradoxes that so frequently characterize religious history, the period under study witnessed two apparently contradictory phenomena, as leading proto-Sunnīs sought to foreclose certain types of dissent in the present even while they retrospectively embraced a sort of diversity. This process is most obvious in the increasingly strict stance adopted by hadith critics concerning how much, if any, criticism of the Companions could be

[158] See the discussions between Ibn Ḥanbal and his students recorded in Khallāl, *Musnad*, 165-88. According to many of these narrations, Ibn Ḥanbal considered *tafḍīl* and *khilāfa* to be two separate issues and used different hadiths as proof-texts for each one. Many of the discussions deal with the implications of whether or not ʿAlī is regarded as a caliph. If he was not a caliph, then why did he perform various ritual and legal functions that are the sole provenance of the caliph? If he was a caliph, then what does that imply about Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr? What were the circumstances under which he received the pledge of allegiance? All of these questions suggest that Ibn Ḥanbal's efforts to standardize doctrine concerning both ʿAlī and the caliphate itself went hand in hand.

tolerated. The cases of ʿAbd al-Razzāq and Wakīʿ demonstrate that while the doctrine of the inviolable sanctity of the Companions was not yet firmly ensconced at the end of the second/eighth century, there was a significant contingent within the proto-Sunnī milieu that sought to exclude anyone who violated it, no matter how learned. This is also demonstrated by the numerous questions put to the master hadith critics of the third/ninth century about prominent Shīʿite narrators: how is it acceptable to narrate from them even though they are Shīʿites? In spite of the efforts of some to exclude Shīʿite narrators altogether, figures like al-Bukhārī, Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn and Ibn Ḥanbal maintained the traditional distinction, largely implicit up to this point, which held that one could transmit from someone who held objectionable beliefs as long as one was confident that they were truthful in what they narrated. As we will see in the next chapter, it was largely this generation that developed a systematic expression of this implicit standard, even though they did not apply it even-handedly in practice.

It should be emphasized that the same critics who defended narrating from Shīʿites were also active in the process of foreclosing possibilities for dissent. We have seen that Ibn Maʿīn, who had defended Wakīʿ against Marwān b. Muʿāwiya's accusations, declared that "anyone who insults... one of the Companions is a transgressing, accursed anti-christ (*dajjāl*) upon whom the curse of God, the angels and all of humankind rests."[159] Ibn Ḥanbal disapproved of transmitting controversial materials about the Companions to the extent that he prohibited a student from attempting to ascertain how much Shuʿba had narrated regarding the Battles of Ṣiffīn and the Camel, asking him why these battles mattered at all since they had nothing to do with the duties owed to God.[160] Ibn Ḥanbal's disregard for the post-Prophetic history of the Companions is reflective of the gradual receding of their memory

[159] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/86.
[160] Khallāl, *Musnad*, 206.

from the realm of history, where they remained fallible human beings, to the realm of doctrine, where general notions of their sanctity trumped all other considerations.[161]

This ahistorical view of the Companions allowed the emerging Sunnī community to elide the implications of disagreement and dissent in history and to forge a unified narrative of community where none had existed. By the middle of the third/ninth century, Ibn Ḥanbal was heir to a vast and variegated body of lore deriving from all of the major urban centers of the early Islamic empire, as well as some of its backwaters. Inasmuch as this lore reflected the beliefs of multiple local milieus and competing religio-political doctrines and agendas, it fell to collectors like him to provide it with a maximal level of coherence. His *musnad* collection, in which Kūfan narrations on the virtues of ʿAlī are juxtaposed with Syrian narrations on the virtues of Muʿāwiya with no sense of irony, was a bricolage of the accumulated oral and written traditions of multiple, contending religio-political factions, theological trends and legal schools that was held together and made possible by the common patterns of authority that they all shared despite their differences.

The elevation of the Prophetic word to an unparalleled authoritative status that was the hallmark of Ibn Ḥanbal's approach and that of the hadith movement in general had profound effects for Sunnī views of history and community. The narrators who had transmitted these words for two centuries were relegated to a monochromatic substratum over which the uninterrupted transmission of divine guidance flowed. The paradigmatic form of the hadith – in the sense of a *matn* supported by an *isnād* – had the effect, literally, of

[161] For a study of this process see Heather N. Keaney, *Medieval Islamic Historiography: Remembering Rebellion* (New York: Routledge, 2013). On the microcosmic manifestation of this process in the discipline of hadith, embodied in the doctrine of the "collective probity," or *ʿadāla*, of the Companions see the recent studies of Amr Osman, "*ʿAdālat al-Ṣaḥāba:* The Construction of a Religious Doctrine," *Arabica* 60 (2013), 272-305; Nancy Khalek, "Medieval Biographical Dictionaries and the Companions of Muḥammad," *Der Islam* 91 (2014), 272-95. I am grateful to both authors for providing me with advance copies of these articles and to Nancy Khalek for suggesting the first reference cited here.

foregrounding the shared underlying assumptions that had allowed contending factions to participate in a shared scholarly venture while hiding the religio-political and social conflicts that had divided them behind their shared allegiance to the Prophetic word. A fragile unity was, in a sense, purchased at the price of authentic memory.

The processes involved in this transaction were closely paralleled outside the discipline of hadith. In the twin discipline of historiography, the third/ninth century was also a moment of synthesis, in which disparate local historical traditions were gathered in compilations permeated by a catholic impulse that sought to smooth over past divisions.[162] Likewise, in the discipline of law, local traditions waned in the face of the synthetic project of al-Shāfiʿī that demanded that absolute primacy be accorded to the divine and prophetic word.[163] In each of these cases, and especially in the fields of hadith and law, post hoc discourses sought to define the principles by which all participants were bound to operate in theory, but the individual predilections of different participants continued to determine which elements of inherited discourses they accentuated in practice. In the following chapter, I will examine how this process played out as Sunnī hadith compilers sifted through the narrations of early Shīʿites on the virtues of ʿAlī.

[162] Petersen, *ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya*; Chase Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 40-41; Tarif Khalidi, "The Battle of the Camel: Trauma, reconciliation and memory," in Angelika Neuwirth and Andreas Pflitsch, eds. *Crisis and Memory in Islamic Societies* (Beirut: Orient-Institut, 2001), 153-63.
[163] For a recent survey of this process see Ahmad El Shamsy, *The Canonization of Islamic Law* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

V: Between Theory and Practice: Narrating the Virtues of ʿAlī from Shīʿites

In the preceding chapters, we have been largely focused on understanding the relationships and controversies that determined the status of Shīʿite hadith narrators within the various milieus in which they were participants. We now turn our attention to their reception in the Sunnī tradition in the latter half of the third/ninth century, the period in which their recorded legacy was determined to a large extent. Our focus in this chapter will be on a series of questions that deal with the interrelations between the theory and practice of narrating from Shīʿites in the Sunnī tradition. In the first two parts of the chapter, we will examine questions like the following: How and when did a theoretical discourse on narrating from innovators develop? How did Shīʿite narrators come to be constituted as one category of innovators among others? What kinds of tensions and contradictions were inherent in this process? In the third part, we will examine the genesis and growth of skepticism concerning reports about ʿAlī in the proto-Sunnī milieu. This skepticism formed part of the backdrop to the compilation of the canonical Sunnī hadith collections. These collections are the subject of the final part of the chapter, where narrations on ʿAlī's virtues are analyzed in an effort to discover what they reveal regarding the approach of different authors to the question of narrating from Shīʿites, and what their choices tell us about the impact of the discourses on narrating from innovators that we examined in the first two sections of the chapter. Before proceeding to these discussions, it is worth laying out an overview of the state of our knowledge on the basis of both classical Islamic scholarship and contemporary Western scholarship.

For hadith scholars from roughly the fourth/tenth century onward, it was self-evident that Shīʿite narrators were guilty of *bidʿa*, or blameworthy innovation. The juxtaposition of the

bidʿa of Shīʿism with the uninterrupted continuity of the *sunna* was a virtual *grundnorm* for Sunnī scholars writing in the centuries after Sunnī identity had crystallized in opposition to Shīʿism. For such scholars, reared with a worldview in which Shīʿites were a consummate "other," the fact that Sunnī hadith collections included narrations from Shīʿites required some explanation. The standard approach to resolving the cognitive dissonance that this could entail is exemplified in the comments of the great Mamlūk era hadith scholar Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) in an entry on Abān b. Taghlib:

> Someone might say, "How can an innovator be declared as *thiqa* while the definition of a *thiqa* is that he be possessed of high moral character (*ʿadāla*) and accuracy (*itqān*)? How can he be of high moral character while he is an innovator?" The answer is that there are two kinds of innovation: a lesser innovation, such as extreme Shīʿism (*ghuluww al-tashayyuʿ*) or Shīʿism that is not extreme and does not deviate. This is common among the generation of the followers (*tābiʿīn*) and the generation after them, but they are also possessed of sound religion, scrupulousness and honesty. If the ḥadīths of such people were rejected, a sizeable portion of the Prophetic traditions would be lost, and this is clearly a great harm. There is also a great innovation, like complete and extreme *rafḍ*, denigration of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, and calling others to all of that. The narrations of such people are not to be used as proofs no matter what anyone says. Furthermore, I cannot think of any one among such people who is honest or trustworthy. Rather, the inner reality of their mendacity is concealed behind their cloak of *taqīyya* and hypocrisy (*al-kadhib shiʿāruhum wa al-taqiyya wa al-nifāq dithāruhum*). So how could the transmission of someone in such a state be accepted? Of course not! The extreme Shīʿite at the time of the *salaf*, according to their customary use of the term, was one who denigrated and spoke ill of ʿUthmān, Ṭalḥa, Zubayr, Muʿāwiya and a group of those who fought against ʿAlī, God be pleased with him. And the extreme Shīʿite in our time, according to our customary use of the term, is one who anathematizes (*yukaffir*) these great men and disavows the two Shaykhs [Abū Bakr and ʿUmar]. Such a person is hopelessly lost."[1]

In his priortization of the necessity to preserve the corpus of hadith over the desire to maintain the innermost boundaries of orthodoxy, al-Dhahabī encapsulated the logic of the earliest hadith critics. He wrote these comments in a biographical work, a genre that may have allowed him to hew more closely to the organic practice of his field than the more theoretical

[1] Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*, 1/5.

and systematic works of *ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*, where the issue was frequently presented in a more dichotomous manner. In these works, several standard positions were presented on the issue of narrating from innovators:

> 1) Their narrations are rejected altogether because they sin in their adoption of *bidʿa*.
> 2) Their narrations are accepted as long as they do not proselytize for their *bidʿa*.
> 3) Their narrations are accepted as long as they do not consider it permissible to lie in support of their *bidʿa*, irrespective of whether or not they proselytize.
> 4) Their narrations are accepted in general, but narrations that support their *bidʿa* are rejected.[2]

In general, the great masters of the Sunnī hadith tradition recognized that such cut and dry positions oversimplified an incredibly complex issue. Thus, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071) wrote that the continuous practice of the community from the time of the Companions onward was to narrate from innovators so long as they were known to be honest, noting that this was "the greatest of all the proofs in this matter."[3] Ibn al-Ṣalāh al-Shahrazūrī (d. 643/1245) likewise found the notion of unequivocal rejection of innovators to be "unlikely and far from the widespread practice of the Imāms of hadith, for their books are overflowing with narration from innovators who did not proselytize."[4] Ibn al-Amīr al-Ṣanʿānī (d. 1182/1769), a Yemenī Zaydi-cum-Sunnī, took his critique a step further, dismissing the entire discussion as pseudo-scientific and claiming that the only condition for accepting a narrator was honesty.[5]

The conclusion of Ibn al-Amīr al-Ṣanʿānī is largely in agreement with that of contemporary Western scholarship, which is virtually unanimous in its conclusion that

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[2] See discussions of this issue in Khaṭīb, *Kifāya*, 194-210; Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, *al-Madkhal ilā kitāb al-iklīl* (Alexandria: Dār al-daʿwa, 1983), 49; Abū ʿAmr Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shaharzūrī; *Maʿrifat anwāʿ ʿulūm al-ḥadīth* (Beirut: Dār al-fikr, 1986), 114-5. See also Eerik Dickinson's translation of the latter as *An Introduction to the Science of Hadith* (London: Garnet Publishing, 2005), 86-7.
[3] Khaṭīb, *Kifāya*, 201.
[4] Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *Maʿrifat*, 115.
[5] Muḥammad Ibn al-Amīr al-Ṣanʿānī, *Thamarāt al-naẓar* (Riyadh: Dār al-ʿĀṣima, 1996). This work is discussed further in the conclusion.

sectarian labels and association with *bidʿa* (in and of itself) had a minimal impact on hadith critics' assessments of narrators' reliability.[6] A related but slightly different question is whether and how association with *bidʿa* impacted the actual compilation of hadith collections. There is no systematic study of this question to date that I am aware of, although two scholars have offered brief statements pertaining to it. Jonathan Brown has noted the lack of a one-to-one correspondence between the mature theory of *ʿulūm al-ḥadīth* and the organic practice of early compilers:

> In theory, Sunni hadith critics restricted themselves from accepting the transmissions of Shiite narrators who tried to convert others to their cause (since this might provoke them to forge Shiite hadiths) or, at the very least, not accepting those hadiths with a pro-ʿAlid message from such Shiite transmitters. In reality, however, even the great Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj included in his *Sahih* a report from a known Shīʿite, ʿAdī b. Thābit (d. 116/734), in which the Prophet announced that only a believer could love ʿAlī and only a hypocrite could hate him.[7]

A slightly different emphasis is found in the work of Ghassan Abdul-Jabbar, who offers a pregnant but unelaborated statement on al-Bukhārī's handling of the hadiths of innovators: "Where Bukhari [sic] quotes the hadith of someone who held doctrinally unorthodox views, he does so with care."[8] Given our survey of Shīʿite narrators up to this point, we are in a good position to arrive at a more detailed understanding of the extent to which the methods of the compilers of the canonical collections were shaped by the nascent theoretical discourse on narrating from innovators, but we turn our attention first to the development of that discourse itself.

[6] Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 179; Dickinson, *Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism*, 102-4; Lucas, *Constructive Critics*, 320-4.
[7] Brown, *Hadith*, 141.
[8] Ghassan Abdul-Jabbar, *Bukhari* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 98.

V.1. Narrating from Innovators: The Development of a Problem

One of the central aphorisms around which the tradition of Sunnī hadith criticism was constructed is a statement ascribed to the Basran Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (d. 110/728): "They did not use to ask about the *isnād*, but when the *fitna* occurred, they [began to] say, 'Name for us your men.' They would then examine [them]: if they were people of the *sunna* then their hadiths were accepted but if they were people of *bidaʿ* then their hadiths were not accepted."[9] This report has taken on something of a canonical status in Western scholarship as well, and considerable effort has been expended to identify which *fitna* Ibn Sīrīn intended to refer to. If we accept the statement as genuine and assume that Ibn Sīrīn was indeed referring to a specific event, then the counter-Caliphate of ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr (64-73/683-692) seems by far the best candidate among those proposed.[10] One particular feature of the arguments in favor of this identification concerns us here.[11] In one of his two articles on the subject, Juynboll notes that the individuals associated with the emergence of the most prominent innovative

[9] The version translated here is from Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, *Saḥīḥ Muslim* (Stuttgart: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000), 1/9. See other versions of the report in Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 2/559; Tirmidhī, *ʿIlal*, 396; *DU*, 1/10; *IAH*, 2/28; Khaṭīb, *Kifāya*, 197.

[10] Schacht suggested that the attribution to Ibn Sīrīn was spurious and that the *fitna* must have referred to the killing of Walīd II in 126/744 since this was "a conventional date for the end of the good old time," and any earlier dating would be too early for the emergence of *isnād*s (*Origins*, 36-37). James Robson argued that it referred to the counter-caliphate of Ibn al-Zubayr on the basis of a report in the *Muwaṭṭaʾ* and his earlier dating of the *isnād* ("The *Isnād* in Muslim Tradition," *Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society* 15 (1953), 21-22). Juynboll offered more thorough arguments in favor of this identification in two separate articles ("The Date of the Great *Fitna*," *Arabica* 20 (1973), 142-59; "Muslim's Introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ*: Translated and annotated with an excursus on the chronology of *fitna* and *bidʿa*," *JSAI* 5 (1984), 303-311). Yet another piece of corroborating evidence for this dating emerges from the Kūfan context, where Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī stated that people began to ask about the *isnād* during the reign of al-Mukhtār (Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 3/381). M.M. Azami suggests that the *fitna* should be identified with the earliest possible referent, the civil wars of the fourth hijrī decade, but this too seems to be a hypothesis-driven interpretation that lacks specific evidence and ignores the arguments adduced by Robson and Juynboll. See his *Studies in Early Hadith Literature* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1992), 216-17.

[11] Needless to say, the debate over the date of the *fitna* was motivated primarily by a concern to date the emergence of the *isnād*, which is not our concern here. At any rate, such dating need not hinge on an individual report, but can be deduced more reliably from a broad reading of the sources. See Motzki, *Origins*, 240-2 and passim.

trends of the early Islamic period, viz. the Qadarīs, Khārijīs, Rāfiḍīs and Murjiʾīs, are clustered in the late first/seventh century, which suggests that the distinction made by Ibn Sīrīn between people of *sunna* and people of *bidaʿ* would have been anachronistic at an earlier date.[12]

Based on what we have seen in the first two chapters, we would have to conclude that to the extent that the distinction drawn by Ibn Sīrīn between people of *sunna* and *bidaʿ* was salient in the late first/seventh century, it would have been implicit, informal and open to contestation, except where the most egregious violators of communal norms were concerned. We will recall that al-Shaʿbī unequivocally rejected the Shīʿite extremist Mughīra b. Saʿīd al-Bajalī, but was willing to narrate from a more moderate Shīʿite figure like al-Ḥārith al-Aʿwar, while noting in the same breath that "he is one of the liars."[13] The case of Jābir al-Juʿfī is perhaps the paradigmatic illustration of a figure in the late Umayyad period who was associated with a wide variety of objectionable views but whose status as a narrator remained an open question for several decades after his death.[14]

Similar sorts of ambiguity and contestation are found in the reception of figures associated with the other major categories of *bidʿa*. In the case of Qadarīs, Maʿbad al-Juhanī (d. 80-90/699-709) was widely condemned for his role in initiating the controversy over free will in Baṣra but was nonetheless recognized by some as a trustworthy hadith narrator.[15] Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) reportedly warned against the influence of Maʿbad for a period, only to succumb to it himself, slightly marring his otherwise stellar reputation.[16] In the case of

[12] Juynboll, "Muslim's introduction," 310-11.
[13] See III.3.
[14] See III.3 and IV.3.
[15] On Maʿbad, who was executed by the Umayyads for his views, see Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 28/244-8; Steven C. Judd, "Muslim Persecution of Heretics during the Marwānid Period (64-132/684-750)," *Al-Masāq* 23 (2011), 4-6.
[16] Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 28/246. For a broader discussion of the controversy over Ḥasan's association with *qadar* see Mourad, *Early Islam*, 161-75. Similar to what we have seen in the case of prominent figures like

Khārijīs, Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795) and Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-Anṣārī (d. 143/760) refrained from narrating from ʿIkrima (d. 104/723), the *mawlā* of Ibn ʿAbbās, on account of his association with Khārijī views, but ʿIkrima remained one of the most important narrators of his generation.[17] A contrasting example is found in Jābir b. Zayd (d. 93-104/712-723), who is claimed by the Ibāḍī Khārijīs as one of their founders but whose reputation is virtually untarnished in Sunnī literature.[18] In the case of the Murjiʾīs, Saʿīd b. Jubayr (d. 94/712) and Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī (d. 96/714) boycotted Dharr b. ʿAbd Allāh because he was an early proponent of *irjāʾ* (if not the first) but he was widely regarded as a trustworthy narrator.[19] Slightly younger Murjiʾīs, such as ʿAmr b. Murra (d. 118/736) and Qays b. Muslim al-Jadalī (d. 120/738) were prominent and respected figures within the Kūfan traditionalist milieu, although their *irjāʾ* was noted with

al-Thawrī and al-Aʿmash, Mourad stresses that the sources give different portrayals of the extent and the duration of Ḥasan's commitment to free will, with different parties making different claims about him. Mourad notes that the efforts of his predestinarian disciples to deny his association with *qadar* are the strongest evidence in favor of it.

[17] Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 20/277-92; *SAN*, 5/20-36.

[18] See John C. Wilkinson, *Ibadism: Origins and Early Development in Oman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 183-205 and passim. The association of Jābir with Khārijī views is largely muted in Sunnī literature. See for example Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 4/434-7; *SAN*, 4/481-3.

