Was Ibn Wāḍiḥ al-Yaʿqūbī a Shiʿite Historian? The State of the Question*

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Abstract

The works of the third/ninth-century historian and geographer Ibn al-Wāḍiḥ al-Yaʿqūbī have long served as an indispensable source in the modern study of Islamic historiography, but nagging questions about al-Yaʿqūbī's purportedly Shiʿite identity have continued to bedevil modern attempts to interpret his works. This essay re-visits the question of al-Yaʿqūbī's Shiʿite identity in of light of new data and a re-evaluation of the old, and it questions what evidence there exists for considering him a Shiʿite as well as what heuristic value, if any, labeling him as a Shiʿite holds for modern scholars who read his works.

Modern historians of early Islam have read, studied, and relied upon the third/ninth-century Arabic chronicle known today as *Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī* (Eng. *The History of al-Yaʿqūbī*) for nearly a century and a half, yet throughout the modern study of early Islamic history, a rather persistent question has haunted the work. Namely, is the chronicle written by a Shiʿite author? And is its portrait of early Islamic history 'Shiʿite'? For the most part, the view that Ibn Wāḍiḥ al-Yaʿqūbī's *History* offers a Shiʿite take on Islamic history has prevailed in modern scholarship on Muslim historical writing since the first printed edition of the text was published in the late-nineteenth century. In truth, the very question of a Shiʿite bias is a tedious one - though often asserted, only rarely does one find the implications of the assertion, if there are any, explicitly spelled out. Yet, given how tenacious of a hold this question of the putative Shiʿite bias of al-Yaʿqūbī's *History* continues to have on scholarship, this essay seeks to revisit the issue. But we begin with restating the question in clearer terms: What does it mean to say that al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle is a Shiʿite work? Does it mean simply that the author was himself Shiʿite, or does it mean that the author uses history to vindicate Shiʿite

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beliefs? What use, if any, does answering this question serve when reading this chronicle?

Although the view that al-Yaʿqūbī harbored Shiʿite beliefs attained axiomatic status in the century following the publication of his *History*, modern scholarship has failed to reach a consensus as to what his putative Shiʿite beliefs mean for how his chronicle ought to be read. Hence, one may rightly wonder whether one gains any insight at all by categorizing al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle as a Shiʿite one—identifying the sectarian loyalties of an author hardly nullifies the value of his works as historical sources. Labelling al-Yaʿqūbī as a Shiʿite historian has indeed been a hindrance to historians taking his *History* seriously in the past, as some notorious examples clearly demonstrate.[1] In a relatively recent, iconoclastic essay, Elton Daniel pursued the question of al-Yaʿqūbī's purported Shiʿite bias farther than any of his predecessors, even going so far as to challenge the certainty with which twentieth-century scholars read al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle for its putative Shiʿite bias. Daniel rejected the long-standing justifications for labelling al-Yaʿqūbī as a Shiʿite author as dubious at best and tendentious at worst. He rightly warned that preemptively labelling al-Yaʿqūbī's *History* does more to hinder than facilitate our understanding of the text.[2]

Nevertheless, evaluating al-Yaʿqūbī's *History* as a Shiʿite account of Islamic history boasts a hoary pedigree and remains an entrenched scholarly legacy with which one must still contend, notwithstanding Daniel's critique. The inception of this view can be traced to the publication of M. J. de Goeje's 1876 missive on the Cambridge manuscript, in which he extols the importance al-Yaʿqūbī's *History* as the work of "a full-blooded Shiʿite."[3] The manuscript's editor, M. Th. Houtsma, recapitulated de Goeje's verdict on the chronicle in the preface to the printed edition published by E.J. Brill in 1883,[4] and over a century of scholarly opinion ratified this evaluation of the chronicle, albeit with the usual nuances that distinguish one scholar's approach from another.[5] Al-Yaʿqūbī's *History* thus gained a reputation for being a distinctively Shiʿite reading of early Islamic history that stood out from the work of other Abbasid-era historians, such as Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/845), al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892), and Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923).

1. The most infamous example is Goitein's dismissive attitude towards al-Yaʿqūbī's account of ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān's construction of the Dome of the Rock as sheer Shiʿite, anti-Umayyad polemic. Contrary to Goitein's suspicions, al-Yaʿqūbī's account, as Amikam Elad has demonstrated, originated not with his Shiʿite bias but, rather, with the non-Shiʿite sources his chronicle drew upon. See A. Elad, "Why did ʿAbd al-Malik build the Dome of the Rock? A re-examination of the Muslim sources," in *Bayt al-Maqdis: ʿAbd al-Malik's Jerusalem*, eds. J. Raby and J. Johns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 241-308 and, more recently, idem, "ʿAbd al-Malik and the Dome of the Rock: A Further Examination of the Muslim Sources," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 35 (2008): 167-226.