[19] Mizzī; *Tahdhīb*, 8/511-13; Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*, 2/32; *Th&G*, 1/154-5; Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, 80-1. The notion that Saʿīd b. Jubayr was himself a Murjiʾī (Madelung, *Der Imam*, 231, 237; noted also as a possibility by Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, 80; Crone and Zimmerman, *Epistle*, 242) finds only limited support in the sources. Abū Ḥanīfa enlisted him, along with a veritable who's who of Ḥijazī Followers, in support of *irjāʾ* in his *Risāla ilā ʿUthmān al-Battī* (*Th&G*, 5/28). This would be consistent with the claim of Ḥammād b. Zayd, cited by Crone/Zimmerman and Cook, that he once met Abū Ḥanifa in Mecca and the latter "claimed [Saʿīd] as support for *irjāʾ* (*intaḥalahu fī al-irjāʾ*)" by citing the same Sālim [al-Afṭas] mentioned in his *Risāla* (*MT*, 2/798; *TB*, 13/371). Aside from Sharistānī's inclusion of him in his list of Murjiʾīs (*Al-Milal wa al-niḥal*, 1/146), this is the full extent of the evidence for Saʿīd having been a Murjiʾī. Ḥammād b. Zayd's report is, however, hardly supportive of the notion, since he challenges Abū Ḥanīfa's claim by noting that Sālim al-Afṭas was a Murjiʾī and that Saʿīd had admonished Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī against sitting with Ṭalq b. Ḥabīb, another early Murjiʾī (Cf. the comments of Van Ess in *Th&G*, 1/155). Other reports on Saʿīd's opposition to Ṭalq (Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 7/277-8) are dismissed by Madelung as an anti-Murjiʾī effort to reclaim Saʿīd. If the matter were limited to Ṭalq, this might be plausible, but Saʿid's opposition to Dharr b. ʿAbd Allāh and the Murjiʾīs in general is also widely reported (See Khallāl, *Musnad*, 393, and a large collection of reports – some no doubt fabricated – in Ibn Baṭṭa al-ʿAkbarī, *Al-Ibāna* (Riyadh: Dār al-Rāya, 1996), 2/886-91). The case of Saʿīd b. Jubayr can be contrasted with that of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, whose disciples were frequently compelled to tacitly acknowledge the charge of *qadar* in their efforts to acquit him of it.

disapproval.[20] All of this simply serves to underscore two facts with respect to the broad category of *bidʿa* that we have already observed with respect to Shīʿites. Association with *bidʿa* hardly had a uniform impact on the reception of narrators in the late Umayyad period, and, moreover, what actually constituted an unacceptable *bidʿa* was agreed upon only in its broadest outlines.

The drive to shore up communal boundaries and impose consistent standards for the exclusion of *bidʿa* gained greater momentum in the middle of the second/eighth century. We saw a prominent example of this in the case of Zāʾida b. Qudāma, who sought to marginalize Shīʿites and other innovators through an uncompromising rejection of their narrations and a boycott of their persons. We have noted that Zāʾida's methods struck his contemporaries as unprecedented and overbearing, but while he may have represented the apotheosis of a new and exclusive logic, he was not the only figure to act on its basis.

We find a handful of statements attributed to Zāʾida's younger contemporaries that seem to have contained embryonic expressions of the vocabulary that would eventually frame the discussions of Shīʿites and other innovators in the Sunnī hadith tradition. These expressions correlate well with the actions of those to whom they are attributed, reinforcing our sense that the middle of the second/eighth century was indeed a key moment in the development of a more self-conscious approach to narrating from innovators. Mālik b. Anas was among the first critics reported to have issued an interdiction against narrating from certain kinds of innovators. We have seen that he disliked narrating from ʿIkrima due to his association with Khārijism and he took pride in his selective approach to narrating hadith,

[20] On ʿAmr see Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 22/232-7; *SAN*, 5/196-200; Th*&G*, 1/179-80. Van Ess notes that ʿAmr "seems to have stood close to the moderate Shīʿites," which is corroborated by the high volume of his reports on ʿAlī's virtues. On Qays see Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 24/81-3; *Th&G*, 1/180. This Qays is not to be confused with Qays b. Abī Muslim al-Māṣir, who was a *mawlā* and another candidate for the first Murjiʾī (*Th&G*, 1/157-8; Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, 80).

boasting that if a narrator were reliable he could be found in his books.[21] In accord with a venerable Ḥijāzī tradition, he had a general aversion to the hadiths of the people of Iraq due to its association with *bidʿa*.[22] Mālik is also credited with a statement that would be one of the first to contain some of the standard vocabulary of later hadith critics. He said that knowledge should not be taken from four kinds of people:

1) someone who is plainly foolish, even if he is a prolific narrator
2) an innovator who prosyletizes to others (*ṣāḥib hawā yadʿū al-nās ilā hawāhu*)
3) someone who lies about things other than hadith
4) a pious person who is not well-versed in what he narrates.[23]

Although there is some question as to whether this statement accurately reflected Mālik's views, its significance lies in its specification of an innovator who prosyletizes, an idea that was fundamental to the discussions of later hadith critics.[24] More explicit formulations of a distinction between those who proselytize and those who do not are found in a number of anecdotes regarding one of Mālik's contemporaries, the itinerant warrior-scholar ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Mubārak (d. 181/797). In a number of reports, Ibn al-Mubārak is asked why he abandoned narrating from the Muʿtazilī progenitor ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd (d. 137/754) while he narrates from Qadarīs like ʿAbd al-Wārith b. Saʿīd (d. 180/796), Saʿīd b. Abī ʿUrūba (d. 155/772) and Hisham al-Dastawāʾī (d. 152/759), since they were all the same with respect to their views on free will. In his responses, Ibn al-Mubārak always notes that ʿAmr was a proselytizer (*dāʿī*) and he sometimes also mentions that the other figures were more reticent about their views.[25] It is

[21] *IAH*, 1/24; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 1/91. For a discussion of Mālik's selectivity in narrating hadith see Umar F. Abd-Allah Wymann-Landgraf, *Mālik in Medina* (Boston: Brill, 2013), 45-8.
[22] For a collection of Ḥijāzī reports, mostly from figures earlier than Mālik, disparaging the reliability of the people of Iraq see *MT*, 2/746-62.
[23] *DU*, 1/13; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 1/92.
[24] The *isnād* is from Maʿn b. ʿĪsā (d. 198/814), a major transmitter from Mālik, to Ibrāhīm b. al-Mundhir (d. 236/851). Ibrāhīm checked the report with another of Mālik's students, who could only verify that Mālik prohibited narrating from the fourth category.
[25] *MT*, 2/263, 3/365; *IAH*, 1/273; Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*, 3/275.

unlikely that Ibn al-Mubārak's remarks on this specific case were intended to express a universal standard for the reception of innovators (there were many other important differences between ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd and the other figures mentioned). But however informal his remarks may have been, they are again significant in their formulation of a clear distinction between proselytizing and non-proselytizing innovators.

Ibn al-Mubārak's general aversion to innovation is also borne out by his approach to Shīʿite narrators. On the whole, he appears to have expended considerable efforts to marginalize the narrations of Shīʿites. He was likely one of the first figures to explicitly identify *tashayyuʿ* with the broader category of *bidʿa*, noting that ʿAwf b. Abī Jamīla (d. 146/763), a Basran Qadarī and Shīʿite, was not content with just one *bidʿa* but insisted on adopting two.[26] He also upbraided the Basran Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān al-Ḍubaʿī (d. 179/795) (whose Shīʿism influenced ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī) for choosing to learn from ʿAwf instead of figures who upheld his own vision of orthodoxy, like the ʿUthmānī Ibn ʿAwn (d. 151/768) and the predestinarian Yūnus b. ʿUbayd (d. 139/756).[27] His efforts to marginalize Shīʿites were not limited to individual exchanges but took place in public settings as well, as when he warned a crowd against narrating from ʿAmr b. Abī al-Miqdām (d. 172/787) on the grounds that he disparaged the Companions.[28] Ibn al-Mubārak also boycotted ʿAmr's funeral in an apparent effort to emphasize just how unacceptable his actions were.[29] Even when he was in the relatively weaker position of interacting with his own teachers, Ibn al-Mubārak seems to have mustered whatever protest he could against criticism of the Companions. When Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī

[26] Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 2/434; *DU*, 1/189, 3/429. On ʿAwf see *Th&G*, 2/424.
[27] Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 2/434; *DU*, 1/189, 3/429. On Ibn ʿAwn see *Th&G*, 2/355-67. On Yūnus see *Th&G*, 2/352-4.
[28] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1/10. The narrator of the report stresses the public nature of Ibn al-Mubārak's efforts: "*samiʿtu Ibn al-Mubārak yaqūl ʿalā ruʾūs al-nās...*"
[29] See the comments of Muhammad Qasim Zaman in "Death, Funeral Processions," 32-3.

(d. 148-50/765-7), an important narrator from ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, made a disparaging remark about ʿUthmān (*nāla min ʿUthmān*), Ibn al-Mubārak expressed his displeasure by tearing up all the notes he had written from Abū Ḥamza and departing from the gathering.[30] Ibn al-Mubārak's critical approach towards Shīʿites was sufficiently well known to draw pushback from his contemporaries.[31] Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ expressed his astonishment that Ibn al-Mubārak was critical of the reputable Kūfan Zaydī Qays b. al-Rabīʿ al-Asadī (d. c. 160/777), yet was willing to narrate from the *shurṭa* of the Umayyads.[32] Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq also reportedly criticized Ibn al-Mubārak and prayed against him for suppressing the virtues of the Prophet's family.[33]

Among the next generation of hadith critics, discussions regarding narrating from innovators would become much more widespread and more explicit as an effort was made to articulate some sort of consistent standard on the issue. The foregoing survey suggests that while these efforts were in some sense unprecedented, they were based on an implicit logic operative among earlier generations, who had been engaged in a highly contested process of boundary drawing for more than a century. Before moving on to these more explicit discussions, two points are worth noting. Firstly, although the idea of rigorously excluding innovators from narrating hadith does seem to have been pioneered by only a handful of

[30] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/93. On Abū Ḥamza see *TS*, 377-9.
[31] For examples of other Shīʿites criticized by Ibn al-Mubarak see Muḥammad Saʿīd b. Muḥammad Ḥasan Bukhārī, *Al-Imām ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Mubārak al-Imām al-Nāqid* (Riyadh: Matkabat al-Rushd, 2003), 257-8, 299-301, 306-8. There were likely a handful of exceptions to his overall aversion to Shīʿites, although this study documents only one. See ibid., 249-50.
[32] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 6/39-40. On the institution of the *shurṭa*, a sort of informal police force, see "shurṭa," *EI*^{2}.
[33] Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 144-5. In this report, Muḥammad compares Ibn al-Mubārak unfavorably to Abū Ḥanīfa, whom he deems to have fulfilled his obligations to the Prophet's family. In spite of the staunchly quietist tradition of his forefathers after Ḥusayn, Muḥammad launched an abortive rebellion against the ʿAbbāsids in Madīna in Rabīʿ II 200/November 815, in the immediate aftermath of the defeat of Abū al-Sarāyā. See ibid., 537-41.

individuals, the impetus behind it was hardly incongruous with the overall ethos of the traditionalist milieu. A figure like Sufyān al-Thawrī may well have been lax in his selection of narrators, but his opposition to Murjiʾīs was severe enough for him to regularly boycott their funerals.[34] The Syrian jurist ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Awzāʿī (d. 157/774) was similarly not altogether enamored of the more critical methods of investigating hadith reports that emerged in his lifetime, but he was severely opposed to Qadarīs and reportedly participated in the trial that led to the execution of Ghaylān al-Dimashqī.[35] Sporadic attempts by traditionalist scholars to enforce competing visions of orthodoxy through the organs of the state were in fact an important feature of the broader socio-political environment in which the methods of narrating hadith evolved.[36]

Second, it is necessary to underscore the fact that efforts to condemn particular groups as innovators were hardly unidirectional. From the perspective of Shīʿites, figures like al-Thawrī and Mālik b. Anas were themselves a subset of Murjiʾīs.[37] From the perspective of Ibāḍī Khārijīs, quietist traditionalists were "wavering doubters (*shukkāk*)."[38] At least for a certain period, predestinarians and advocates of free will apparently both condemned their counterparts as "Qadarīs."[39] The difference was that in the long run, the traditionalists

[34] Zaman, "Death, Funeral Processions," 33-4.
[35] At times when students demanded to know al-Awzāʿī's source for a hadith, he would simply tell them, "I didn't learn it for your sake, but rather I learned it for myself from someone I trust (*laysa laka ḥamaltuhu innamā ḥamaltuhu li-nafsī ʿamman athiq bihi*)" (*TMD*, 35/186). Scott Lucas has also noted the general lack of evidence for al-Awzāʿī having engaged in any significant measure of narrator criticism (*Constructive Critics*, 132, 155). On al-Awzāʿī's anti-Qadarī stance and the probability of his participation in the trial of Ghaylān see Steven C. Judd, "Ghaylān al-Dimashqī: The Isolation of a Heretic in Islamic Historiography," *IJMES* 31 (1999), 170-2.
[36] See Judd, "Persecution," 1-14; Zaman, *Religion and Politics*, 63-9, 136-45 and passim.
[3737] Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-shīʿa*, 7. See also Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn's comment that if Abū Nuʿaym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn called a narrator a Murjiʾī, he was in fact a *ṣāḥib sunna* (cited above in section IV.3).
[38] Crone and Zimmerman, *Epistle*, 245-50.
[39] Mourad, *Early Islam*, 162-3.

emerged from the fray as the party that had the greatest success in appropriating concepts with a positive valence and in making their derogatory labels for others stick.

V.2. Narrating from Innovators: Articulating a Standard

While we can discern some of the vocabulary used to discuss narrating from innovators in isolated statements attributed to Ibn al-Mubārak and Mālik, it was the generation of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Mahdī (d. 198/814) and Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān (d. 198/813) that integrated the issue as an explicit and permanent feature of the emerging discipline of hadith criticism. Ibn Mahdī and al-Qaṭṭān are often treated as a pair in *rijāl* literature and were regarded by later hadith scholars as the first individuals to engage in narrator criticism in a systematic manner.[40] Their explicit discussions of narrating from innovators were a part of their systematizing efforts, although they seem to have been successful only in establishing the issue as one that required consideration, rather than articulating a clear and consistent standard. Consistent with our approach throughout this study, we will discuss their contributions after situating them within the evolving ethos of the traditionalist milieu.

Ibn Mahdī and al-Qaṭṭān were among the foremost students of al-Thawrī and Shuʿba. Ibn Mahdī spent ten years in the company of Shuʿba and he was one of the foremost authorities on the hadiths of al-Thawrī, who is reported to have died in his house. Al-Qaṭṭān was not as close to al-Thawrī, but he spent no less than twenty years learning from Shuʿba.[41] In spite of their close relationships with their teachers, both Ibn Mahdī and al-Qaṭṭān exercised a significant degree of independence from them as they emerged as experts in their own right. On more than one occasion, al-Thawrī and Shuʿba had the bittersweet experience of their two

[40] See the comments of Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūḥīn*, 1/52.
[41] *IAH*, 1/249; *TB*, 14/141.

star pupils besting them at their own game. When al-Thawrī came to Basra, he requested a study session with a capable Basran narrator and al-Qaṭṭān was selected for the honor. Al-Thawrī emerged from the session saying, "I asked for a study session with a *man*, and you brought me a *devil*," marveling at al-Qaṭṭan's rigor.[42] While al-Thawrī may have been more susceptible to such critiques than Shuʿba, al-Qaṭṭān was also able to get the better of his primary teacher on occasion. He once decisively ended a debate in Shuʿba's circle by contravening Shuʿba's opinion, causing him to exclaim, "Who can bear your criticism (*naqdaka*), O one-eyed!"[43] Similar occurrences are attested for Ibn Mahdī, who recalled reducing al-Thawrī to silence in a debate over a legal point.[44]

The departure of al-Qaṭṭān and Ibn Mahdī from their teachers is perhaps even more evident in the details of their practice of narrator criticism as it is preserved in *rijāl* literature. Here we can discern that the more stringent and formalized methods pioneered by Shuʿba with respect to *isnād* criticism, and by Zāʾida and others with respect to *bidʿa*, were taken to their logical extent by Ibn Mahdī and al-Qaṭṭān and decisively eclipsed the more informal methods of al-Thawrī. Ibn Mahdī reportedly disqualified more than eighty *shuyūkh* whom al-Thawrī had narrated from.[45] Both he and al-Qaṭṭān rejected a significant number of Shīʿite narrators who had been accepted by al-Thawrī and/or Shuʿba, including Jābir al-Juʿfī and Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa.[46]

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[42] Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūḥīn*, 1/53. For other instances of al-Qaṭṭān's probing examinations of al-Thawrī, and especially of his *tadlīs* from Jābir al-Juʿfī, see *DU*, 1/212; Rāmahurmuzī, *al-Muḥaddith al-fāṣil*, 562-4.
[43] *IAH*, 1/232; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 1/71.
[44] *IAH*, 1/257.
[45] Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/116.
[46] On Jābir see Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/115-6; *DU*, 1/194-5. On Sālim see Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 4/180. Other Shīʿites accepted by al-Thawrī but rejected by Ibn Mahdī and al-Qaṭṭān include Ḥakīm b. Jubayr al-Asadī (Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 2/217), ʿUthmān b. ʿUmayr Abū al-Yaqẓān (*IAH*, 6/161; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 5/166-7), Muḥammad b. al-Sāʾib al-Kalbī (*IAH*, 7/271) and Qābūs b. Abī Ẓabyān (Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 6/48; cf. *IAH*, 7/145, where al-Qaṭṭān is said to have narrated from him via al-Thawrī). For a detailed study of al-Qaṭṭān's narrator criticism that includes his opinions (and often those of Ibn Mahdī as well) on these figures and other

Al-Qaṭṭān also rejected some of Shuʿba's colleagues and teachers, including the Basran Shīʿite ʿAlī b. Zayd b. Judʿān (d. 131/749) and the Kūfan Zaydī Qays b. al-Rabīʿ.[47] Al-Qaṭṭān's criticism of the latter was a point of contention with Shuʿba, who was unable to dissuade his student from criticizing Qays in spite of several attempts.[48]

At an obvious level, the departure of Ibn Mahdī and al-Qaṭṭān from their teachers with respect to their evaluations of Shīʿite narrators was indicative of an increasing sensitivity towards *bidʿa*. But it also signaled a significant reordering of the hierarchy of values in the traditionalist milieu. There are numerous anecdotes in which Ibn Mahdī and al-Qaṭṭān flatly refuse to narrate the hadiths of questionable Shīʿites to students, making it clear that they know the hadiths well but are simply unwilling to narrate from these figures.[49] This is a virtual inversion of the logic prevalent among the previous generation, exemplified by figures like al-Thawrī and Ibn Jurayj (d. 150/767), who regularly employed *tadlīs* to pass a hadith from a questionable narrator on a group of unsuspecting students.

In explaining this shift, it is important to underscore the fact that whether measured in terms of of quantity, organization or ease of access, the availability of hadith to the generation of Ibn Mahdī and al-Qaṭṭān would have been exponentially greater than it had been to the generation of al-Thawrī and Shuʿba. While the latter had vied with their peers to obtain a few hadiths from teachers who dispensed them slowly over time, by the turn of the century or shortly thereafter, the voluminous works that contained the fruits of their efforts were easily

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Shīʿites see ʿAbd Allāh al-Amīn ʿAbd al-Raqīb ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, *al-Manhaj al-naqdī lil-Imām Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān* (Cairo: Dār al-kitāb al-islāmī, 2014).

[47] For his rejection of ʿAlī b. Zayd see *DU*, 3/231; *IAH*, 6/186, cited in ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, *al-Manhaj al-naqdī*, 1/522-3.

[48] *DU*, 3/470; *IAH*, 7/97; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 6/40; *TB*, 12/453-4, cited in ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, *al-Manhaj al-naqdī*, 2/581-2.

[49] See for example Ibn Mahdī's refusal to narrate from ʿAmr b. Abī al-Miqdām (*IAH*, 6/223) and Abū Isrāʾīl al-Mulāʾī (Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūḥīn*, 1/124), and al-Qaṭṭān's refusal to narrate from ʿAlī b. Zayd b. Judʿān noted above.

obtained from known transmitters by posterity.[50] The sentiment expressed by Ibn Mahdī when he declared that he would rather discover a hidden defect (*ʿilla*) in a single hadith than learn ten hadiths could only be viewed by Shuʿba and al-Thawrī as emerging from a pampered generation who could not fathom the struggles of their elders.[51]

We noted in the previous chapter that evaluations of narrators with problematic beliefs involved balancing the intrinsic value of the hadiths themselves with the extrinsic value of enforcing boundaries of orthodoxy. One of the decisive factors in rendering the approach of Zāʾida b. Qudāma a curious oddity in the middle of the second/eighth century and that of Ibn Mahdī and al-Qaṭṭān a mainstream opinion by its end must have been the decline in the intrinsic value of hadiths that occurred as they flooded the market over the course of the second/eighth century. Obtaining hadiths remained a significant concern for Ibn Mahdī and al-Qaṭṭān, but the more pressing task was how to sift through the massive corpus available to them, much of which they deemed unreliable.