2. E. Daniel, "al-Yaʿqūbī and Shiʿism Reconsidered," in *ʿAbbasid Studies: Occasional Paper of the School of ʿAbbasid Studies, Cambridge, 6-10 July 2002*, ed. J.E. Montgomery (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 209-231.

3. M. J. de Goeje, "Ueber die Geschichte der Abbâsiden von al-Jakûbî," in *Travaux de la troisième session du Congrès international des orientalistes*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1876) 156-57, "[W]eil uns hier die Islamische Geschichte erzählt wird von einem Vollblut-Schî'iten, der wahrheitsliebend ist, obgleich in der Wahl der Berichte unter dem Einflüsse seiner Verehrung für das Haus Alî's steht."

4. "Praefatio," in Th. Houtsma, ed., *Ibn Wāḍiḥ qui dicitur al-Jaʿqūbī Historiae* (Leiden: Brill, 1883), I, ix-x.

5. Daniel cites a few outliers (ibid., 212-13), but rarely do they go as far as to deny al-Yaʿqūbī's Shiʿite inclinations outright.

Most of the scholarship on the relationship between Shiʿism and Yaʿqūbī's chronicle in the decades following Houtsma's edition remained impressionistic, and few scholars delved into a detailed analysis of al-Yaʿqūbī's work and the specific ways in which his putative Shiʿite perspective shaped its content. This situation changed for the better beginning in the 1970s. Two scholars, William G. Milward[6] and Yves Marquet,[7] published watershed studies of al-Yaʿqūbī's oeuvre that simultaneously confirmed and nuanced de Goeje's and Houtsma's views. Milward's and Marquet's respective work was considerably more thorough than that of their predecessors.

Milward in particular argued that, although recognizably Shiʿite in disposition, al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle was neither parochial nor insular but, much like the work of other historians of the Abbasid era, drew upon a diverse swathe of sources that exhibited no conspicuously sectarian biases. Yves Marquet's analyses, albeit occasionally tendentious, also demonstrated that, while broadly Shiʿite in outlook, al-Yaʿqūbī's *History* did not espouse a perspective that could be easily identified with any one Shiʿite community from among the multitude of Shiʿite movements of the early Islamic period. Inasmuch as Shiʿism remained a fissiparous phenomenon in the Abbasid period, al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle did not promote the parochial interests of any single Shiʿite community and, therefore, defies any strict categorization.[8]

As argued below, the precise communal locus of al-Yaʿqūbī's sectarian loyalties remain unknowable barring future discovery of new data concerning his biography. That being said, the chronicle does contain a wealth of material that one can use to demonstrate that he favored a staunchly rejectionist, or 'Rāfiḍī', Shiʿite view of early Islamic history. This essay argues, in other words, that, despite Daniel's critique, a reading of al-Yaʿqūbī's *History* that views the work as one animated by a staunchly Shiʿite view of history remains not only justifiable but also imperative. In particular, al-Yaʿqūbī's narratives of the succession to the Prophet and the first Civil War (*al-fitna al-kubrā*) are staunchly pro-ʿAlid and pro-Hāshimid while simultaneously being profoundly hostile not only to controversial Companions, such as the caliph Muʿāwiya ibn Abī Sufyān, but also to the likes of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.

Such textual posturing, of course, does not mean that one can automatically infer that al-Yaʿqūbī espoused this or that ideology or assume that every account in his chronicle ought to be read through the lens of Shiʿite sectarianism. Islamic historiography is replete with histories that relate contradictory and even mutually exclusive accounts and versions of events.[9] Yet, as will be seen below, what grants the presence of such sectarian narratives particular significance is when, as in al-Yaʿqūbī's case, a chronicler rarely (or never) takes

6. M. Milward, *A Study of al-Yaʿqūbī with Special Reference to His Alleged Shīʿa* [sic] *Bias*, unpublished Ph.D., Princeton, 1962; idem, "The Adaptation of Men to Their Time: An Historical Essay by al-Yaʿqūbī," *JAOS* 84 (1964): 329-344; idem, "Al-Yaʿqūbī's Sources and the Question of Shīʿa [sic] Partiality," *Abr-Nahrayn* 12 (1971-72): 47-75.