Part of this effort involved addressing the issue of narrating from innovators in a more explicit manner. Although Ibn Mahdī and al-Qaṭṭān frequently agreed in their evaluation of Shīʿite narrators in practice, they disagreed on the issue of narrating from innovators when it was posited as a theoretical problem. Ibn Mahdī was the closer of the two men to ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Mubārak and he seems to have been influenced by his distinction between an innovator who proselytizes and one who does not. Ibn Ḥanbal reported directly from Ibn Mahdī that he identified three kinds of narrators from whom knowledge should not be taken: 1) someone accused of lying, 2) someone who makes many mistakes in narrating, and 3) an innovator who

[50] The generation of al-Thawrī and Shuʿba produced the first systematic collections of hadith, many of which were were easily obtained from known transmitters by the end of the second/eighth and beginning of the third/ninth centuries (Lucas, *Constructive Critics*, 365-6).
[51] See Ibn Mahdī's statement in *SAN*, 9/206.

proselytizes (*ṣāḥib hawā yadʿū ilā bidʿa*).[52] He is also reported to have said that an innovator who did not proselytize could be tolerated, while an innovator who proselytized deserved to be abandoned.[53]

Ibn Mahdī was certainly one of the first hadith critics, if not the first, to issue such a general pronouncement, and it struck some as an excessively blunt instrument for the detailed parsing demanded of a hadith critic. ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī (d. 234/849) was a student of both Ibn Mahdī and al-Qaṭṭān, and he felt it necessary to consult the latter after learning of Ibn Mahdī's standard:

> "I said to Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd, 'ʿAbd al-Raḥmān [b. Mahdī] says to leave prominent promoters of *bidʿa* who proselytize for their views (*man kāna raʾsan fī al-bīdʿa yadʿū ilayhā*).'" Yaḥyā said, "What do you do with Qatāda [b. Diʿāma]? What do you do with Ibn Abī Rawwād and ʿUmar b. Dharr?" and he enumerated others. Then Yaḥyā said, "If he abandons this sort [of narrator] then he will abandon many."[54]

At the level of theory, it would appear that the disagreement between Ibn Mahdī and al-Qaṭṭān was significant, but the practice of both men suggests that the disagreement was largely semantic. Ibn Mahdī praised Qatāda (d. 117/735) highly and narrated from both him and Ibn Abī Rawwād (d. 159/776).[55] A contentious exchange between Muḥammad b. al-Muthannā (d. 252/866), one of al-Bukhārī's primary sources in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, and Ibn Mahdī over

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[52] Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 3/218; *DU*, 1/8.

[53] Khaṭīb, *Kifāya*, 203. *"man raʾā raʾyan wa lam yadʿu ilayhi iḥtumila, wa man raʾā raʾyan wa daʿā ilahyi fa-qad istaḥaqqa al-tark*." See also *SAN*, 9/207, where it is reported that Ibn Mahdī "*kāna yakrah al-julūs ilā dhī hawā aw bidʿa*."

[54] *DU*, 1/8. Also cited in Dickinson, *Taqdima*, 104. I have emended the text of ʿUqaylī, which has "Abū Dāwūd," to "Ibn Abī Rawwād." This was recommended to Dickinson by Cristopher Melchert on the basis of another version of the report in Khaṭīb, *Kifāya*, 205-6. The fact that Ibn Abī Rawwād is also found in the version of this report in Ibn ʿAsākir, *TMD* (45/20-1) and that there is apparently no innovator named Abū Dāwūd of comparable prominence to Qatāda and ʿUmar b. Dharr seems to clinch the issue in favor of Ibn Abī Rawwād.

[55] For his praise of Qatāda see *IAH*, 7/134. For his narration from Ibn Abī Rawwād see Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 18/137.

who was more selective in their narration reveals that Ibn Mahdī was willing to invoke the exact same logic that al-Qaṭṭān used in his dismissal of Ibn Mahdī's standard:

> [Ibn al-Muthannā]: ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Mahdī said to me, "The people of Kūfa narrate from anyone and everyone." I said, "Abū Saʿīd, they say that *you* narrate from anyone and everyone." "Who do I narrate from?" So I mentioned Muḥammad b. Rāshid al-Makḥūlī [a Qadarī and possibly a Shīʿite][56] to him. He said, "Remember this well. There are three kinds of people: a precise narrator who memorizes, no one differs about him; another who makes mistakes but most of his hadiths are sound – if the hadith of such people are abandoned then there will be no more hadiths left; and another who makes mistakes and most of his hadiths are mistaken. This is the kind whose hadiths are abandoned."[57]

In this anecdote, Ibn Mahdī frames the issue as one of relative precision, but when another narrator objected to Ibn Mahdī's narration from Muḥammad b. Rāshid specifically because he was a Qadarī, Ibn Mahdī became angry and could only protest, "And what does it harm him!?"[58] In the midst of their efforts to balance the intrinsic value of hadith against profoundly subjective evaluations of *bidʿa*, even the most fastidious critics were occasionally hemmed in by the tensions and contradictions inherent in the enterprise.

V.3. Evaluating Men and Narrations

The juxtaposition of people of *sunna* against people of *bidʿa* was reflective of the most fundametal underpinnings of the hadith critics' worldview, which placed a premium on the

[56] Muḥammad b. Rāshid (d. mid-2nd/8th c.) was a complex figure. He was among the Qadarī pious opposition that supported Yazīd III in the third civil war in 126/744. He fled from Marwān II and at some point arrived in Basra, where he came to be associated with the nascent Muʿtazilism of ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd. The source of his purported Shīʿite inclinations was baffling to al-Dhahabī, given his Syrian and Basran background (*Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*, 3/543). In addition to *DU* see Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 1/346, 2/504; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 6/201; *TB*, 2/337-40; Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 160; Josef van Ess, "Les Qadarites et la Gailānīya de Yazīd III," *Studia Islamica* 31 (1970), 73-4.
[57] *DU*, 1/13, 4/65.
[58] *DU*, 4/65. As was often the case, it is not clear how much of the objection to Muḥammad b. Rāshid was due to his association with *bidʿa* and how much to the imprecision of his narration, the latter being noted by Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūḥīn*, 2/253.

intergenerational continuity of embodied knowledge. Statements such as, "This knowledge is religion, so consider well whom you take your religion from," and, "Accepting traditions means knowing the men," served as the axial credos informing the critics' tralatitious endeavors.[59] At the same time, contestations over the appropriate lines dividing *sunna* from *bidʿa* and the reverberations of the Companions' religio-political conflicts had the effect of exposing the tautological underbelly of such statements. In whose hands was religion the legitimate arbiter of men? Which men rightfully determined the content of religion?

This conundrum manifested nowhere more clearly than in the sharp disagreements within the Muslim community regarding what could be reliably reported from and believed about ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. As early as ʿAlī's own lifetime, divergent views of his religio-political role and status emerged among his supporters, much less his opponents, and then rapidly diversified along a broad spectrum after his death. In the decades following his death, his Umayyad opponents cursed him from the pulpits of mosques while among his descendants and supporters, his memory inspired a diverse array of revolutionary movements, quietist opposition, sectarian divisions and chiliastic expectations.[60] By the late Umayyad period, ʿAlī was perhaps the single most contested and symbolically potent figure of early Islam.

What is of particular interest to us here is that the widespread controversy over ʿAlī's status gave rise to at least three peculiar features in narrations about his virtues that are not found with the same frequency in narrations on any other topic: 1) interjections of narrators indicate that there was a generalized skepticism regarding reports on ʿAlī's virtues, 2) in an

[59] For the first statement, attributed to Ibn Sīrīn, see Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1/9. For the second see Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 161-217.
[60] See Dakake, *The Charismatic Community*, 57-69, for a discussion of divergent views on the status of ʿAlī within the ranks of his army. Sean W. Anthony likewise argues that it is probable that expectations of ʿAlī's parousia emerged among some of his supporters in the immediate aftermath of his death (*The Caliph and the Heretic*, 200-218).

apparent response to this skepticism, reports on ʿAlī's virtues are frequently accompanied by some sort of extraordinary guarantee of their veracity and 3) as we have already observed briefly, reports on ʿAlī's virtues were often transmitted in a secretive manner. These features were apparent from at least the late Umayyad period onward, but before discussing them in detail, it is worth examining a number of background issues that likely contributed to the rise of such skepticism.

Beginning from perhaps the most intriguing yet historically inaccessible point, it is possible that in the course of ʿAlī's conflict with the Khārijīs, doubts emerged within the ranks of his own army regarding some of his claims about what he had heard from Muḥammad. Reports from at least three different participants in the battle of Nahrawān suggest that ʿAlī would use the phrase "God and his messenger have spoken truly (*ṣadaqa Allāhu wa rasūluhu*)" to create the impression among his troops that he had heard an explicit prophecy from Muḥammad regarding the events that were taking place. When he was challenged on the issue, he admitted that he had not heard any specific prophecy, but justified his actions with the famous dictum "war is trickery (*al-ḥarb khadʿa*)."[61]

[61] Reports to this effect come from two prominent Followers, Masrūq b. al-Ajdaʿ (d. 63/683) and Suwayd b. Ghafala, as well as another participant in the battle known simply as Ṣubayḥ, who is cited by another prominent Kūfan Follower ʿAbd al-Malik b. Abjar (d. 105-120/724-738). In each of the reports, ʿAlī says "*ṣadaqa Allāhu wa rasūluhu*," often repeatedly, in relation to one or more landmarks – a river, channel, door and/or boulder. In several of them, someone asks if his statement is in reference to an explicit prophecy that he heard, to which he replies, "No, but war is trickery." The report of Ṣubayḥ specifies that the opposite impression was created among the army: *wa narā naḥnu annahu shayʾun qīla lahu*. For the report of Ṣubayḥ see Abū Bakr ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-rushd, 1989), 6/539. For the reports from Masrūq see Aḥmad b. Shuʿayb al-Nasāʾī, *Al-Sunan al-kubrā* (Beirut: Muʾassast al-risāla, 2001), 8/36; *TB*, 5/324, 13/233 (with al-Khaṭīb presumably citing from a work of al-Madāʾinī). For reports from Suwayd see Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālisī, *Musnad Abī Dāwūd al-Ṭayālisī* (Cairo: Dar hajr, 1999), 1/140; Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tahdhīb al-Āthār* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-madanī, 1982), 3/120. As we will see below, the version of this report most commonly cited from Suwayd does not include the context provided in the versions cited here. The *isnād* to Suwayd in Ṭayālisī (Suwayd – Shimr b. ʿAṭiyya – Qays b. al-Rabīʿ) differs from the usual *isnād* (Suwayd – Khaythama – al-Aʿmash), but Ṭabarī includes the usual *isnād* with the variant content. Shimr b. ʿAṭiyya and Masrūq were both ʿUthmānīs. ʿAbd al-Malik b. Abjar was not explicitly identified as an ʿUthmānī but his relationships and the body of

Although the Sunnī tradition preserved a small number of isolated reports in which the historical context for ʿAlī's citation of this dictum is provided, on the whole Sunnī authors opted for narrations that portrayed the episode rather differently. Most commonly, they cited a related dictum of ʿAlī shorn of any historical context that apparently delineates a clear line dividing the gravity of narrating hadith from the pragmatic ethics of honesty governing normal speech: "When I quote to you from the Messenger of God, then I would rather fall from the sky than attribute a lie to him. But when I speak to you between us, then war is trickery."[62] In addition to this stand-alone version, another version in which ʿAlī prefaces a famous anti-Khārijī hadith with this dictum is also frequently quoted by Sunnī authors.[63] The aftermath of the battle is also the context for yet another cluster of reports in which ʿAlī searches for a man described to him by Muḥammad among the dead and upon finding him says, "I have not lied nor have I been lied to."[64]

The portrayals of the whole episode are more than a bit murky and they contain several discrete topoi that are combined and disaggregated in a bevy of different

material reported from him are consistent with an ʿUthmānī profile. It seems likely that the reports cited here represent a memory of ʿAlī's actions at Nahrawān current among ʿUthmānī circles in the mid-late Umayyad period, on which see more below.

[62] There are two primary *isnāds* for this version: (Saʿīd b. Dhī Ḥuddān – Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī) where Abū Isḥāq is the common link and (Abū Juḥayfa – ʿAwn b. Abī Juḥayfa – Shuʿba) where Shuʿba is the common link. For the Abū Isḥāq version see Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 6/539; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Beirut: Muʿassasat al-risāla, 2001), 2/106-7, 347. For the Abū Juḥayfa version see Ṭayālisī, *Musnad*, 1/103; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 2/347.

[63] The anti-Khārijī hadith in question here is: "A people will emerge at the end of time who are young, impetuous and foolish (*aḥdāth al-asnān sufahāʾ al-aḥlām*). Their speech is as if it were that of the best of creation, but their faith does not penetrate past their throats. They pass through the religion like an arrow passes through its target. Wherever you meet them, kill them, for there will be a reward in killing them for the one who does so on the day of ressurection." See ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām al-Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1983), 10/157; Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Stuttgart: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000), 2/710, 3/1398; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1/421-2. Zayd b. Wahb narrated a version of this report in which the context of Nahrawān is specified, as in the reports above (Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ʿAmr al-Bazzār, *Musnad al-Bazzār* (Madina: Maktabat al-ʿulūm wa al-ḥikam, 1988-2009), 2/195-6.

[64] ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 3/357; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 7/555-61; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1/423.

permutations.[65] Collectively, the reports seem to suggest two possibilities: either ʿAlī really did create false impressions among his supporters about what Muḥammad said to him on occasion, or at least he was remembered as having done so by a number of prominent Kūfan Followers tending towards the ʿUthmānī side of the spectrum. Although this interpretation survived only in a relatively muted form in the Sunnī and Shīʿite traditions, it was promoted by some early representatives of the Muʿtazilīs, such as ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd and Ibrāhīm b. Sayyār al-Naẓẓām (d. 221-31/836-45), to their own ends.[66] Most important for our purposes is the fact that the conflict with the Khārijīs served as a nexus in which the topoi of doubt concerning narrations from or about ʿAlī and extraordinary guarantees of their veracity converged at an early date.

Another issue that apparently contributed to doubt regarding narrations about ʿAlī was disagreement over the extent of his legal independence from his predecessors. The wealth of

[65] Adding yet another layer of confusion, there are versions of the report from Suwayd b. Ghafala in which the "false impressions" topos is combined with another topos of ʿAlī immolating a group of heretics. This is reported from Suwayd by two Kūfan ʿUthmānīs, Abū Ḥaṣīn and Nuʿaym b. Abī Hind (d. 110/729), adding a bit more weight to the ʿUthmānī hypothesis proposed above (on the opposition of Nuʿaym to ʿAlī see *TT*, 10/418). For the reports from Abū Ḥaṣīn, see Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 5/563, 6/486. For the report from Nuʿaym see Ṭabarī, *Tahdhīb al-āthār*, 3/79-80. On some of the various contexts in which the immolation topos appears see Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic*, 173-5; Christian C. Sahner, "Between Persecution and Prosecution: Christians and the Law of Apostasy in Early Islamic Society," in *Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam: Legitimacy and Legitimation of Political Authority*, eds. Annlies Nef and Vivien Prigent (Princeton: Darwin Press, forthcoming). I thank Christian for providing me with an advance copy of this article.

[66] Josef van Ess has reconstructed the views of al-Naẓẓām (who quotes ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd) from excerpts of a lost work preserved primarily in Shīʿite literature. See his *Das Kitāb an-Nakṯ des Naẓẓām und seine Rezeption im Kitāb al-Futyā des Ǧāḥiẓ* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), 78-86. Although van Ess deserves much credit for pioneering a reconsideration of this episode, his assumption that al-Naẓẓām has preserved its original context and import appears excessively optimistic. Van Ess does not note, for example, the ʿUthmānī coloring of the *isnād*s supporting the memory of events employed by al-Naẓẓām. This point does nothing to prove van Ess or al-Naẓẓām wrong – the ʿUthmānīs could have preserved the original context due precisely to their opposition to ʿAlī – but the fact that the ʿUthmānīs were also an "interested" party and that their transmissions coalesce around a particular interpretation demonstrates the difficulty of any linear reconstruction of events. Furthermore, as noted by Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, al-Naẓẓām was not a collector of historical reports and some of the anecdotes that he cites are uncorroborated (*Sharḥ*, 6/129-30).

contradictory evidence on this point makes it difficult to render straightforward judgment concerning ʿAlī's position, but this simply serves to underscore the early controversy over the issue. On the one hand, we find a number of reports suggesting that ʿAlī bristled at the notion that he should be bound by the precedent of earlier caliphs. Several reports suggest that this was in fact the primary reason that ʿUthmān was elected over him by the *shūrā* council, although the contributing factors would have certainly been numerous.[67] In addition, later authors collected instances of ʿAlī's departure from the judicial precedent of the first two caliphs, lending credence to the attitude conveyed by these reports if not specifically to their historicity.[68] On the other hand, we find reports from proto-Sunnī and Shīʿite figures suggesting that ʿAlī conformed to the judicial precedent of his predecessors in an effort to preserve communal unity. ʿAbīda al-Salmānī (d. c. 63/683),[69] a prominent Follower who served as one of ʿAlī's judges in Kūfa and apparently did not flinch from questioning him aggressively, asserted that ʿAlī instructed his judges to continue judging as they had been under his predecessors in order to preserve the *jamāʿa*.[70] Likewise, Muḥammad al-Bāqir reportedly stated

[67] Although many reports suggest that ʿAlī declined to be bound by the precedent of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, they differ in their portrayals of the nature of his refusal. In the portrayal of al-Yaʿqūbī, ʿAlī believed that he had no need of the precedent of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar (Aḥmad b. Abī Yaʿqūb al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī* (Beirut: Dār ṣādir, 1960), 2/162). In reports recorded by Ibn Shabba and al-Ṭabarī, ʿAlī is portrayed as declining to agree to this condition out of either genuine humility or feigned humility that he believed would secure the approval of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf (Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh*, 3/930; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3/297-302)

[68] For al-Naẓẓām's collection of instances in which ʿAlī broke with the judicial precedence of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar see van Ess, *Das Kitāb an-Nakṯ*, 47-77.

[69] Despite the prominence of this figure, there is some confusion regarding his name and death date. His name is also commonly given as ʿUbayda, although Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn expressed his preference for ʿAbīda citing ʿĪsā b. Yūnus (Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, 3/494). A commonly quoted death date for ʿAbīda is 72/691 but this is unlikely to be correct. Anecdotes about his funeral prayer include some controversy over the possibility of al-Mukhtār's participation, which means he must have died in or before the year 67/686. For these reports and on ʿAbīda generally see Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 6/93-5; Wakīʿ, *Akhbār al-quḍāt*, 2/399-402.

[70] "*uqḍū kamā kuntum taqḍūn fa-innī akrah al-ikhtilāf ḥattā yakūna lil-nās jamāʿa aw amūta kamā māta aṣḥābī.*" ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 11/329; Bukhārī, *Saḥīḥ*, 2/733. Several versions of the report are given by Wakīʿ, *Akhbār al-quḍāt*, 2/399. When ʿAlī told ʿAbīda that he had changed his opinion regarding the sale

that ʿAlī allowed the portion of war spoils allotted to the Prophet's family to be distributed as it had been under Abū Bakr and ʿUmar because he was loath to be criticized for going against them.[71]

Madelung offers a cogent interpretation of the conflicting evidence, following the logic of al-Bāqir's interpretation of ʿAlī's actions. Although ʿAlī indeed differed with his predecessors on a variety of legal issues and considered it his prerogative to do so, he was unable to implement his own opinions due to the priority of consolidating his fractious coalition of supporters, many of whom could have been alienated by significant departures from the practice of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. The task of expounding the legal teachings of the *ahl al-bayt* thus fell primarily to Ibn ʿAbbās after ʿAlī's death, whose corpus of legal teachings indeed bears many striking resemblances to that of developed Imāmī law, especially where issues that became sectarian shibboleths are concerned.[72]

Most important for our purposes is the fact that significant echoes of this controversy are found in hadith literature and likely form an important part of the background to the general skepticism regarding narrations from or about ʿAlī discussed above. The narrator of the report from ʿAbīda al-Salmānī in which ʿAlī instructs his judges to act in accord with judicial precedent is narrated by Ibn Sīrīn. Al-Bukhārī closes his chapter on the virtues of ʿAlī with this report, which includes an addendum in which it is noted that Ibn Sīrīn "used to

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of the *umm walad* (a concubine with children), ʿAbīda replied that he preferred ʿAlī's opinion in agreement with ʿUmar over his opinion on its own (ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 7/291). ʿAbīda also questioned ʿAlī repeatedly after the battle of Nahrawān, asking him whether he had actually heard the anti-Khārijī hadith mentioned above from the Prophet, forcing ʿAlī to swear an oath to that effect three times. See two Basran reports from ʿAbīda and one Kūfan report from Zayd b. Wahb in ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 10/147-9.