7. Y. Marquet, "Le Šīʿisme au IXe siècle à travers l'histoire de Yaʿqūbī," *Arabica* 19 (1972): 1-45, 103-138.

8. Cf. *EI*2, art. "al-Yaʿḳūbī" (M.Q. Zaman).

9. Albrecht Noth and Lawrence I. Conrad, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source Critical Study*, tr. Michael Bonner (Princeton: Darwin, 1994), 7-10.

any measures to temper their net effect on the reader by providing alternative narratives. Unlike many of his peers, al-Yaʿqūbī dispenses with the method of compiling narratives out of discrete and disparate reports (*akhbār*) and, instead, usually opts for a single narrative voice. Thus does al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle clearly stack the narrative deck in favor of one particular sectarian viewpoint—in his case, that of a Rāfiḍī Shiʿite?

But, this being said, I also follow Daniel's basic instinct that reading al-Yaʿqūbī as "merely Shiʿite" has its limitations, too. As such, this essay seeks a nuanced reading of al-Yaʿqūbī's work as a 'Shiʿite chronicle'. Two lines of inquiry elucidate the challenges posed by al-Yaʿqūbī's *History* and why the place of Shiʿism in the work remains such a difficult question. The first relates to the difficulty of reconstructing al-Yaʿqūbī's biography. The available data about al-Yaʿqūbī is not only sparse, it is also fraught with ambiguities and contradictions, raising the question as to whether any of the data point to his sectarian loyalties. The second line of inquiry pursues a more complicated question: What exactly would a Shiʿite history from the Abbasid period look like?

This second line of questioning draws on a recognition of the internal diversity of Shiʿism in the 3rd/9th-century Abbasid empire without losing sight of the unifying features of Shiʿism broadly conceived. Thus, a narrative that espoused a Shiʿite view of history can be expected, at a minimum, to uphold the view that the Prophet's family (*ahl al-bayt*) enjoyed a particular claim to political and religious leadership. This constitutes the rudiments of a view that even non-Shiʿite scholars of the Abbasid period, particularly among the staunchly Sunnī *ḥadīth* folk, broadly termed 'good' or 'benign Shiʿism' (Ar. *tashayyuʿ ḥasan*). A more hardline – a so-called Rāfiḍī or 'rejectionist' - view would contend that *only* the Prophet's family, whether defined as the Prophet's kin (either defined broadly as the Hāshim clan or more narrowly as ʿAlī and his progeny), could rightfully claim this leadership. The rejectionist view also entails the belief that those who deny this leadership have gravely sinned, including even such prominent Companions of the Prophet as Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, since they refused to recognize ʿAlī's rights from the outset and even thwarted their realization. It is this later view, I contend, that one finds in the chronicle of al-Yaʿqūbī, and inasmuch as his chronicle espouses this view of the succession to Muḥammad, one can justifiably regard him as a Shiʿite author.

The Biographical Data

Al-Yaʿqūbī's family history and personal biography have long been recognized as difficult, if not impossible, to reconstruct. In a rare and fragmentary autobiographical note that begins his geographical work, the *Kitāb al-buldān*, al-Yaʿqūbī gives us our best insight into his life, portraying himself as follows (*Buldān*, 232-33):[10]

> In the prime of my youth and during the occupations of adulthood I dedicated the keenness of my intellect to the study of the stories of various lands and the distances between them, for I had travelled from a young age. My travels continued and my foreign sojourns never ceased. When I encountered someone from these lands, I

10. Ed. M.J. de Goeje, *Bibliotheca geographorum Arabicorum* (Leiden: Brill, 19272), VII, 231-373.

> would ask him about his homeland and cities …and afterwards I would verify what he reported to me from the most trustworthy testimony. I posed queries to person after person until I had questioned a great multitude of the learned in and out of season as well as Easterners and Westerners. Thus did I write down their reports and transmit their reports … for a long time.

All of this he states, however, without informing his readers what course these journeys traced or whence he began them. A little later on, he begins his treatise with a detailed and adulatory account of Baghdād, a decision he justifies in part because his ancestors once resided in Baghdād and because one of them even helped manage its affairs[11]—likely a reference to his ancestor Wāḍiḥ, an Abbasid client who served the caliphs as a court steward (*qahramān*). He does not, however, claim to have been born there himself. Hence, these comments might give us the sense of a figure who was curious, intrepid, and well-travelled, but they settle little else.