[71] Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh*, 1/217.

[72] Wilferd Madelung, "ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās and Shiʿite Law," in eds. U. Vermulen and J.M.F. van Reeth *Law, Christianity and Modernism in Islamic Society* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1998), 13-25. I thank Nebil Husayn for this reference.

believe that most of what was ascribed to ʿAlī was lies."[73] Muslim also includes two Ḥijāzī reports in the introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that suggest that Ibn ʿAbbās believed that written records of ʿAlī's judgments contained corrupted material.[74]

The final factor that would have contributed to skepticism surrounding narrations from and about ʿAlī is rather obvious but again somewhat difficult to track precisely. Both classical Islamic and modern Western scholars have noted that conflicts over the caliphate may have occasioned some of the earliest instances of fabrication of hadith. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd (d. 656/1258) asserted that a contest of one-upmanship between the earliest Shīʿites and the "Bakriyya," or adherents of Abū Bakr, was the initial impetus behind the fabrication of hadith. Similarly, al-Madāʾinī (d. c. 235/850) wrote that Muʿāwiya intentionally sought to promote narrations on the virtues of ʿUthmān and suppress narrations on the virtues of ʿAlī and al-Jūzajānī wrote that al-Mukhtār would pay a handsome sum to those who would narrate hadiths supporting his cause during his reign in Kūfa.[75] While the details of these assertions cannot be taken at face value, their overall import is borne out to a certain extent by the contents of hadith literature itself. We find, for example, that narrations on the virtues of ʿAlī

[73] "*fa-kāna Ibn Sīrīn yarā anna ʿāmmat mā yurwā ʿalā ʿAlī al-kadhib*." Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2/733. This comment is likely an insertion of ʿAlī b. al-Jaʿd. See his *Musnad*, 1/181.

[74] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1/9. Ṭāwūs (d. 106/724) asserted that a record of ʿAlī's judgments (*kitāb fīhi qaḍāʾ ʿAlī*) was brought to Ibn ʿAbbās and he erased it. Ibn Abī Mulayka (d. 117/735) wrote to Ibn ʿAbbās requesting that he write a *kitāb* for him and "hide [some things] from [him]" (*yukhfī ʿannī*). Ibn ʿAbbās called for a record of ʿAlī's judgements and selected some things from it, but when he passed over other items he would say, "By God, ʿAlī could only have judged in this manner if he went astray." This second anecdote is somewhat enigmatic. Al-Nawawī, following Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, suggested that Ibn Abī Mulayka may have intended that Ibn ʿAbbās should not include controversial material in their correspondence. See Abū Zakariyyā Muḥyī al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Sharaf al-Nawawī, *Ṣharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut, Dār iḥyā al-turāth al-ʿarabī, 1972), 1/83.

[75] For discussions of the reports from Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd and al-Madāʾinī see Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 12-3; Brown, *Hadith*, 70; Asma Afsaruddin, *Excellence and Precedence: Medieval Islamic Discourse on Legitimate Leadership* (Boston: Brill, 2002), 29-31. For the report concerning al-Mukhtār see Jūzajānī, *Aḥwāl al-rijāl*, 39-40.

and Abū Bakr mirror one another with great frequency and that Umayyad provocations against ʿAlī frequently provide the context for citations of his virtues.[76]

Given the context outlined here, it is hardly surprising that we find widespread skepticism regarding narrations from and about ʿAlī among figures from across the religio-political spectrum in the late Umayyad period. Some of this skepticism indeed seems to have emerged during the reign of al-Mukhtār, in line with the assertion of al-Jūzajānī. Among relatively centrist figures, we have already seen that al-Shaʿbī's aversion towards Shīʿites derived from his experience among the supporters of al-Mukhtār and that Ibrāhīm al-Nakhiʿī identified al-Mukhtār's reign as the time in which people began to ask about the *isnād*.[77] Among Shīʿite-leaning figures, a variety of reports from Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī (127/745) suggest that one or more supporters of the ʿAlid cause blamed al-Mukhtār's followers for corrupting the knowledge circulating in the Shīʿite milieu.[78] Ibn Abī Laylā (d. 83/702), who was one man's Batrī and another man's ʿUthmānī, remarked that he had never heard most of what his contemporaries were ascribing to ʿAlī even though he had been in close company with him.[79]

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[76] Examples of *faḍāʾil* reports that mirror one another closely include "*Abū Bakr wa ʿUmar sayyidā kuhūl ahl al-janna*" (Muḥammad b. Yazīd Ibn Mājah al-Qazwīnī, *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (Stuttgart: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000), 18) and "*Al-Ḥasan wa al-Ḥusayn sayyidā shabāb ahl al-janna*" (Abū ʿĪsā Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā b. Sawra al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* (Stuttgart: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000), 2/959); "*lā yabqayanna fī al-masjid bāb illā sudda illā bāb Abī Bakr*" (Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2/719) and "*suddū hādhihi al-abwāb illā bāb ʿAlī*" (Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad b. Shuʿayb al-Nasāʿī, *Khaṣāʾiṣ amīr al-muʾminīn* (Qum: Majmaʿ Iḥyāʾ al-Thaqāfa al-Islāmiyya, 1999), 68); a lesser known hadith that mirrors *ḥadīth al-manzila* (discussed below) in favor of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar (Afsaruddin, *Excellence*, 156 n. 42). For reports in which Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ and Sahl b. Saʿd are prompted to cite ʿAlī's virtues by Umayyad provocations see Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2/733; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2/1030-3.

[77] Ibn Ḥanbal, *ʿIlal*, 3/381.

[78] Two separate reports recorded by al-Jūzajānī identify this individual as either Ṣila b. Zufar al-ʿAbsī or Khuzayma b. Naṣr al-ʿAbsī (*Aḥwāl al-rijāl*, 40). The report from Ṣila is corroborated by al-Bukhārī (Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr* (Hyderbad: Dāʾirat al-maʿārif al-ʿuthmāniyya, 1958-64), 4/321). On Ṣila, a Kūfan Follower, see Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 13/233-5. On Khuzayma, who was not much of a narrator but participated in al-Mukhtār's revolt, see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4/503-4. In a version narrated by Muslim, Abū Isḥāq simply mentions "*rajul min aṣḥāb ʿAlī*" (*Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1/9). Yet another report with similar wording from Abū Isḥāq is construed as ʿAlī condemning the Khārijīs (Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 7/562).

[79] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 6/113; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 2/580; Jūzajānī, *Aḥwāl al-rijāl*, 40.

For a more solidly ʿUthmānī figure like Mughīra b. Miqsam al-Ḍabbī (d. 136/753), nothing could be believed about ʿAlī except for what was narrated by the students of ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd.[80]

The skepticism expressed in these generic statements regarding the lore circulating from and about ʿAlī also frequently manifested in exchanges between narrators concerning the reliability of specific hadiths. Here too, we find examples that cut across the proto-Sunnī spectrum. Among ʿUthmānīs, Abū Ḥaṣīn (d. 127/745) claimed that no one had ever heard of the hadith of Ghadīr Khumm until Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī came from Khurasan and "bleated it (*naʿaqa bihi*)," after which people began to accept it.[81] Among centrist proto-Sunnīs, Saʿīd b. al-Musayyab (d. 94/713) reportedly went to extra lengths to confirm the veracity of *ḥadīth al-manzila*.[82] After hearing the hadith from one of the sons of Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, Ibn al-Musayyab insisted on hearing it from Saʿd directly and then questioned him until Saʿd made an oath that if he did not hear the hadith he should go deaf.[83] Among Murjiʾīs, we have already seen the example of a group of Kūfan Murjiʾīs that visited al-Aʿmash on his deathbed in an attempt to dissuade him from some of the pro-ʿAlid hadiths that he had propagated. Among Shīʿites, Sharīk b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Nakhaʿī said that he would not have accepted *ḥadīth khāṣif al-naʿl* if anyone other than Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir had narrated it to him.[84]

At an obvious level, these anecdotes reveal a pervasive sense that narrations about ʿAlī called for special caution, but they also give inchoate expression to a more general

[80] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1/9; Jūzajānī, *Aḥwāl al-rijāl*, 40. The skepticism outlined here also found implicit expression in the notion that ʿUthmānīs were of a more temperate character than Shīʿites and were less likely to denigrate their opponents. See reports to this effect from Saʿīd b. Abī ʿArūba and Yazīd b. Hārūn in *TMD*, 39/503.
[81] Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 6/241. On this hadith see V.4.
[82] On this hadith, in which the Prophet compares his relationship to ʿAlī to that of Moses to Aaron see section V.4.
[83] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2/1030; Nasāʾī, *Khaṣāʾiṣ*, 79-81.
[84] *SAN*, 4/405. On this hadith, in which the Prophet apparently prefers ʿAlī over Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, see section V.4.

epistemological problem inherent in the enterprise of transmitting and criticizing hadith. If a hadith was formally sound but substantively objectionable, what was the appropriate response? The answer to this question rested on the intrinsically subjective judgments of just how jarring the substance of a given hadith was and just how much credence was lent to it by the authority of a given narrator. For an ʿUthmānī like Abū Ḥaṣīn, it was self-evident that the hadith of Ghadīr Khumm could not be reliable and that Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī was at fault for narrating it. But for a Shīʿite like Sharīk, the doubts arising from the substance of *ḥadīth khāṣif al-naʿl* were trumped by the impeccable authority of his teacher Manṣūr.

In the late Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid periods, such considerations were largely implicit and the lack of clearly articulated communal standards for evaluating hadith reports left ample room for resolving apparent contradictions through unvarnished individual fiat. But as hadith critics honed their craft into a specialized discipline, the problem became more acute and strategies for dealing with it more elaborate. Two developments in the methods of hadith criticism were particularly relevant in this process. First, a search for corroboration emerged as the primary method employed in determining the reliability of a narrator. A narrator was considered reliable to the extent that his narrations from his teachers were corroborated by those of other reputable narrators and was considered weak to the extent that they were not.[85] Second, as hadith critics developed shared standards for their discipline and a cohesive identity that was defined in large part in opposition to rationalist trends in theology

[85] This method was employed by figures as early as Shuʿba and was elaborated and applied more consistently by subsequent generations of hadith critics. See Dickinson, *Development*, 86-90; Brown, *Hadith*, 80-2.

and law, they became increasingly bound to formal, as opposed to substantive, criteria as the only legitimate means of judging hadith reports.[86]

Each of these methodological developments at the level of theory had certain problematic loopholes in practice. Judging reliability through corroboration was eminently logical and certainly succeeded to one extent or another in weeding out bad narrators, but one needed an *a priori* sense of who was reliable in any given generation in order to have a standard from which to proceed. This standard was no doubt provided by broad communal reputation, but this was in part a local and factional affair. Likewise, in an ideal world the application of formal criteria in judging hadith reports should have obviated the need for substantive criteria, but in practice hadith critics continued to encounter reports that were formally sound but substantively too jarring to accept.

While these issues played out across the various genres that constituted hadith literature, they found a particularly poignant expression in the polemically charged issue of the virtues of ʿAlī. The basic problem remained as it had been in the late Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid periods – what to do with an objectionable hadith about ʿAlī narrated via a sound *isnād* –, but the rules of the game had changed. Given the increasing primacy accorded to form over substance, it comes as no surprise that a skeptical hadith critic could be wrestled into submission with a sound *isnād*. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Mahdī once challenged a fellow hadith critic, ʿAmr b. ʿAlī al-Fallās (d. 249/864), to cite a sound *isnād* for *ḥadīth al-manzila*. After several failed

[86] For excellent analyses of the relationship between formal and substantive criticism of hadith see Jonathan A.C. Brown, "How We Know Early Ḥadīth Critics Did *Matn* Criticism and Why It's So Hard to Find," *Islamic Law and Society* 15 (2008), 143-84; idem, "The Rules of Matn Criticism: There Are No Rules," *Islamic Law and Soicety* 19 (2012), 356-96.

attempts, al-Fallās was able to adduce an unassailable *isnād* and he remarked that it "was as if I had fed him [Ibn Mahdī] a rock."[87]

Although a widely known hadith with a sound *isnād* was not easily dismissed, if the balance of the equation changed, such that the hadith was not well known, its contents were entirely unacceptable, or its narrators were not of the highest caliber, the reputation of the narrators themselves could be called into question. It was rare for a narrator's reputation to be ruined altogether because of a single hadith, but a number of anecdotes demonstrate that this was at least a possibility. The following anecdote regarding Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn's reaction to a certain pro-ʿAlid hadith attributed to ʿAbd al-Razzāq provides a clear illustration of the sorts of calculations involved in weighing the objectionable contents of a hadith against the reputation of a narrator:

> When Abū al-Azhar al-Naysābūrī narrated his hadith from ʿAbd al-Razzāq concerning [ʿAlī's] virtues, Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn was informed of that. When he was with him among a group of the *ahl al-ḥadīth*, Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn said, "Who is this Naysābūrī liar who narrated this hadith from ʿAbd al-Razzāq?" Abū al-Azhar stood up and said, "Here I am." So Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn smiled and said, "You are not a liar," surprised at his simplicity. He said, "Someone else is at fault for this hadith."[88]

[87] Abū ʿUthmān Saʿīd b. Muḥammad al-Buḥayrī, *Fawāʾid Abī ʿUthmān al-Buḥayrī*, MS Ẓahiriyya, Damascus. Cited in ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn al-Amīnī, *Mawsūʿat al-Ghadīr fī al-kitāb wa al-sunna wa al-adab: thamarāt al-asfār ilā al-aqṭār* (Qum: Muʾassasat dāʾirat al-maʿārif, 2007), 1/321, and Ḥāmid Ḥusayn al-Mūsawī al-Laknawī, *Nafaḥāt al-azhār fī ʿabaqāt al-anwār* (Iran: 1414), 17/68. The name given for al-Fallās in al-Buḥayrī's work is Abū Ḥafṣ al-Ṣayrafī, but he was known more commonly as ʿAmr b. ʿAlī al-Fallās. On him see Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 22/162-5.

[88] The anecdote is preserved in several versions. The version that I have translated here is from al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī. See *TB*, 4/261-2; Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, 1/193, 5/312. The hadith in question, also reported in several versions, runs: ʿAbd al-Razzāq – Maʿmar – al-Zuhrī – ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿAbd Allāh – Ibn ʿAbbās: the Prophet said to ʿAlī, "You are a *sayyid* in this world and a *sayyid* in the hereafter." Abū Ḥāmid al-Sharqī (d. 318/930), a prominent *muḥaddith* and student of Abū al-Azhar, explained the provenance of this hadith with the assertion that Maʿmar had a *rāfiḍī* nephew who inserted the hadith in his books (*TB*, 4/261).

In this case, it seems that Ibn Maʿīn's assessment of Abū al-Azhar's character saved the latter from being branded a liar for narrating this hadith. In other similar cases, corroboration could save a narrator's reputation:

> [ʿAbbās al-Dūrī]: I heard Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn say that Abū al-Ṣalt ʿAbd al-Salām b. Ṣāliḥ was reliable. I – or someone else – said to him, "He narrates from Abū Muʿāwiya, from al-Aʿmash: 'I am the city of knowledge and ʿAlī is its door.'" Yaḥyā: "What do you want from the poor man? Didn't Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar al-Faydī narrate it from Abū Muʿāwiya?"[89]

Although Abū al-Ṣalt al-Harawī (d. 236/851) was exonerated by Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn, other hadith critics believed that he was in fact guilty of fabricating this hadith and that everyone else who narrated it had "stolen" it from him.[90] The borderline cases of Abū al-Azhar al-Naysābūrī (d. 263/877) and Abū al-Ṣalt al-Harawī highlight two simple facts. First, narrating reports on the virtues of ʿAlī that were not widely corroborated was a highly fraught endeavor. This is underscored by the fact that such reports, including the hadith of Abū al-Azhar, were sometimes narrated in secret. Second, hadith critics' judgments of such reports were based on a host of highly subjective factors, including the degree of skepticism adopted towards reports about ʿAlī, an assessment of the extent to which a particular report was substantively objectionable and an overall sense of the narrator on whose reputation the report in question hinged. All of these factors were of course interdependent, but, as we will see shortly, for many authors, it seems that skepticism towards pro-ʿAlid reports trumped a narrator's reputation more often than the reverse. Nonetheless, all of these factors were at play in the decisions made by a group of authors in the mid-to-late third/ninth century who sought to impose a

[89] *TB*, 11/51. Cf. Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn, *Maʿrifat al-rijāl* (Damascus: Majmaʿ al-lugha al-ʿarabiyya, 1985), 1/79. Abū al-Ṣalt ʿAbd al-Salām b. Ṣāliḥ al-Harawī was a controversial figure in Sunnī circles and was a major source for reports from ʿAlī al-Riḍā in Shīʿite literature. See *TB*, 11/47-52; Khūʾī, *Muʿjam*, 11/19-20; Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, 84-98.

[90] This was the opinion of Ibn Ḥibbān, for example (*Majrūḥīn*, 2/152).

semblance of order on the vast and expanding body of hadith reports by developing a new genre of hadith collections.

V.4. The Virtues of ʿAlī in the Six Books

The middle of the third/ninth century was a seminal moment in the history of hadith scholarship. This is the era in which the hadith compilations that eventually became the most authoritative references for Sunnīs, known retrospectively as "the Six Books," were composed. The authors of these works sought to create authoritative references for those who were not well-versed in hadith criticism by extracting a choice selection of hadiths from the vast corpus available to them.[91] This was initially a highly controversial move, since many of the authors' contemporaries perceived in their works pretensions to authoritative finality in a scholarly endeavor that had long been inherently open-ended.[92] Nonetheless, over the course of three to four centuries, the Six Books proved to have a profound and far-reaching impact on the scholarly culture of Sunnism and eventually gained a sort of canonical status.[93]

[91] We have explicit descriptions of this intent from Muslim and Abū Dāwūd, and it can be inferred with reasonable confidence for the other authors. See Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1/2-5; Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān b. al-Ashʿath al-Sijistānī, *Risālat Abī Dāwūd ilā ahl Makka fī waṣf sunanihi* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1985), 24-8; Brown, *Canonization*, 54-9.

[92] For an insightful discussion of the manner in which al-Bukhāri and Muslim departed from precedent with their collections and initial reactions to them see Brown, *Canonization*, 47-98.

[93] Brown places the canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim in the fifth/eleventh century, while Goldziher suggests that the other four books gained canonical status in the course of the seventh/thirteenth century. However, as noted by Goldziher, the canon was by no means hermetically determined. The Six Book canon emerged largely from the scholarly milieus active under the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk dynasties, where a general intensification of the study of hadith occurred. In Almohad North Africa, scholars frequently referenced the "ten *muṣannaf*s" rather than the Six Books. Moreover, even in the eastern lands where the Six Book canon originated, the status of Ibn Mājah was frequently contested and Mālik's *Muwaṭṭaʾ* was sometimes a strong competitor or a seventh addition. On the Six Books generally see Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 234-44. On al-Bukhārī and Muslim see Brown, *Canonization*, 99-205 and passim.

Although these works represent only a limited portion of the hadith corpus as it existed in the third/ninth century, a focus on them in our examination of narrations on ʿAlī's virtues is warranted for two reasons. To begin with, the canonical status that they gained meant that, on the whole, they circulated more widely and received a greater share of scholarly (and, indeed, popular) attention than other works. Put differently, these works would have had a significantly greater impact in shaping scholarly discussions and, to some extent, popular consciousness, than other works of hadith.[94] This was particularly true of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), which functioned not only as the most authoritative and revered collection of hadith, but as a powerful cultural icon employed in contexts ranging from court ceremony to talismanic cures to annual calendrical rituals.[95]

In addition to the greater influence of these works, the nature of their composition frequently renders the intentions and normative stances of their authors more accessible than those of the authors of other early works of hadith. All of the Six Books belonged to either the *sunan* or *jāmiʿ* genres, which overlapped significantly and emerged in the first half of the third/ninth century as a sort of hybrid of two earlier genres, the *muṣannaf* and the *musnad*.[96] The *muṣannaf* genre was the earliest of the three, emerging in the early to mid-second/eighth

[94] For vivid descriptions of the participation of members of the ruling class, women from scholarly families and common people in hadith circles in Mamlūk Cairo see Jonathan Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) 155-60, 175-81, 210-6. Based on a detailed study of *samāʿāt* (certificates of audition) in medieval Damascus, Stefan Leder, et. al. likewise conclude that "occupation with the Sunna and its transmission was part of the daily life and custom of many residents of the city" (Stefan Leder, et. al., *Muʿǧam al-samāʿāt al-Dimashqiyya* (Damas: Institut Français, 1996), 29). I thank Joel Blecher for this reference. Discussions of the impact of learned works on the general populace are naturally speculative, but it is almost certain that the rituals, objects and institutions of popular religious culture – shrines, Sufi orders, epic poems, songs performed at religious festivals – would have had an equal if not greater impact than formal scholarship.

[95] Brown, *Canonization*, 338-46.

[96] The ostensible difference between *sunan* and *jāmiʿ* works was that the former were limited to ritual and legal topics while the latter also included historical, theological and ethical topics, but this was not a hard and fast distinction. See Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 229-30.

century, and was accordingly the most informal. A *muṣannaf* was organized primarily by a succession of legal topics and contained a mix of Prophetic and post-Prophetic reports, with the latter predominating in quantity. The *musnad* genre emerged in the late second/eighth century and was composed solely of Prophetic reports organized according to their point of origin (i.e. the Companion that narrated the hadith) rather than their contents. Both *muṣannaf*s and *musnad*s were highly eclectic, containing many contradictory reports with no indication of how to reconcile or adjudicate between them, and neither genre was particularly concerned with restricting itself to authentic reports.[97]

Sunan and *jāmiʿ* works were hybrid versions of these earlier genres with respect to their contents and structure, consisting of solely Prophetic reports like the *musnad* but organized topically like the *muṣannaf*. The authors of these works were much more concerned with the authenticity of the reports they included and, significantly for our purposes, they were distinguished from their predecessors by their more overt legal and doctrinal agendas.[98] In spite of the many nuanced differences between the approaches of the authors of each of the

[97] On the composition and arrangement of the *muṣannaf* of ʿAbd al-Razzāq see Motzki, *Origins*, 77-101 and passim. Motzki uses, *inter alia*, the apparent artlessness of the composition of the *muṣannaf* to argue against the possibility of large scale fabrication. On the *muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba see Scott Lucas, "Where are the Legal *Ḥadīth*? A Study of the *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba," *Islamic Law and Society*, 15 (2008), 283-314. On the *musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal see Christopher Melchert, "The *Musnad* of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal: How It Was Composed and What Distinguishes It from the Six Books," *Der Islam,* 82 (2005), esp. 40-41.

[98] The description of these four genres that I offer here is conventional but somewhat schematic. Although the salient distinctions between the structure and content of the different genres outlined here are generally valid, there was a great deal of terminological overlap. Thus, many early *muṣannaf*s were described by Ibn al-Nadīm as *sunan* works (*Fihrist*, 464-71), and one of the first *sunan* works, authored by al-Dārimī (d. 255/869) was also known as a *musnad*. Some *musnad*s organized the hadiths of each companion by legal genre, after the fashion of the *muṣannaf*, and so on (Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 237-40) For further discussion of the evolution of these genres see Brown, *Hadith*, 25-34; Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, 196-240.

Six Books, it is clear that their arrangement and selection of hadiths frequently point the reader toward specific conclusions in a manner that those of *muṣannaf*s and *musnad*s do not.[99]

With respect to the issue of narrating reports on the virtues of ʿAlī from Shīʿites, the authors of the Six Books seem to have adopted markedly different approaches. In a broad comparison of the chapters on the virtues of the Companions (*faḍāʾil/manāqib al-ṣaḥāba*) in the works of al-Bukhārī, Muslim and Ibn Abī Shayba, Scott Lucas has already suggested that different authors' presentations of the topic varied widely and likely reflected their individual preferences and calibrations of exactly how the prominent Companions should be remembered and ranked relative to one another.[100] Our examination here is restricted to the works of al-Bukhārī, Muslim (d. 261/874), al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892) and Ibn Mājah (d. 273/886) since Abū Dāwūd and al-Nasāʾī do not include chapters on the virtues of the Companions in their works.[101] Our focus will be on both the contents of the hadith reports selected by each

[99] This point has been amply demonstrated for the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī, which has naturally received a greater share of scholarly attention than the other five canonical works. It is certain that there are "family differences" between these works with respect to the nature of their normative stances and the manner in which they are supported, but the overall contrast between these works and the *muṣannaf* and *musnad* genres holds true in broad terms. For studies demonstrating some of the normative concerns of al-Bukhārī see Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "*Maghāzī* and the *Muḥaddithūn*: Reconsidering the Treatment of 'Historical' Materials in Early Collections of Hadith," *IJMES* 28 (1996), 1-18, where this point is illustrated through a comparison of the treatment of *maghāzī* materials in al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* and the *Muṣannaf*s of Ibn Abī Shayba and ʿAbd al-Razzāq; S.R. Burge, "Reading Between the Lines: The Compilation of *Ḥadīṯ* and the Authorial Voice," *Arabica* 58 (2011), 168-97, where the author argues that the compilation of two chapters in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* betrays a clear authorial intent. On Būkhārī's legal agenda see Scott C. Lucas, "The Legal Principles of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī and their Relationship to Classical Salafī Islam," *Islamic Law and Society* 13, no. 3 (2006), 291-310, and Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim: Formation and Function of the Sunnī Ḥadīth Canon* (Boston: Brill, 2007), 72-4. The same point is reinforced by the fact that al-Bukhārī frequently omitted controversial or objectionable materials from his narrations, for which see Muḥammad Ṣādiq al-Najmī, *Aḍwāʾ ʿalā al-ṣaḥīḥayn* (Qum: Muʾassasat al-maʿārif al-islāmiyya, 1419), 116-20.

[100] Lucas, *Constructive Critics*, 255-266.

[101] Al-Nasāʾī compiled an independent work on the virtues of ʿAlī, *Khaṣāʾiṣ Amīr al-muʾminīn*, that is also included in his *al-Sunan al-kubrā*. I briefly compare this work to the contents of the other works analyzed here below.

author and the extent to which each author expanded or restricted the scope of Shīʿite narrators' contributions.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim – Bāb min faḍāʾil ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib

Although the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī has long been favored over that of his junior student Muslim due to al-Bukhārī's higher standards for authenticity, a number of scholars, especially in the Maghreb, preferred Muslim's work on account of its elegant arrangement.[102] Without wishing to enter the fray, I take the counterintuitive step of beginning my analysis with Muslim's work for a different reason. Among all of the authors of the Six Books, only Muslim includes an introduction in which he informs the reader of exactly what he intends to do in his work.[103] Both Muslim's compilation of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* and his introduction to it were occasioned by the request of a student, perhaps Aḥmad b. Salama al-Naysabūrī (d. 286/899), that he compile a reference work of hadith for him.[104] Muslim explains that he only saw fit to fulfill the request because he had witnessed so many would-be *muḥaddith*s spreading weak reports among the unsuspecting masses. The work is thus designed as an accessible reference for those who are unable to critically sift through the corpus of hadith on their own.

In a formulation reminiscent of that of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Mahdī, Muslim offers the reader a tripartite division of hadith based on the accuracy and reliability of its narrators: 1) "people of rectitude (*istiqāma*) and precision (*itqān*)" whose hadiths are free of "great discrepancy (*ikhtilāf shadīd*)" and "excessive confusion (*takhlīṭ fāḥish*)," 2) people who rank

[102] On this issue see Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *Muqaddima*, 160-1; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Nukat ʿalā kitāb Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ* (Madina: Al-Jāmiʿa al-islamiyya, 1984), 1/281-6; Brown, *Canonization*, 278-80.
[103] Abū Dāwūd's *Risāla ilā ahl Makka* and al-Tirmidhī's *Kitāb al-ʿilal al-ṣaghīr*, appended at the end of his *Sunan*, offer retrospective descriptions of their works but neither is as clear as Muslim's introduction.
[104] Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī specifies that Muslim compiled the *Ṣaḥīḥ* for Aḥmad b. Salama in his biography of the latter (*TB*, 4/408).

below the first category in memory and exactitude but are nonetheless honest and experienced narrators who are not guilty of serious errors,[105] 3) narrators who are suspected of fabricating reports or who narrate a large volume of uncorroborated (*munkar*) reports. Muslim states that he will include reports only from the first two categories of narrators and that, wherever possible, he will only include reports from narrators of the second category after exhausting those from the first category.[106]

Significantly for our purposes, Shīʿites and Shīʿite themes appear throughout Muslim's introduction to his work. Wherever Shīʿite themes emerge explicitly, they are cast in a negative light. In a section demonstrating the importance of a rigorous approach to narrating hadith and avoiding weak narrators, Muslim includes several of the reports examined above expressing general skepticism regarding reports about ʿAlī.[107] He also includes no less than eight reports criticizing Jābir al-Juʿfī, as well as reports criticizing other Shīʿites, such as ʿAmr b. Abī al-Miqdām, al-Ḥārith b. Ḥuṣayra and the notorious extremist Mughīra b. Saʿīd al-Bajalī.[108] There are also a handful of Shīʿites who appear in a positive light in the introduction, although their Shīʿism is neither highlighted nor implied. Al-Aʿmash and Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir are upheld as examples of the highest caliber of narrators and Yazīd b. Abī Ziyād (d. 136/754) is mentioned as a second-tier narrator.[109] In its apparent rejection of Shīʿism and its enthusiastic endorsement of certain Shīʿite narrators, Muslim's introduction is a representative product of the processes examined up to this point. As we will see in some detail in what follows, in spite

[105] The phrase used by Muslim here, "*fa-inna ism al-sitr wa al-ṣidq wa taʿāṭī al-ʿilm yashmaluhum*," is somewhat ambiguous. Juynboll translated *sitr* as intelligence but it seems more likely that it is to be understood as a passive participle (*mastūr*), as suggested by al-Nawawī, meaning that the narrator is "veiled" or "protected" from serious error (*Sharḥ*, 1/51).
[106] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1/2-5.
[107] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1/9. The reports are from Ibn ʿAbbās, Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī and Mughīra b. Miqsam.
[108] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1/12-13.
[109] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1/3-4.

of the fact that narrators like al-Aʿmash and Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir received the highest accolades, the reception of the material they narrated was likely heavily conditioned by a decision on the part of Muslim and his teacher al-Bukhārī to avoid narrating pro-ʿAlid reports from Shīʿites.

Muslim includes thirteen narrations in his chapter on the virtues of ʿAlī, only five of which are entirely distinct hadiths. By way of comparison, he includes eighteen narrations on the virtues of Abū Bakr, ten of which are distinct hadiths, twenty-four on the virtues of ʿUmar, ten of which are distinct hadiths, and eight narrations on the virtues of ʿUthmān, only two of which are distinct hadiths.[110] Only two of the thirteen narrations on ʿAlī have one or more Shīʿites in the *isnād.* The Shīʿites included are al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayaba, Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (d. 188/804) (both of whom were major proto-Sunnī narrators opposed to extreme manifestations of Shīʿism as we have seen) and Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl b. Ghazwān (d. 195/811), a less prominent figure also known for moderate Shīʿite sentiments. The contents of the chapter can be summarized as follows:

> 1. *Ḥadīth al-manzila* (3 narrations through descendants of Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, one including al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba).
>
> 2. *Ḥadīth al-rāya*: "I will give the flag tomorrow to a man who loves God and His Messenger through whom God will grant victory" (3 narrations, no Shīʿites).
>
> 3. A composite hadith including *ḥadīth al-manzila*, *ḥadīth al-rāya* and *ḥadīth al-kisāʾ* (1 narration, no Shīʿites).
>
> 4. *Ḥadith Ghadīr Khumm* (4 narrations, one including Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd and one including Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl. None of these include the portion "Whoever [considers] me his *mawlā* then [let] him [consider] ʿAlī his *mawlā* (*man kuntu mawlāhu fa-ʿAlī mawlāhu*)."
>
> 4. *Ḥadīth Abū Turāb* - how ʿAlī received the nickname Abū Turāb (1 narration, no Shīʿites).[111]

[110] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2/1021-33.
[111] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2/1030-3.

Two observations can be made regarding Muslim's presentation of ʿAlī's virtues. To begin with, all of the hadiths with a Shīʿite in the *isnād* follow as corroboration after a prior narration of the same hadith that does not include Shīʿites. Given Muslim's stipulation that he would give precedence to the most authentic narrations, this is a significant point. Secondly, among the various versions of these hadiths that would have been known to Muslim, at times he opted to include those whose implications for ʿAlī's status were relatively benign. For example, he omits any mention of the most controversial portion of the hadith of Ghadīr Khumm in which the Prophet declares, "Whoever [considers] me his *mawlā* then [let] him [consider] ʿAlī his *mawlā*."[112] It is apparent from all of this that Muslim took a highly conservative position with respect to narrating the virtues of ʿAlī from Shīʿites, especially considering the fact that his work was known to include a large number of Shīʿite narrators.[113]

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī – Bāb Manāqib ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib

Although we do not possess any definitive statements of al-Bukhārī's motivations and methods in the compilation of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it is reasonable to surmise that they did not differ greatly from those expressed by Muslim in his introduction. Al-Bukhārī was known for being even more stringent than Muslim in his selection of narrators and reports, a fact that is evident in his reception of Shīʿite narrators and his presentation of the virtues of ʿAlī.

Al-Bukhārī includes eight narrations in his chapter on the virtues of ʿAlī, seven of which are distinct hadiths. He includes twenty-eight narrations on the virtues of Abū Bakr, twenty-five of which are distinct hadiths, eighteen narrations on the virtues of ʿUmar, fifteen of which

[112] On this hadith and its importance in sectarian debates see now Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, "Ghadīr Khumm," *EI*[3].
[113] Khaṭīb, *Kifāya*, 208.

are distinct hadiths, and six narrations on the virtues of ʿUthmān, five of which are distinct hadiths.[114] In his chapter on ʿAlī's virtues, al-Bukhārī includes two hadiths with Shīʿites in the *isnād*. One of these includes two Shīʿites, al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Laylā (d. 83/702), both of whose Shīʿism was relatively benign. The other includes ʿAlī b. al-Jaʿd, author of the *musnad*, as al-Bukhārī's direct source. Significantly, the chapter also includes narrations from figures known for their opposition to Shīʿism, such as Zāʾida b. Qudāma and the ʿUthmānī Abū Ḥaṣīn. The contents of the chapter can be summarized as follows:

> 1. Opening with two *muʿallaq* narrations: Muḥammad says to ʿAlī, "You are of me and I am of you," and ʿUmar says that Muḥammad was pleased with ʿAlī when he died.[115]
>
> 2. *Ḥadīth al-rāya* (2 narrations, no Shīʿites).
>
> 3. *Ḥadīth Abū Turāb* (1 narration, no Shīʿites).
>
> 4. A hadith of Ibn ʿUmar in which he defends both ʿUthmān and ʿAlī to an anonymous questioner (1 narration, no Shīʿites, narrated by Zāʾida from Abū Ḥaṣīn).
>
> 5. ʿAlī and Fāṭima request a servant but Muḥammad teaches them an invocation instead (1 narration, includes al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba and Ibn Abī Laylā).
>
> 6. *Ḥadīth al-manzila* (1 narration, no Shīʿites).
>
> 7. ʿAlī orders people to continue judging according to the opinion of his predecessors, including a notation that Ibn Sīrīn believed "most of what is narrated about ʿAlī is lies (*ʿāmmat mā yurwā ʿalā ʿAlī al-kadhib*)" (1 narration, includes ʿAlī b. al-Jaʿd).[116]

It is clear that al-Bukhārī took a highly conservative approach to narrating from Shīʿites on ʿAlī's virtues. His particular selection of reports yields a more subdued picture of ʿAlī's virtues than that of Muslim. This is not surprising, given that al-Bukhārī seems to have been more critical than Muslim in narrating from Shīʿites in general. He famously refrained from narrating from Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, and also omitted other Shīʿites included by Muslim, such as

[114] Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2/719-33.
[115] The famous *muʿallaq* narrations of al-Bukhārī are pithy hadiths or post-Prophetic narrations without *isnād*s, usually included at the beginning of a chapter.
[116] Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2/732-3.

Abān b. Taghlib and even one of the last living Companions, Abū al-Ṭufayl ʿĀmir b. Wāthila (d. 110/728).[117] We can only guess at the logic behind al-Bukhārī's closing of the chapter with a narration indicating that Ibn Sīrīn believed most of what was narrated regarding ʿAlī to be fallacious, but it is not entirely flattering and seems designed to vindicate his conservative approach to ʿAlī's virtues. Further evidence for this approach to ʿAlī's virtues is found in his interactions with one of his students, Abū ʿĪsā al-Tirmidhī.

Sunan al-Tirmidhī – Bāb manāqib ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib

Al-Tirmidhī's presentation of ʿAlī's virtues stands in sharp contrast to that of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. Not only does he include a much wider selection of hadiths, but he draws liberally on the narrations of Shīʿites. Al-Tirmidhī includes twenty-six narrations on the virtues of ʿAlī, twenty-five of which are distinct hadiths. His chapter on the virtues of Abū Bakr includes only seven narrations, six of which are distinct hadiths, but this is followed by a chapter on the virtues of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, which includes twenty-two narrations, sixteen of which are distinct hadiths and many of which apply only or primarily to Abū Bakr. His chapter on the virtues of ʿUmar includes sixteen narrations, thirteen of which are distinct hadiths and his chapter on the virtues of ʿUthmān also includes sixteen narrations, thirteen of which are distinct hadiths.[118]

In the chapter on ʿAlī"s virtues, more than two thirds of the narrations, eighteen of twenty-six, include one or more Shīʿites in the *isnād*. In addition, whereas al-Bukhārī and Muslim selected only sober Shīʿites who were almost entirely uncontroversial in the proto-Sunnī milieu, al-Tirmidhī includes a large number of Shīʿites who were sharply criticized for

[117] Khaṭīb, *Kifāya*, 208.
[118] Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, 2/935-53.

their beliefs. Lastly, even where al-Bukharī and Muslim did narrate from Shīʿites, they tended to do so for hadiths that were corroborated by non-Shīʿite *isnād*s. Al-Tirmidhī not only includes reports that are narrated only by Shīʿites, but frequently inserts comments that defend their authenticity against possible objections. Because al-Tirmidhī includes twenty-six reports with only one repetition, it is not feasible to list the contents of his chapter as we did with al-Bukhārī and Muslim. The summary below is limited to notable features in terms of content and *isnād*s:

<u>*Content*</u>

1. Two hadiths in which Muḥammad takes ʿAlī's side in disagreements with other Companions.

2. *Ḥadīth khāṣif al-naʿl*: A delegation from Quraysh comes to Muḥammad seeking the return of weak Meccans who have fled to Medina. Muḥammad warns them to desist or else God will "send against you a man who will strike your necks over religion; God has tested his heart for faith." Eager companions, including Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, ask who this man is. Muḥammad says that it is "the one mending the sandal (*khāṣif al-naʿl*)," and he had given his sandal to ʿAlī to repair it. After narrating the hadith, ʿAlī turns to those present and cites the famous Prophetic dictum, "Whoever intentionally lies about what I say, let him take his seat in the fire."

3. *Ḥadīth al-ṭayr*: Muḥammad prays that "the most beloved of God's creation" will eat a roasted bird with him and ʿAlī comes to eat it with him.

4. Loving ʿAlī is tantamount to faith (*īmān*) and hating him is tantamount to hypocrisy (*nīfāq*) (3 narrations).

5. ʿAlī prayed before anyone else (with the controversy over the issue noted).

6. ʿAlī has various kinds of special access to Muḥammad's mosque (2 narrations).

7. Other reports indicating a unique relationship between ʿAlī and Muḥammad.

<u>Isnād</u>

1. Al-Tirmidhī narrates from prominent Shīʿites who al-Bukhārī and/or Muslim narrate from in their works but exclude from their chapters on ʿAlī's virtues. These figures include Abū Nuʿaym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn, ʿUbayd Allāh b. Mūsā, Abū Aḥmad al-Zubayrī, Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ, Sharīk b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Nakhaʿī (Muslim only), al-Aʿmash, Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir, Salama b. Kuhayl and Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī.

2. In one case, al-Tirmidhī narrates from al-Bukhārī himself from ʿUbayd Allāh b. Mūsā.

3. Al-Tirmidhī narrates from controversial Shīʿites who were criticized by some narrators but accepted by others. These figures include:

a. Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān al-Ḍubaʿī (reported to have disparaged Abū Bakr and ʿUmar).

b. Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa (Batrī Zaydī reported to have disparaged ʿUthmān).

c. ʿAlī b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy (brother of Batrī Zaydī Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ).

d. Ḥakīm b. Jubayr al-Asadī (accepted by Thawrī but criticized by Shuʿba, Ibn Mahdī and al-Qaṭṭān).

e. ʿAlī b. Qādim.

f. Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Suddī.

g. Abū Hārūn al-ʿAbdī (severely criticized by Shuʿba for disparaging ʿUthmān and narrating fabricated hadiths).

4. Al-Tirmidhī narrates a report with a full *ahl al-bayt isnād*, a rarity in the Six Books (extending from ʿAlī b. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq to his brother Mūsā b. Jaʿfar and then through the father-son line to ʿAlī).

5. Al-Tirmidhī deflects potential objections to many of the reports:

a. After *ḥadīth khāṣif al-naʿl*, he notes that Wakīʿ said that the narrator from ʿAlī, Ribʿī b. Ḥirāsh, never lied and that Ibn Mahdī called the next narrator, Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir, "the most reliable of the people of Kūfa."

b. After narrating from Abū Hārūn al-ʿAbdī, he notes that Shuʿba criticized him (*takallama fīhi*) but that the hadith is also attributed to al-Aʿmash.

c. After narrating *ḥadīth al-ṭayr*, he confirms that al-Suddī met Anas b. Mālik, the first narrator, and mentions the praise of several critics for al-Suddī.[119]

A significant gulf thus separates al-Tirmidhī from al-Bukhārī and Muslim in terms of their willingness to narrate from Shīʿites. Even if one accounts for the fact that al-Tirmidhī had no intention of being as strict as al-Bukhārī and Muslim in his selection of reports, the contrast in their methods remains striking. Whereas al-Tirmidhī narrated liberally from Shīʿites on ʿAlī's virtues, al-Bukhārī and Muslim seem to have intentionally avoided narrating from Shīʿites in their *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections where the virtues of ʿAlī were concerned. The most explicit

[119] Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, 2/948-53.

illustration of this contrast is found in the fact that al-Tirmidhī narrated from at least nine prominent Kūfan Shīʿites who were included by al-Bukhārī and Muslim throughout their works but who are conspicuously absent from their chapters on ʿAlī's virtues. Further confirmation of this is found in al-Tirmidhī's report from al-Bukhārī himself from ʿUbayd Allāh b. Mūsā (d. 213/828). Finally, exchanges between al-Tirmidhī and al-Bukhārī indicate that al-Bukhārī held genuine doubts regarding narrations about ʿAlī, in accord with his citation of Ibn Sīrīn's blanket skepticism concerning such reports. In separate works, al-Tirmidhī documents two exchanges with al-Bukhārī in which al-Bukhārī tells him that he considers some of his narrations regarding ʿAlī to be farfetched.[120]

This point is underscored by *ḥadīth khāṣif al-naʿl*, narrated from ʿAlī via the *isnād* (Ribʿī b. Ḥirāsh – Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir). We have seen that Muslim identified Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir as a narrator of the highest caliber in the introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. He also narrated the Prophetic dictum against attributing lies to Muḥammad via the same *isnād* (ʿAlī – Ribʿī – Manṣūr) in his introduction and was undoubtedly familiar with the context provided by al-Tirmidhī. But he did not include *ḥadīth khāṣif al-naʿl* anywhere in his collection, possibly because of its explicit suggestion that the Prophet preferred ʿAlī over Abū Bakr and ʿUmar in this instance.

[120] In his *Sunan*, al-Tirmidhī mentions a report with a Shīʿite *isnād* to al-Bukhārī in which Muḥammad tells ʿAlī that no one may pass through the mosque in Medina in a state of major ritual impurity (*junuban*) and notes that al-Bukhārī considered it odd (*istaghrabahu*) (2/950). In his *ʿIlal*, al-Tirmidhī mentions the famous hadith "I am the house of wisdom and ʿAlī is its door" to al-Bukhārī who replies that he has not heard it and considered it "*munkar*" (374); also cited in Brown, "How we Know," 174. Brown notes that the meaning of the quasi-technical term *munkar* was elastic and that its usage evolved over time. In the time of al-Bukhārī it was used in a flexible manner to express objection either to the content or the *isnād* of a hadith (ibid., 174 n. 83 and 84). One of the possible meanings of *munkar* in this period, that the hadith came through only one *isnād*, is precluded in this case because al-Tirmidhī labels this hadith as "*ḥadīth gharīb munkar*" in his *Sunan*, where *gharīb* is already used regularly to indicate this feature of a hadith (2/951).

Sunan Ibn Mājah – Bāb faḍl ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib

As noted above, the canonical status of Ibn Mājah's work was the most precarious among the Six Books. This was due to what Jonathan Brown has referred to as Ibn Mājah's "outsider status," or his relative distance from the most prominent figures of third/ninth century hadith scholarship, as well as the general recognition that his work contained many weak hadiths, which made up as much as a quarter of its contents. Those who advocated the canonical status of the work did so because, in spite of its failings, it yielded a large number of hadiths not found in the other five canonical works.[121]

Ibn Mājah includes eight distinct hadiths in his chapter on ʿAlī's virtues. He includes nine hadiths on the virtues of Abū Bakr, seven on the virtues of ʿUmar and five on the virtues of ʿUthmān, all of which are free of repetition.[122] Five of the eight hadiths on ʿAlī's virtues have at least one Shīʿite in the *isnād*. Despite Ibn Mājah's overall propensity to include weak hadiths in his work, the Shīʿites found in this chapter were generally reputable and prominent narrators. They include many of the same figures that al-Tirmidhī included in his chapter on ʿAlī's virtues, but al-Bukhārī and Muslim excluded, such as ʿUbayd Allāh b. Mūsā, Wakīʿ, al-Aʿmash, Sharīk and Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī. The lone exception to this is al-Muʿallā b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Wāsiṭī, who was said to have refrained from seeking God's forgiveness on his deathbed because he was confident that he had already secured it by fabricating ninety hadiths about the virtues of ʿAlī.[123] The hadith narrated by al-Muʿallā here is, however, well attested. The contents of Ibn Mājah's chapter can be summarized as follows:

[121] Jonathan A.C. Brown, "The Canonization of Ibn Mâjah: Authenticity vs. utility in the formation of the Sunni ḥadîth canon," *Revue des Mondes Musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 129 (2011), 169-81.
[122] Muḥammad b. Yazīd Ibn Mājah al-Qazwīnī, *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (Stuttgart: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000), 18-22.
[123] *DU*, 4/215. Ibn ʿAdī was more optimistic regarding the reliability of al-Muʿallā (*Kāmil*, 6/373-4).

1. Only believers love ʿAlī and only hypocrites hate him (includes 4 Shīʿites: Wakīʿ [and others] – al-Aʿmash – ʿAdī b. Thābit – Zirr b. Ḥubaysh).

2. Abbreviated version of *ḥadith al-manzila* (no Shīʿites).

3. A relatively strong version of *hādīth Ghadīr Khumm* which includes the portion on *wilāya* and specifies that this occurred after a large communal prayer during the Prophet's journey to pilgrimage (includes two Shīʿites: ʿAlī b. Zayd b. Judʿān - ʿAdī b. Thābit).

4. A version of *ḥadīth al-rāya* which specifies that ʿAlī gained immunity from heat and cold due to the Prophet's prayer (includes five Shīʿites: Wakīʿ – Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Laylā – al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba – Ibn Abī Laylā – Abū Laylā).

5. Ḥasan and Ḥusayn are "the masters of the youths of paradise" and their father is better than them (includes one Shīʿite: al-Muʿallā b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān).

6. "ʿAlī is from me and I am from him. No one will convey on my behalf except ʿAlī" (includes two Shīʿites: Sharīk – Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī).[124]

7. ʿAlī says, "I am *al-ṣiddīq al-akbar*. No one claims this after me except that he is a liar. I prayed for seven years before the people [began to pray]." (one Shīʿite: ʿUbayd Allāh b. Mūsā).

8. A composite hadith with abbreviated references to Ghadīr Khumm, *ḥadīth al-manzila* and *ḥadīth al-rāya* (no Shīʿites).[125]

Ibn Mājah conveys a significantly more robust conception of ʿAlī's virtues than either al-Bukhārī or Muslim, but his presentation is not as strong as that of al-Tirmidhī. While he includes a strong version of the hadith of Ghadīr Khumm as well as ʿAlī's claim to be the first Muslim to pray, he does not include hadiths explicitly indicating preference over Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, such as *ḥadīth khāṣif al-naʿl*, or absolute precedence over the other Comapnions, such as *ḥadīth al-ṭayr*. It is noteworthy, if not particularly surprising, that the relative strength of the picture of ʿAlī's virtues that emerges from each of the four works surveyed here closely matches the Shīʿite coloring of the *isnād*s chosen by each author. This parralelism between content and *isnād* does not necessarily hold true at the level of individual reports but certainly

[124] The Prophet is reported to have said this in the context of sending ʿAlī to convey the import of *Sūrat al-tawba*, the ninth chapter of the Qurʾān, to the remaining polytheist tribes during the pilgrimage in 9 A.H.
[125] Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, 21-2.

holds true across these collections when viewed as a whole. Al-Bukhārī and Muslim limit the contributions of Shīʿites to their chapters and a limited picture of ʿAlī's virtues emerges. Ibn Mājah includes many Shīʿites but for the most part avoids controversial narrators and his presentation thus occupies a middle ground between that of al-Bukhārī and Muslim and that of al-Tirmidhī. Al-Tirmidhī includes by far the largest number of Shīʿite narrators, many of whom were subject to significant criticisms, and his chapter accordingly offers the strongest pro-ʿAlid content.

V.5. Conclusion

Perhaps the most intriguing point that emerges from this chapter is the fact that al-Bukhārī and Muslim seem to have intentionally limited the contributions of Shīʿite narrators in their chapters on ʿAlī's virtues. This conclusion admittedly derives from an *argumentum e silentio*, but it is a particularly strong one. From our survey of al-Tirmidhī alone it emerged that he included narrations from no less than nine prominent Shīʿites who made copious contributions to the works of al-Bukhārī and Muslim but who are conspicuously absent from their chapters on ʿAlī's virtues. A broader survey would no doubt reveal a larger number of such figures. For example, slightly more than half of the reports in one of the largest contemporary compendia of ʿAlī's virtues, al-Nasāʾī's *Khaṣāʾiṣ*, include at least one Shīʿite in the *isnād*.[126] The percentages of hadiths with Shīʿites in the *isnād*s of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, 25% and 15% respectively, could only result from a conscious effort to limit the presence of Shīʿites in the material that they selected from the vast corpus of narrations on ʿAlī's virtues. This point is also underscored by the discrepancy between the number of narrations that Bukhāri

[126] See Nasāʾī, *Khaṣāʾiṣ*, passim.

and Muslim provide for Abū Bakr and ʿUmar and those that they provide for ʿAlī, which was hardly representative of the corpus that existed in their era. Third/ninth century authors who compiled reports on the virtues of the Companions in a less self-conscious manner inevitably found themselves with more material on ʿAlī than any other figure. Scott Lucas notes that Ibn Abī Shayba included 26 hadiths and 16 *āthār* for Abū Bakr in comparison with 35 hadiths and 36 *āthār* for ʿAlī. Ibn Ḥanbal's *Kitāb faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥaba* likewise includes 275 reports for Abū Bakr in comparison with 370 for ʿAlī.[127]

The question that remains is why al-Bukhārī and Muslim limited both the scope of Shīʿite narrators' contributions and the number of reports on ʿAlī's virtues. The obvious answer of their rigorous standards for authenticity may account in part for the atrophied nature of their presentations but it certainly cannot account for it in full. Recall that Muslim designated al-Aʿmash and Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir as narrators of the highest caliber and that both he and al-Bukhārī narrated extensively from them and other prominent Kūfan Shīʿites outside of their chapters on ʿAlī. Another consideration that may have impacted their presentations was the broader contestations for religious orthodoxy and authority that took place beyond the milieu of hadith narrators, which continued unabated while they compiled their works. The reports that scholars of hadith labored so intensively to collect and sift were a primary resource invoked by contemporaneous authors who exchanged polemical tracts on the issue of the early Imāmate, such as al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/869) and Abū Jaʿfar al-Iskāfī (d. 241/855).[128] It is certainly plausible that al-Bukhārī and Muslim were wary of providing fodder to pro-ʿAlid authors outside the hadith milieu, or of lending an aura of authenticity to all of the pro-ʿAlīd

[127] Lucas, *Constructive Critics*, 261 n. 175. As noted by Lucas, these numbers do not indicate these authors' preference for ʿAlī, but rather the fact that their methods of compilation were not shaped by normative concerns to the extent that those of al-Bukhārī and Muslim were.
[128] See Afsaruddin, *Excellence and Precedence*, 72-3, 181 and passim; Jāḥiẓ, *ʿUthmāniyya*, including the editor's collection of extant passages of al-Iskāfī's *Naqḍ maqālat al-ʿUthmāniyya* (282-343).

material narrated by Kūfan Shīʿites.[129] Such considerations might account for the outsized presentation of the virtues of Abū Bakr, for example, but more subtle phenomena, such as the selection of particular versions of hadiths whose pro-ʿAlid content was relatively mild, or Muslim's subordination of Shīʿite reports to those of non-Shīʿites, appear to have been deft maneuvers intended primarily for internal consumption.[130]

Rather than the naked question of authenticity or the broad religio-political environment in which these works were composed, it would seem that the most appropriate place to search for an explanation for al-Bukhārī and Muslim's approach is in the specialized practices and discourses of the hadith milieu that they dedicated their lives to mastering. Here, the nascent discourse on narrating from innovators and the generalized skepticism concerning reports about ʿAlī that we examined in the course of this chapter stand out as explanatory factors. Their own works explicitly demonstrate their embrace of this skepticism and they would have been thoroughly familiar with the discussions on narrating from innovators that became an issue *du jour* for hadith critics after Ibn Mahdī and al-Qaṭṭān. It is not clear whether al-Bukharī and Muslim avoided narrating from Shīʿites because they believed this was the right thing to do, or because they did not want to leave room for potential critics to impugn the authenticity of their works. In the case of al-Bukhārī, his exchanges with al-Tirmidhī suggest that the former possibility was operative but we lack similar evidence for Muslim. Whatever the case may have been, it is remarkable that the presentation of ʿAlī's virtues in their works would have been nearly immune to the criticism of

[129] Scholars in the hadith milieu were generally wary of how their works might be used against them by rival parties. Abū Zurʿa al-Rāzī, for example, complained that by compiling his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Muslim had made it possible for innovators to claim that there were no authentic hadith reports outside of this collection (Brown, *Canonization*, 91-2).

[130] On some of the subtleties involved in al-Bukhārī and Muslim's selection and placement of a single narrator and/or report see Abdul-Jabbar, *Bukhari*, 95-8; Brown, *Canonization*, 92.

their contemporary al-Jūzajānī, who first proposed that one should not narrate material from innovators that supports their innovation and was widely recognized as being excessive in his opposition to Shīʿite narrators.

Whatever the reasons for al-Bukhārī and Muslim's exclusion of Shīʿīte narrators, outside of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* genre, individual scholars like al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah seem to have arrived at their own calibrations of what sort of pro-ʿAlid content was acceptable and what sort of Shīʿite narrator could be relied upon. Such determinations were inescapably subjective: the individual *muḥaddith*'s sense of who ʿAlī was determined his criterion for what sort of *tashayyuʿ* went beyond the bounds, and hence who was an innovator. But the *muḥaddith*'s sense of who ʿAlī was could only derive from the social milieus in which he was imbedded and through which collective memory flowed. In this sense, the inscrutable factors of stories told privately by parents to their children, or proclaimed publicly by preachers to their congregations, or the special relationships between favored students and their teachers, would have been as important as the formalized means of traveling from city to city to meet the living remnants of earlier generations, gather their reports and determine exactly which of them was worthy of being "taken as religion." The paradox of knowing men by history or knowing history by men bedevils the debates that continue over Shīʿite narrators and the virtues of ʿAlī to this day.

VI. Conclusion: Contested Boundaries in the Literary Afterlife of Shīʿite Narrators

The story of Shīʿite narrators in the Sunnī hadith tradition is one of evolution from sectarian ambiguity to hardened sectarian boundaries that were essential to the self-definition of an inchoate Sunnī orthodoxy. This orthodoxy was maintained and articulated through enforcement of these boundaries in the present and projection of them into the past. In order to serve their purpose of clearly delineating two distinct entities, boundaries often separate things that apparently belong together and the separations effected by the projection of the boundaries of orthodoxy into the past were many. The legacies of narrators like Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-Aʿmash, Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ and ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī were indispensable to the Sunnī hadith tradition, but their most strident pro-ʿAlī narrations and their criticism of other Companions were largely suppressed and forgotten. At times, the separations effected by retrospective boundary drawing appear almost wholly arbitrary. No historically consistent logic could explain the striking contrast between the reception of Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir and that of Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy. Both men were highly learned Kūfan Shīʿites who actively supported the nascent Zaydī cause, but while Manṣūr was remembered as one of the most important narrators of his generation, Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ languished as a relatively obscure narrator remembered mostly for his rebellious views.

Enforcing boundaries in the present was somewhat different from projecting them into the past. The recipients of a past narrator's legacy were free to redact it as they wished. In the present, however, figures who challenged boundaries presented a dynamic challenge that had to be actively countered and marginalized. This was accomplished in myriad ways. Subtle pressure could be exerted, as was the case with the Khurasānī agitator who questioned Abū Nuʿaym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn about his Shīʿism in a hostile environment in Baghdad. More overtly

exclusionary practices were another common method, as we witnessed in the efforts of figures like Zāʾida b. Qudāma and ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Mubārak to marginalize Shīʿite narrators guilty of various offenses. Outright violence was yet another possible method, as we saw in al-Nasāʾī's death at the hands of an angry mob. Once the incipient Sunnī orthodoxy was adopted by the ʿAbbāsid state during the reign of al-Mutawakkil, the organs of the state became yet another possible means of enforcing sectarian boundaries.[1]

While it is possible to view the waning prominence of Shīʿite narrators throughout the course of the third/ninth century, and the death of al-Nasāʾī due to his Shīʿism at the beginning of the fourth/tenth, as a sort of denouement in the story of Shīʿite narrators in the Sunnī hadith tradition, this would, in fact, be cutting their story short. Not only did the Shīʿite sentiments that they embodied remain a latent possibility within the Sunnī community that surfaced from time to time, but their literary afterlife was also a site for the articulation, reinforcement and contestation of sectarian boundaries. When Shīʿite sentiments did surface within the Sunnī community, they were frequently countered with one of the strategies of boundary enforcement described above, but this was not always the case. Abū al-ʿAbbās Ibn ʿUqda, a mid-fourth/tenth century Zaydī scholar of hadith, was fully integrated into the Sunnī hadith milieus of his day and was widely praised by Sunnīs for his vast erudition, although they also noted his Shīʿite affiliation with mild disapproval.[2] A Sunnī contemporary of Ibn ʿUqda, Ibn al-Saqqāʾ al-Wāsiṭī (d. 373/983), was expelled from a mosque for narrating *ḥadīth al-ṭayr*, which implied that ʿAlī was the best of the Companions.[3] Al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d.

[1] For an example of a narrator who was nearly flogged by al-Mutawakkil for narrating a pro-ʿAlid hadith through the Ḥusaynī Imāms see *TB*, 13/289.
[2] Jonathan A.C. Brown, "Crossing Sectarian Boundaries in the 4th/10th Century: Ibn ʿUqda, a Man for all Seasons," *Al-ʿUṣūr al-wusṭā* 20 (2008) 55-8.
[3] *SAN*, 16/352. The mob that expelled him even washed the place where he sat while narrating the hadith for good measure.

405/1014), arguably the single most important hadith scholar of the fourth/tenth century, was also widely criticized for narrating this hadith. In an incident redolent of the attack on al-Nasāʾī, al-Ḥākim's house was reportedly surrounded by an angry mob because he could not bring himself to narrate a single hadith in favor of Muʿāwiya.[4]

Such manifestations of *tashayyuʿ* among Sunnī scholars continued even in the wake of the putative "Sunnī revival" of the sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries, in which dynasties with a strong Sunnī identity came to reign throughout much of the medieval Near East. Ibn Musdī (d. 636/1239), a Sunnī hadith scholar hailing from al-Andalus, grew close to the Zaydī ruling family during a sojourn in Mecca and was condemned by his Sunnī colleagues for criticizing Muʿāwiya and ʿĀʾisha.[5] Sunnī scholars of Mamlūk Damascus looked askance at the *qāḍī* Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-Zakī due to his alleged preference of ʿAlī over ʿUthmān and his role in the surrender of Damascus to nominally Shīʿite Mongol conquerors in 658/1260.[6] Also under the Mamlūks, the iconoclastic Ḥanbalī jurist Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī (d. 716/1316) was removed from a teaching post, flogged, publicly shamed and imprisoned and for allegedly composing verses of poetry that smacked of Shīʿism.[7]

On the one hand, these examples provide vivid illustration of the fact that the boundaries dividing Sunnīs from Shīʿites were never hermetically sealed in medieval Islam. The *tashayyuʿ* of the first two centuries was largely dormant within the Sunnī community but

[4] Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*, 3/608; Ibn al-Najjār al-Baghdādī, *al-Radd ʿalā Abī Bakr al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1997), 145; Brown, *Canonization*, 159-60.
[5] Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāẓ*, 4/1448-50.
[6] Alexander Knysh, *Ibn ʿArabī in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 30-31.
[7] On this episode see Tariq al-Jamil, "Cooperation and Contestation in Medieval Baghdad (656/1258–786/1384): Relationships between Shīʿī and Sunnī Scholars in the *Madīnat al-Salām*," Ph.D. dissertation. Princeton University, 2004, 74-79.

never quite extinct. On the other hand, they demonstrate that these boundaries were policed in such a manner that few approached them and even fewer did so without consequences.

The same sort of boundary maintenance that found practical expression in the consequences faced by Sunnīs who hearkened back to an early from of *tashayyuʿ* found literary expression in the continual refiguration of the symbolic significance of early Shīʿite narrators. The production of biographical dictionaries intensified greatly under the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk dynasties, both of which cast themselves as champions of Sunnism, and authors in this era also exhibited a greater propensity to insert their own opinions in historical works.[8] The works of Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, one of the most influential figures in late Sunnī hadith criticism alongside Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, contain copious comments interspersed throughout the biographies of Shīʿite narrators in which al-Dhahabī defends his vision of Sunnī orthodoxy. He employed a two-pronged strategy in this effort. Most often, he confronted problematic features of the narrators' biographies, such as an outright preference of ʿAlī or criticism of the Companions, by undermining the credibility of the report, explaining that its apparent meaning was incorrect, or, where these strategies failed, chastising narrators as prominent as Wakīʿ and ʿAbd al-Razzāq from across the ages with his pen.[9] Less frequently, al-Dhahabī found reports from or about Shīʿite narrators that allowed him to construe their Shīʿism as a benign affinity for ʿAlī and excoriate the Shīʿites of his own day for their departure from this legacy.[10]

Although no other author of *rijāl* literature wrestled with the legacy of Shīʿite narrators as often or as forcefully as al-Dhahabī, he was not the only one to do so. Both al-Dhahabī and

[8] Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 182-210, esp. 200-210; Elias Ibrahim Muhanna, "Encyclopaedism in the Mamlūk Period: Al-Nuwayrī's (d. 1333) *Nihāyat al-adab fī funūn al-Adab*," Ph.D. dissertation. Harvard University, 2012, 10-38.
[9] See for example the interjections of al-Dhahabī in *SAN*, 7/369-70, 9/576-7, 14/129-30; *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāẓ*, 2/699; *Tārīkh al-Islām,* 11/69.
[10] See *SAN*, 7/463, 8/202.

Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī attempted to explain the widespread nature of Shīʿism among early narrators by offering a clear definition of what *tashayyuʿ* consisted of and juxtaposing it with *rafḍ*. These definitions employed different criteria in their attempts to parse the various gradations of *tashayyuʿ* and *rafḍ*, reflecting the inherently indeterminate nature of the terminology itself. For all of their differences, these definitions were successful in offering a gradated picture of *tashayyuʿ* and *rafḍ* that highlighted some of the major distinctions between the terms, but they also shared the tendency to subtly domesticate the meaning of *tashayyuʿ*. In one of his definitions, Ibn Ḥajar suggested that preference of ʿAlī over Abū Bakr and ʿUmar was tantamount to *rafḍ* and al-Dhahabī in his turn described it as *ghuluww*.[11] Such a construction of *rafḍ*/*ghuluww* could legitimately be described as a projection of orthodox boundaries into the past, but this would only tell half of the story. The standards of al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar were not absent from the traditionalist milieus of the second/eighth century – Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir was a *khashabī* in the eyes of Ḥammād b. Zayd, al-Aʿmash was a "Sabaʾī" in the eyes of Yazīd b. Zurayʿ and Wakīʿ was a *rāfiḍī* in the eyes of Marwān b. Muʿāwiya. What the definitions of al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar accomplished was to accord to these standards a normative force that they did not enjoy in the milieus in which they were first articulated. Once again, this consisted of an artificial partition of the past. The positions that al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar associated with *rafḍ* were held by some of the most prominent narrators in the proto-Sunnī milieu, and therein lay a tension in the genealogy of Sunnī orthodoxy that could not be resolved or dispelled by its most erudite proponents.

Although al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar did their best to domesticate the legacy of Shīʿite narrators, the literary afterlife of the narrators was not a one-sided affair and the masters of

[11] See Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī,* 1/613; Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidal*, 1/5. Cf. Ibn Ḥajar, *TT,* 1/81-2; *SAN*, 16/457-8, where different definitions are given.

the late Sunnī hadith tradition did not have the last word in defining it. Scholars with strong pro-ʿAlid views contested the legacy of these narrators and its implications for orthodoxy in two different religio-political contexts. In the eleventh/seventeenth and twelfth/eighteenth centuries, after the Qāsimī dynasty unified the Zaydī northern highlands of Yemen with the Sunnī southern valleys of Ḥadramawat, a class of Zaydī scholars emerged who drew heavily on the epistemological orientation of hadith-based Sunnī traditionalism. These scholars viewed and presented themselves as internal participants in both their native Zaydī and adopted Sunnī traditions, and in doing so artlessly constructed bridges between them.[12] At least three scholars from this milieu took up the subject of Shīʿite narrators explicitly. Ṣāliḥ b. Mahdī al-Maqbalī (d. 1108/1696) and al-Ḥasan b. Isḥāq (d. 1160/1747) criticized the representatives of the Sunnī hadith tradition for declaring Shīʿite narrators weak on account of nothing other than their Shīʿism. They argued that criticism of Shīʿite narrators was used as a pretext to dismiss narrations on ʿAlī's virtues and that any serious student of hadith should be aware of this problem. Although he was highly critical of al-Dhahabī, al-Maqbalī also attempted to give a positive valence to Shīʿism and distance it from *rafḍ* by citing one of al-Dhahabī's definitions of the early meaning of the terms.[13] Ibn al-Amīr al-Ṣanʿānī, a much more prominent scholar than either al-Maqbalī or al-Ḥasan b. Isḥāq, echoed the arguments of his predecessors but also exhibited greater hermeneutical dexterity in his critique of the Sunnī treatment of Shīʿite narrators. In a work arguing against the relevance of *bidʿa* to evaluations of hadith narrators, al-Ṣanʿānī picks apart the definitions that al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar gave of *tashayyuʿ* and *rafḍ*,

[12] On this milieu see Bernard Haykel, *Revival and Reform in Islam: The Legacy of Muhammad al-Shawkani* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[13] Ṣāliḥ b. Mahdī al-Maqbalī, *al-Manār fī al-mukhtār min jawāhir al-baḥr al-zakhkhār* (Beirut: Muʾassast al-risāla, 1988), 1/170-1; idem, *al-ʿAlam al-shāmikh fī īthār al-ḥaqq ʿalā al-ābāʾ wa al-mashāyikh* (Beirut: Dār al-ḥadīth, 1985), 10, 205, 212-3; al-Ḥasan b. Isḥāq, *al-Jumān al-mujtamiʿ fī al-radd ʿalā ahl al-sunna al-mubtadiʿ*, MS in private collection, Sanaa. Accessed through the Princeton Manuscript Digitization Initiative <http://pudl.princeton.edu/objects/4f16c4116#page/1/mode/2up>, April 12, 2015.

preying upon their tensions and ambiguities to prove that not only is Shīʿism not an innovation, it is in fact an essential part of Islam. In a graceful hermeneutical exercise, al-Ṣanʿānī awls his way through a thick stack of syllogisms until Ibn Ḥajar and al-Dhahabī themselves are made to support the following propositions: a "a pure Shīʿite (*al-shīʿī al-muṭlaq*) possesses a high rank" and "pure Shīʿism (*al-tashayyuʿ al-muṭlaq*)" is "a necessary attribute of every believer without which his faith (*īmān*) is incomplete."[14]

One might have expected that Zaydī Shīʿites working within the framework of the Sunnī tradition would have found early Shīʿite narrators to be a useful resource for their project. More surprising is the fact that many of the arguments that they made were adopted and elaborated by Sunnī scholars in the twentieth century. The first of these scholars, Muḥammad b. ʿAqīl al-ʿAlawī (d. 1931) hailed from the Shāfiʿī Sunnī milieu of Ḥadramawt in which ʿAlid descent had been celebrated as a mark of social distinction and religious authority for centuries. Ibn ʿAqīl wrote the first full monograph on the subject of the Sunnī reception of early Shīʿite narrators. His critique consists largely of an extended version of the arguments made by the Zaydī-cum-Sunnī scholars outlined above.[15] Ibn ʿAqīl briefly cites one of the works of al-Maqbalī, and other evidence suggests that he was influenced by the Zaydī-cum-Sunnī tradition of his northern neighbors. However, in his introduction to the work in question, he implies that he gradually came to recognize the hypocrisy of the Sunnī tradition's approach to Shīʿite narrators through independent research.[16] Whatever the relative influence of the Zaydī-cum-Sunnī discourse may have been on Ibn ʿAqīl, it is clear that he was primarily concerned with grounding a broad pro-ʿAlid project that extended beyond his work on Shīʿite narrators in

[14] Ṣanʿānī, *Thamarāt al-naẓar*, 29-44.
[15] Muḥammad Ibn ʿAqīl al-ʿAlawī, *al-ʿAtb al-jamīl ʿalā ahl al-jarḥ wa-al-taʿdīl* (Jakarta: Manshūrat Hay'at al-Buḥūth al-Islāmīyaẖ, 1971).
[16] Ibn ʿAqīl al-ʿAlawī, *al-ʿAtb al-jamīl*, 27-30.

the indigenous tradition of the Shāfiʿī *sayyids* of Ḥadramawt.[17] His contact with modernist Salafī discourse and with the ecumenical discourse that emerged between Sunnīs and Imāmīs due to the pressures of colonial expansion in the late nineteenth century also contributed to the shaping of his intellectual horizons.[18]

Another attempt on the part of Sunnīs to valorize early Shīʿite narrators emerged from a family of Moroccan hadith scholars and Sufis active in the mid- to late-twentieth century. Much like Ibn ʿAqīl, Aḥmad b. Ṣiddīq al-Ghumārī (d. 1961) and his younger brother ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Ṣiddīq (d. 1997) were *sharīf*s (the North African equivalent of *sayyid*s) and hailed from a region in which their Prophetic descent accorded them a significant level of social and religious distinction.[19] Unlike Ibn ʿAqīl, however, they were active participants in a Sufi order. Throughout the Muslim world, but especially in Yemen and North Africa, the status of *sayyid*s/*sharīf*s was deeply interwoven into the fabric of Sufi institutions and resonated with the Sufi view of ʿAlī as the fountainhead of esoteric knowledge in Islam.[20] Aḥmad b. Ṣiddīq al-Ghumārī's critique of Shīʿite narrators largely echoed those of the Yemenī scholars surveyed above, but was distinguished from them by the fact that it was ultimately aimed at

[17] Al-ʿAlawī was best known for his harsh criticisms of Muʿāwiya and the Umayyads, which he argued were fully in line with the views of his predecessors. See Muḥammad Ibn ʿAqīl al-ʿAlawī, *al-Naṣāʾiḥ al-kāfiya li-man yatawallā Muʿāwiya* (Najaf: Maṭbaʿat al-nuʿmān, 1966), esp. 235-9; idem, *Taqwiyyat al-īmān bi-radd tazkiyyat Ibn Abī Sufyān* (Najaf: al-Maktaba al-Ḥaydariyya, 1966), esp. 20-9, 36, 48-9, 64.

[18] Wener Ende, "Schiitische Tendenzen Bei Sunnitischen Sayyids Aus Ḥaḍramaut: Muḥammad B. ʿAqīl al-ʿAlawī (1863-1931)," *Der Islam* 50 (1973): 82–97; William R. Roff, "Murder as an aid to social history," in Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein, eds., *Transcending Borders: Arabs, politics, trade and Islam in Southeast Asia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002).

[19] On the Ghumārī family generally see Muḥammad Mukhtār al-Tilmisānī, *Ṣiddīqūn: rayḥānat Ṭanja Sīdī Muḥammad b. Ṣiddīq wa anjāluhu al-ashiqqāʾ al-khamsa* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2009).

[20] On the blending of Sufism and *sayyid* identity in Yemen see Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean* (Berkely: University of California Press, 2006). On Morocco see Vincent Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998).

substantiating the Sufi view of ʿAlī with the tools of the Sunnī hadith tradition.[21] ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Ṣiddīq restricted his own discussion to the discipline of hadith criticism in two monographs in which he defended al-Ḥārith al-Aʿwar as a reliable narrator from ʿAlī.[22]

In many respects, the dynamics of the collective literary afterlife of Shīʿite narrators did not differ greatly from those that settled into place in the course of the third/ninth century. The master hadith scholars of the Mamlūk era offered a more systematic articulation of the standards that were implicit in evaluations of Shīʿite narrators scattered throughout the vast corpus of *rijāl* literature. While they gave the impression that these standards had greater salience than they actually did when the narrators were active, their portrayal of the situation was otherwise largely accurate. Similarly, the particular constellation of pro-ʿAlid sentiments found among the Zaydī-cum-Sunnīs of eighteenth century Yemen and the pro-ʿAlid, Sunnī *sayyid*s of the twentieth century evokes the *tashayyuʿ* of the narrators whom they sought to rehabilitate. One of the most prominent strategies of boundary enforcement, the elastic application of indeterminate sectarian terminology, also persisted into the twentieth century. Ibn ʿAqīl and Aḥmad b. Ṣiddīq have been denounced as *rāfiḍīs* by many critics due to their criticism of Muʿawiya, but other Sunnīs have offered milder critiques of their "noted Shi'i [sic] slant" while recognizing their formidable erudition.[23] Lastly, just as Shīʿite narrators were

[21] Aḥmad b. Ṣiddīq al-Ghumārī, *Fatḥ al-Malik al-ʿAliyy bi-ṣiḥḥat ḥadīth bāb madīnat al-ʿilm ʿAlī* (n.p., 1969); idem, *ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib: Imām al-ʿĀrifīn* (n.p., 1969). Like Ibn ʿAqīl, al-Ghumārī was also highly critical of Muʿāwiya and the Umayyads, for which see idem, *Juʾnat al-ʿaṭṭār fī ṭuraf al-fawāʾid wa nawādir al-akhbār* (n.p., 1983), 154-157, 187-190.

[22] ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Ṣiddīq al-Ghumārī, *al-Bāḥith ʿan ʿilal al-ṭāʿn fī al-Ḥārith* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qāhira, 2005); idem, *Bayān nakth al-nākith al-mutaʿaddī bi-taḍʿīf al-Ḥārith* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qāhira, 2006).

[23] This quote is from Gibril Haddad "The Ghumari School," <https://www.abc.se/home/m9783/ir/f/The%20Ghumari%20School.htm>, accessed May 20, 2015. For another example of a measured critique of Ibn ʿAqīl see Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Naqd al-naṣāʾiḥ al-kāfiya* (Port Said: Maktabat al-thaqāfa al-dīniyya, 2001). For accusations of *rafḍ* see Ḥasan b. ʿAlawī, *al-Ruqya al-shāfiya* (Beirut: Rāwafid, 2008); Muḥammad b. al-Amīn Būkhubza, *Ṣaḥīfat al-sawābiq wa jarīdat al-bawāʾiq*; Muṣṭafā al-Yūsufī, *Tanbīh al-qārī ilā faḍāʾiḥ Aḥmad b. Ṣiddīq al-Ghumārī* (n.p., 1996).

unable to perpetuate their own vision of orthodoxy with much efficacy, the incisive critiques of the Sunnī tradition penned by their few ideological descendants have not effected any seismic shifts in the boundaries of Sunnī orthodoxy.

The question thus arises as to what significance the literary afterlife of Shīʿite narrators has beyond the significance of the lives of the narrators themselves. Beginning from an obvious point, it should be noted that the reception of Shīʿite narrators is an infinitesimally small slice from within the ambit of sites at which the boundaries between Sunnīs and Shīʿites were defined and redefined, contested and defended, challenged and enforced. Such sites ran across the gamut of cultural production in Muslim societies, ranging from discursive disciplines, such as history, theology, law and genealogy, to socio-political formations, such as governance, tribal and familial descent and popular religious culture, to institutions that combined nearly all of the above, such as Sufism (which was, unsurprisingly, one the most porous sites at which cross-pollination between Sunnīs and Shīʿites occurred). These sites did not exist in isolation from one another, but existed in a symbiotic relationship where discursive and socio-political transformations influenced one another.

This much is fairly obvious, but if we read the reception of Shīʿite narrators as a synecdoche for the negotiation of Sunnī-Shīʿite boundaries generally, we can gain a more precise view of how all of these factors interacted. The trajectory of the discourse on Shīʿite narrators over the *longue durée* of their reception seems to have been determined by political trends more than anything else. Indeed, to a certain extent, the fact that Shīʿite narrators had a literary afterlife at all is likely due to the continued political salience of the Sunnī-Shīʿite divide. In Mamlūk Syria and Egypt, when the nominally Shīʿite-alligned Ilkhānid dynasty constituted an existential threat in the eyes of Sunnīs, al-Dhahabī made explicit discussions of

Shīʿite narrators into a permanent feature of Sunnī *rijāl* literature, adopting a decidedly anti-Shīʿite tone. After the Qāsimī dynasty unified the Zaydī Shīʿite and Sunnī populations of Yemen under its reign, scholars attempting to bridge the two intellectual traditions found early Shīʿite narrators to be an ideal resource that would allow them to imbue Shīʿism with a positive valence from within a Sunnī framework. In the first half of the twentieth century, Sunnī scholars with a strong ʿAlid identity were the first "pure" Sunnīs to explicitly challenge the inherited discourse on Shīʿite narrators. Their efforts were shaped in part by the influence of Sunnī and Shīʿite scholars who initiated an ecumenical discourse after witnessing the institutional foundations of their societies buckle under the weight of European colonialism.

While political realities seem to have been most determinative of the tone and trajectory of the intermittent discussion on Shīʿite narrators, discursive practices set parameters for the discussion and determined the form that it would take. The production of encyclopedic works, both in biographical and in other genres, was a prominent feature of Ayyūbid and Mamlūk intellectual life and the contributions of al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar came largely in this genre. Although both men exercised their authorial agency through their arrangement and selection of reports in biographical entries, the high degree of fidelity to earlier sources that characterized the genre they wrote in also compelled them to confront the question of early Shīʿite narrators directly. The Zaydī-cum-Sunnīs of eighteenth century Yemen were deeply influenced by the Salafī strand within Sunnism, which was characterized by its relative disregard for inherited tradition. The willingness of these authors to seek a novel synthesis of the Zaydī and Sunnī traditions was facilitated in part by the "relatively

shallow and limited" structures of authority in Salafī epistemology.[24] Ibn ʿAqīl and al-Ghumārī were characterized by a similar disregard for precedent and were influenced in their own ways by Salafī epistemology, and Sufi views of ʿAlī also played an important role in structuring al-Ghumārī's discussion.

Much of the contemporary Middle East is wracked by Sunnī-Shīʿite conflict, the manifestations of which range from outright warfare to social and political marginalization and repression. It comes as no surprise that in the midst of this conflict, prominent roles have emerged for "sectarian identity entrepreneurs, people whose social and economic standing depends on the skillful manipulation of sectarian boundaries and who profit if these boundaries become the defining markers of a particular segment of society."[25] At the same time, the results of a relatively small number of ecumenical initiatives that have emerged over the past century have been dismal, in part because of the reluctance of participants to candidly confront their most contentious historical disputes.[26] If history has anything to say to the present, then it would seem that the success of ecumenical discourses will be dependent in the first instance on the emergence of a climate in which they are not only socially relevant but regarded as politically advantageous by a governing elite, and in the second instance on the cultivation of discursive practices and spaces in which historical boundaries can be vigorously contested.

[24] On authority in the Salafī tradition see Bernard Haykel, "On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action," in Roel Meijer, ed., *Global Salafism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 33-51. The influence of Salafī epistemology is especially apparent in al-Maqbalī's work, *al-ʿAlam al-shāmikh fī īthār al-ḥaqq ʿalā al-abāʾ wa al-mashāyikh*, where no sect or school is spared from criticism.
[25] Toby Matthiesen, *Sectarian Gulf: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the Arab Spring That Wasn't* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 127.
[26] Brunner, *Islamic Ecumenism.*

Appendix A: Prosopographical Information for Shīʿite Narrators

The following table contains the information on which the figures in Chapter II are based. The table has been compiled using the biographical sources cited throughout the body of the dissertation. In general, the labels of *tashayyuʿ*, *shīʿī* and *rafḍ* have only been considered when ascribed to (but not necessarily found in) a source from the fourth/tenth century or earlier. I have omitted some plausible candidates for the table, especially partisans of ʿAlī who died in the early Umayyad period, because their inclusion would not have contributed to the terminological thrust of this investigation. I have also omitted a small number of figures whose association with *tashayyuʿ* or *rafḍ* is found only in isolated sources and seems especially implausible. The information on participation in ʿAlid revolts and Zaydī sectarian affiliation was compiled primarily from C. van Arendonk's *Les débuts* and the Zaydī sources on these revolts. The information on Imāmī sectarian affiliation was compiled primarily from al-Ṭabasī's *Rijāl al-shīʿa*, who relies on al-Ṭūsī's *Rijāl*, and Hossein Modarressi's *Tradition and Survival*. The methods that I have used in calculating approximate death dates (where no death date is given in the sources) and "grades" of reliability for the narrators are explained in detail in Appendix B.

Key

CC = Criticism of Companions

AR = Supported or participated in ʿAlid revolt

F = Narrated or believed in *faḍāʾil* of ʿAlī or *ahl al-bayt*, did *tafḍīl* of ʿAlī, etc.

J = Refrained from praying in congregation or attending Friday prayer

R = Believed in *rajʿa*

x+ = extreme (*yufriṭ/yaghlū*) in Shīʿism or *rafḍ*

x- = moderate (*khafīf/qalīl*) in Shīʿism

(u) = *min ʿutuq al-shīʿa* (Ibn Abī Ḥātim)

(ru) = *min ruʾasāʾ al-shīʿa* (Ibn Abī Ḥātim)

Name	Location	Death	*Tashayyuʿ*	*Shīʿī*	*Rafḍ*	Description	Zaydī	Imāmī	"Ṣāḥib"	Grade
Abān b. Taghlib	Kūfa	141	x+			CC		x		8
ʿAbāya b. Ribʿī al-Asadī		~84		x(u)						6
ʿAbbād b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad Abū Maʿmar			x			F, CC				3
ʿAbbād b. al-ʿAwwām	Wāsiṭ	183	x			AR				8
ʿAbbād b. Yaʿqūb al-Rawājinī	Kūfa	250	x+	x/x+	x	F, CC	x			5
ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Quddūs	Kūfa/Rayy	~208			x+	CC, F				3
ʿAbd Allāh b. Dāhir al-Rāzī		~191			x+	F			x	3
ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥakīm b. Jubayr al-Asadī	Kūfa	~162			x+					2
ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿĪsā al-Anṣārī	Kūfa	130	x							8
ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Jahm al-Rāzī	Rayy	~235	x							7
ʿAbd Allāh b. Lahyiʿa	Egypt	174	x+			F				7
ʿAbd Allāh b. Shaddād b. al-Hād	Madīna	81		x		F				8
ʿAbd Allāh b. Sharīk al-ʿĀmirī	Kūfa	~97	x+							5
ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar b. Abān	Kūfa	239	x+							7
ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Siyāh	Kūfa	~166		x						7
ʿAbd al-Ghaffār b. al-Qāsim Abū Maryam al-Anṣārī	Kūfa	160		x(ru)	x	CC, F				4
ʿAbd al-Jabbār b. al-ʿAbbās al-Shibāmī	Kūfa	~166	x/x+						x	6
ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Yaʿfūr Abū Yaʿfūr al-Juʿfī				x(u)						6
ʿAbd al-Malik b. Muslim	Kūfa	~166		x						8
ʿAbd al-Malik b. Aʿyan	Kūfa	~144	x	x/x(u)	x			x	x	5
ʿAbd al-Nūr b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Maṣmaʿī					x+					1
ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ṣāliḥ	Kūfa/Baghdād	235	x+			CC				7
ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām al-Ṣanʿānī	Ṣanʿāʾ	211	x	x		F, CC			x	7
ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Hammām	Ṣanʿāʾ		x+			J				

Name	Location	Death	*Tashayyuʿ*	*Shīʿī*	*Rafḍ*	Description	Zaydī	Imāmī	"Ṣāḥib"	Grade
Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Jadalī ʿAbda b. ʿAbda	Kūfa	~97	x			AR			x	8
Abū Ghassān Mālik b. Ismāʿīl al-Nahdī	Kūfa	219	x+							8
Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī Thābit b. Dīnār	Kūfa	150			x	F, CC		x		4
Abū Hārūn al-ʿAbdī ʿUmāra b. Juwayn	Baṣra/Wāsiṭ	~123			x	F, CC				3
Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī	Kūfa	127		x		F			x	7
Abū al-Jārūd Ziyād b. al-Mundhir al-Hamdānī	Kūfa	~150	x+		x	F. CC, AR	x		x	3
Abū Mijlaz Lāḥiq b. Ḥumayd	Baṣra	106		x-						4
Abū Nuʿaym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn	Kūfa	218		x		F				8
Abū al-Ṣalt ʿAbd al-Salām b. Ṣāliḥ al-Harawī		235	x		x	F		x	x	5
Abū al-Ṭufayl ʿĀmir b. Wāthila	Makka	110	x							7
ʿAdī b. Thābit al-Anṣārī	Kūfa	116	x+	x						7
ʿĀʾidh b. Ḥabīb	Kūfa	190	x+						x	8
al-Ajlaḥ b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muʿāwiya Abū Ḥujjiyya	Kūfa	145		x		F			x	6
Aḥmad b. al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḥafarī	Kūfa	215		x						7
al-ʿAlāʾ b. Abī al-ʿAbbās al-Sāʾib b. Fārūkh	Makka			x(u)						8
al-ʿAlāʾ b. Ṣāliḥ al-Taymī	Kūfa	~166		x(u)						5
ʿAlī b. Badhīma	Jazīra	~137	x+	x(ru)		F				7
ʿAlī b. Ghurāb al-Fazārī Abū Yaḥyā	Kūfa	189	x+						x	6
ʿAlī b. Hāshim b. al-Barīd	Kūfa	180	x/x+	x		F			x	7
ʿAlī b. al-Ḥazawwar	Kūfa	~139		x		F				3
ʿAlī b. al-Jaʿd	Baghdād	230	x	x						8
ʿAlī b. al-Mundhir al-Ṭarīqī	Kūfa	256		x+						7
ʿAlī b. Qādim	Kūfa	213	x+							5

Name	Location	Death	*Tashayyuʿ*	*Shīʿī*	*Rafḍ*	Description	Zaydī	Imāmī	"Ṣāḥib"	Grade
ʿAlī b. Thābit al-Dahhān	Kūfa	219	x-/x+							7
ʿAlī b. Zayd b. Jadʿān	Baṣra	131	x/x+		x	CC				4
ʿAmmār b. Muʿāwiya al-Duhanī al-Jadalī Abū Muʿawiya	Kūfa	133	x							7
ʿAmr b. Abī al-Miqdām Thābit b. Hurmuz al-Bakrī	Kūfa	172	x+		x	CC			x	4
ʿAmr b. Ḥammād al-Qannād	Kūfa	222			x	CC				6
ʿAmr b. Jābir al-Ḥaḍramī	Egypt	~123	x+							8
ʿAmr b. Shimr al-Juʿfī	Kūfa	157			x+	CC, F			x	2
ʿAṭiyya b. Saʿd al-ʿAwfī al-Jadalī Abū al-Ḥasan	Kūfa	111	x	x						4
Dāhir b. Yaḥyā al-Rāzī	Rayy	~166			x+					2
Dāwūd b. Abī ʿAwf Abū al-Jaḥḥāf	Kūfa	~144	x+	x		F			x	4
Dīnār Abū Saʿīd ʿAqīṣa	Kūfa				x	CC				1
Dīnār b. ʿUmar al-Asadī	Kūfa	~144			x	AR			x	3
Ḍirār b. Ṣard Abū Nuʿaym	Kūfa	229	x							3
Fiṭr b. Khālīfa	Kūfa	150	x- / x+	x		F, AR			x	7
Fuḍayl b. Marzūq	Kūfa	160	x						x	7
Furāt b. Abī Yaḥyā al-Aḥnaf			x+							3
Ghālib Abū al-Hudhayl	Kūfa	~137			x			x		7
Ḥabba al-ʿUranī Abū Qudāma	Kūfa	76	x+							5
Ḥabīb b. Abī Thābit	Kūfa	119		x					x	8
Ḥakam b. ʿAjība	Kūfa		x+							
al-Ḥakam b. ʿUtayba	Kūfa	115	x			F	x		x	8
Ḥammād b. Yaḥyā b. al-Mukhtār	Kūfa		x			F				
Hāniʾ b. Hāniʾ	Kūfa	~97	x						x	*mastūr*
Ḥarām b. ʿUthmān al-Anṣārī	Madīna	149	x+							4
al-Ḥārith b. Ḥuṣayra al-Azdī	Kūfa	~144		x+		F, AR, R	x			6
al-Ḥārith b. Yazīd al-Ḥaḍramī	Egypt	130	x							8
Hārūn b. al-Mughīra al-Bajalī	Rayy	~166	*x*	*x*						6

Name	Location	Death	*Tashayyuʿ*	*Shīʿī*	*Rafḍ*	Description	Zaydī	Imāmī	"Ṣāḥib"	Grade
Hārūn b. Saʿd al-ʿIjlī Abū Muḥammad	Kūfa	~166	x+		x+	F, AR				6
al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn al-ʿUranī	Kūfa			x(ru)		AR				4
Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥayy	Kūfa	169	x			F, CC, AR	x		x	7
Hāshim b. al-Barīd	Kūfa	~144	x+			AR	x			7
Ḥibbān b. ʿAlī al-ʿAnazī	Kūfa	171	x							6
Hishām b. Muḥammad b. al-Sāʾib al-Kalbī Abū al-Mundhir	Kūfa	~165	x+		x	F, R				2
Hishām b. Saʿd	Madīna	166	x							5
Hubayra b. Yarīm	Kūfa	~84	x							6
al-Hudhayl b. ʿUmayr b. Abī al-ʿArīf		214	x							8
Ḥumrān b. Aʿyan	Kūfa	~137	x+					x		4
Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥasan al-Ashqar al-Fazārī	Kūfa	208	x			CC, F				4
Ibrāhīm b. Abī Yaḥyā	Madīna	184			x	F, AR			x	3
ʿImrān b. Maytham	Kūfa				x+			x		1
ʿImrān b. Ẓabyān	Kūfa	157	x							5
ʿĪsā b. Mihrān al-Mustaʿṭaf	Baghdād				x+	F, CC				2
ʿĪsā b. Qirṭās	Kūfa	~144			x+					2
Isḥāq b. Manṣūr al-Salūlī	Kūfa	204	x							8
Ismāʿīl b. Abān al-Warrāq	Kūfa	216	x							8
Ismāʿīl b. Abī Isḥāq Abū Isrāʾīl al-Mulāʾī	Kūfa	160			x	CC				4
Ismāʿīl b. Mūsā al-Fazārī	Kūfa	245	x+			CC				6
Ismāʿīl b. Salmān al-Azraq	Kūfa	~137		x+						4
Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān al-Ḍubaʿī	Baṣra	178	x		x	F, CC				7
Jaʿfar b. Ziyād al-Aḥmar	Kūfa	176	x	x		F, J, AR				7
Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd	Kūfa/Rayy	181	x			F			x	8
Jumayʿ b. ʿUmayr al-Taymī	Kūfa	~97		x(u)	x					5
Kathīr al-Nawwā Abū Ismāʿīl	Kūfa	~144	x+				x			4

Name	Location	Death	*Tashayyuʿ*	*Shīʿī*	*Rafḍ*	Description	Zaydī	Imāmī	"Ṣāḥib"	Grade
Kathīr b. Yaḥyā b. Kathīr Abū Mālik	Baṣra		x							7
Khālid b. Makhlad al-Qaṭawānī	Kūfa	213	x- / x+							7
Khālid b. Ṭahmān Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Khaffāf	Kūfa	~137		x(u)					x	6
Manṣūr b. Abī al-Aswad al-Laythī	Kūfa	184	x				x		x	7
Manṣūr b. al-Muʿtamir	Kūfa	132	x-			F, AR			x	8
Maʿrūf b. Kharrabūdh	Makka	~137		x					x	5
Mīnā b. Abī Mīnā		~84	x+			CC, F				3
Mindal b. ʿAlī al-ʿAnazī	Kūfa	167	x						x	6
Miṣdaʿ al-Aʿraj Abū Yaḥyā	Kūfa	~97	x							6
Miswar b. al-Ṣalt	Madīna/Kūfa		x+			CC				3
Muʿallā b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Wāsiṭī	Wāsiṭ	~208			x	F				2
Muʿallā b. Hilāl al-Ṭaḥḥān	Kūfa	~184	x+			CC				1
Muʿallā b. ʿIrfān al-Asadī	Kūfa		x			F				3
Mughīra b. Saʿīd al-Bajalī	Kūfa	119			x+	F, CC, AR, R				1
Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr al-Asadī	Kūfa	203	x							8
Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭufāwī	Baṣra		x+							6
Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Rabīʿa Abū ʿItāb	Kūfa			x						7
Muḥammad b. ʿAmr al-Sūsī	Kūfa/Egypt				x					
Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl b. Ghazwān	Kūfa	195	x						x	7
Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl b. Rajāʾ b. Rabīʿa al-Zabīdī	Kūfa	~184	x			F			x	7
Muḥammad b. Juḥāda	Kūfa	131	x+							8
Muḥammad b. Kathīr al-Kūfī	Kūfa/Baghdād	~208		x						5
Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Fiṭrī	Madīna	~171	x							7

Name	Location	Death	*Tashayyuʿ*	*Shīʿī*	*Rafḍ*	Description	Zaydī	Imāmī	"Ṣāḥib"	Grade
Muḥammad b. Rāshīd al-Khuzāʿī	Damscus/ Baṣra	~166		x	x	AR				6
Muḥammad b. Salama b. Kuhayl	Kūfa		x			F				
Muḥammad b. ʿUbayd Allāh b. Abī Rāfiʿ	Kūfa	~156		x		F			x	3
Mukhawwal b. Ibrāhīm b. Mukhawwal al-Nahdī	Kūfa		x		x	AR	x			
Mūsā b. Qays al-Ḥaḍramī	Kūfa	~144			x+	F, CC				6
Nufayʿ b. al-Ḥārith al-Qāṣṣ	Kūfa	~137		x+	x+					4
Nāṣiḥ b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Muḥallimī	Kūfa	~155		x	x					5
Nūḥ b. Qays al-Azdī	Baṣra	~184	x							6
al-Qāsim b. Khalīfa	Kūfa	~184		x						
Qays b. al-Rabīʿ al-Asadī	Kūfa	167	x			F, AR	x			5
Rabāḥ b. Khālid al-Kūfī	Kūfa		x							*majhūl*
Rabīʿ b. Anas	Baṣra	139	x+							*6*
Rabīʿ b. Ḥabīb	Kūfa	~166		x					x	4
Rifāʿa b. al-Ḥārith Abū ʿItāb	Kūfa	132	x							8
Saʿʿād b. Sulaymān al-Juʿfī	Kūfa	~184		x(u)					x	5
Ṣabāḥ b. Yaḥyā	Kūfa			x			x		x	
Saʿd b. Ṭarīf al-Iskāf	Kūfa	~144	x+					x		3
Saʿīd b. ʿAmr b. Ashwaʿ	Kūfa	120	x+							7
Saʿīd b. Fayrūz Abū al-Bakhtarī	Kūfa	83	x-							8
Saʿīd b. Khuthaym al-Hilālī	Kūfa	180		x		AR	x		x	7
Saʿīd b. Muḥammad b. Saʿīd al-Jurmī	Kūfa	230	x			F				7
Salama b. al-Faḍl al-Abrash	Rayy	191	x							7
Salama b. Kuhayl al-Ḥaḍramī	Kūfa	122	x/x-	x		AR	x		x	8
Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa	Kūfa	137	x+	x/x(u)	x	CC, F	x		x	5
Ṣaʿṣaʿa b. Ṣūḥān	Kūfa			x						7
Sawwār Abū al-Idrīs al-Murhibī	Kūfa	~123		x(u)						7

Name	Location	Death	*Tashayyuʿ*	*Shīʿī*	*Rafḍ*	Description	Zaydī	Imāmī	"Ṣāḥib"	Grade
Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj	Kūfa	160		x		AR			x	8
Sudayf b. Maymūn al-Shāʿir	Makka	~147			x+	AR			x	3
Sufyān b. al-Layl	Kūfa				x+					3
Sufyān al-Thawrī	Kūfa	161				F			x	8
Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-Aʿmash	Kūfa	148	x			F, AR			x	7
Sulaymān b. Qarm	Kūfa	~166	x+		x+	F				4
Talīd b. Sulaymān Abū Idrīs	Kūfa	~191	x		x	CC, F				4
Ṭāwūs b. Kaysān	Yemen	106		x					x	8
Thaʿlaba b. Yazīd al-Ḥimānī	Kūfa	~97	x+							5
Thuwayr b. Abī Fākhita Abū al-Jahm	Kūfa	~123			x	F			x	2
ʿUbāda b. Ziyād al-Asadī	Kūfa	~235		x(ru)/x+		F				7
ʿUbayd Allāh b. Khalīfa	Kūfa	~97	x							4
ʿUbayd Allāh b. Mūsā	Kūfa	212	x			F, CC			x	8
ʿUmar b. Saʿd al-Asadī				x(u)						3
ʿUmar b. Shabīb al-Muslī	Kūfa	201	x							3
ʿUthmān Muʾadhdhin Banī Afṣā			x							
ʿUthmān b. ʿUmayr Abū al-Yaqẓān	Kūfa	150	x+			AR, R	x		x	4
Yaḥyā b. ʿĪsā	Kūfa/Ramla	201	x							8
Yaḥyā b. al-Jazzār	Kūfa	~97	x+							7
Yaḥyā b. Salama b. Kuhayl			x+				x			3
Yaḥyā b. Yaʿlā al-Aslamī	Kūfa	~208		x						4
Yazīd b. Abī Ziyād	Kūfa	136		x		AR	x		x	5
Yuḥannas b. ʿAbd Allāh Abū Mūsā	Madīna	~97			x					8
Yūnus b. Arqam al-Kindī	Baṣra		x							2
Yūnus b. Khabbāb al-Asadī	Kūfa	~144	x+	x+	x+	CC			x	3
Zabīd b. Ḥārith al-Yāmī	Kūfa	122	x			CC				8
Zādhān Abū ʿUmar al-Kindī	Kūfa	82		x						7
Zayd b. al-Ḥubāb	Khurasān/Kūfa	230		x						7
Zurāra b. Aʿyan	Kūfa	148	x+	x	x	F		x		1

Appendix B: Methods

Death Dates

Roughly half of the death dates given in Appendix A are approximate, meaning that no death date is given at all in the sources, not that various dates were given and one was chosen. Assigning approximate death dates allows for a significantly more complete chronological picture of Shīʿite narrators. Without using estimated dates, our picture of the chronological rise and fall of the narrators would be heavily skewed towards the latter half of the second/eighth and first half of the third/ninth centuries, given the infrequency of precise death dates provided by the sources for earlier generations. The most common method for assigning an approximate death date was to use the average death date for narrators belonging to the same *ṭabaqa* in Ibn Ḥajar's *Taqrīb*, wich I calculated by selecting ten narrators from each *ṭabaqa* at random. Where other relevant information was available, such as someone dying after a certain year or having been a companion, father or son of someone whose death date was known, this information was also taken into account. The average death dates among the *ṭabaqāt* were as follows:

Ṭabaqa	Death Date
2	84
3	97
4	123
5	137
6	144
7	166
8	184
9	208
10	235
11	264
12	287

Grades of Reliability

For most narrators, multiple grades of reliability were given in various sources and I estimated a composite grade based on those. Where no grade was given in earlier sources and Ibn Ḥajar provided one I used that, and at times I also used the comments of the editors of the *Taqrīb* as they frequently differed with Ibn Ḥajar. The following table gives a sense of how an eight-point scale would work for both Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Ḥajar. On the whole, my scale was closer to that of Ibn Ḥajar than Ibn Abī Ḥātim, particularly on the lower half, but I did not attempt to reconcile them in any absolute manner.[1]

Grade	Ibn Abī Ḥātim	Ibn Ḥajar
8	*thiqa, mutqin thabat*	*thiqa, mutqin, thabat, ʿadl*
7	*ṣadūq, maḥalluhu al-ṣidq, lā baʾsa bihi*	*ṣadūq, lā baʾsa bihi*
6	*shaykh*	*ṣadūq sayyiʾ al-ḥifẓ, yahim, yukhṭīʾ, taghayyar bi-akhara*
5	*ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth, lil-iʿtibār*	*maqbūl, layyin al-hadith*
4	*layyin al-ḥadīth*	*ḍaʿīf*
3	*laysa bi-qawī*	*matrūk, wāhī al-ḥadīth, sāqiṭ*
2	*ḍāʿīf al-ḥadīth*	accused of lying
1	*matrūk al-ḥadīth, dhāhib al-ḥadīth, kadhdhāb, sāqiṭ*	known to lie or fabricate

[1] See the discussion in II.4.

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