The longest biographical notice for al-Yaʿqūbī appears in Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī's (d. 626/1229) biographical dictionary of belletrists, and Yāqūt draws his account almost entirely from information recorded by the Egyptian historian Abū ʿUmar al-Kindī (d. 350/961). Yāqūt's entry is exceedingly laconic and makes no explicit statement regarding al-Yaʿqūbī's sectarian loyalties. The entry includes Yaʿqūbī's name and lineage (*nasab*); notes that he was a client (*mawlā*) of the Banū Hāshim (i.e., the Prophet's clan of Quraysh); lists his works;[12] and records his death as transpiring in the year 284/897.[13]

Yāqūt's account is also problematic: the date he gives for al-Yaʿqūbī's death is certainly erroneous—citations of al-Yaʿqūbī's poetry on the fall of the Ṭūlūnid dynasty[14] and the death of the Abbasid caliph al-Muktafī prove that he must have lived beyond 295/908 (see below). To further muddy the waters, the death date that Yāqūt gleans from al-Kindī also appears associated with a similarly named figure in the biographical dictionaries of the scholars of *ḥadīth*. They record a minor Egyptian traditionist by the name of Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad ibn Isḥāq ibn Wāḍiḥ ibn ʿAbd al-Ṣamad ibn Wāḍiḥ al-ʿAssāl ('the honey merchant'), a *mawlā* of the Quraysh. They report his death date as Ṣafar 284/March-April 897—a date matching exactly the death date Yāqūt records for al-Yaʿqūbī.[15]

The *ḥadith* literature places *this* Aḥmad ibn Isḥāq ibn Wāḍiḥ al-ʿAssāl within the orbit

11. *Buldān*, 226.12-13, "*li-anna salafī kānū* [*min*] *al-qāʾimīn bihā wa-aḥadahum tawallā amrahā.*"

12. The works Yāqūt lists are: *Kitāb al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, *Kitāb asmāʾ al-buldān*, *Kitāb fī akhbār al-umam al-sālifa*, and *Kitāb mushākalat al-nās li-zamānihim*. Arguably, all of these works can be regarded as extant in some way if one regards the *Kitāb fī akhbār al-umam al-sālifa* as referring to the first volume of the work known today as *Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī*.

13. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ (Irshād al-arīb ilā maʿrifat al-adīb)*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1993), II, 557.

14. See Gaston Wiet, tr., *Les Pays de Yaʿḳūbī* (Cairo: IFAO, 1937), viii; Ḥusayn ʿĀṣī, *al-Yaʿqūbī: ʿaṣruh, sīrat ḥayātih, wa-manhajuhu l-tārīkhī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1992), 50-51; Daniel, 209 and n. 2 thereto.

15. ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn Muḥammad al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb* (Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1962-82), IX, 291 (citing the *Kitāb Ghurabāʾ* of the Egyptian scholar Ibn Yūnus al-Ṣadafī, d. 347/958); Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa-l-aʿlām*, ed. Bashshār ʿAwwād Maʿrūf (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2003), VI, 668.

of the Egyptian *ḥadīth* scholars. He appears, for example, as a minor *ḥadīth* scholar and an authority in the works of Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad al-Ṭabarānī (260-360/873-970), wherein he transmits traditions from the Egyptian scholar Saʿīd ibn al-Ḥakam Ibn Abī Maryam (d. 224/839)[16] and Ḥāmid ibn Yaḥyā al-Balkhī (d. 242/857), a scholar who resided in Tarsus (Ṭarsūs) but who had a large number of Egyptian students.[17] In addition to al-Ṭabarānī's works, Aḥmad ibn Isḥāq ibn Wāḍiḥ al-ʿAssāl also makes scattered appearances as a *ḥadīth* transmitter in the works of the Mālikī scholar of al-Andalus Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (d. 463/1071). Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr transmits these traditions from the Egyptian *ḥadīth* scholar ʿAbdallāh ibn Jaʿfar Ibn al-Ward (d. 351/362),[18] who cites Aḥmad ibn Isḥāq ibn Wāḍiḥ as an authority for reports from Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. 275/889), the compiler of the famous *Sunan*,[19] as well as two Egyptian scholars named Saʿīd ibn Asad ibn Mūsā al-Umawī (d. 229/843-44)[20] and Muḥammad ibn Khallād al-Iskandarānī (d. 231/845).[21] The impression left by this material is certainly not of the scholarly networks cultivated by a Shiʿite but rather a minor *ḥadīth* scholar known locally among Egyptian traditionists. But is he to be identified with al-Yaʿqūbī the historian? I believe not, but to see why we need to broaden the scope of our analysis.

Most of the other biographical details available to modern historians must be gleaned from the scattered references to and citations of al-Yaʿqūbī's writings in the works of other medieval authors, and all of these recommend against identifying the author of the so-called *Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī* with Aḥmad ibn Isḥāq ibn Wāḍiḥ al-ʿAssāl. Al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle was scarcely known to medieval authors—the earliest known citation of the *History* appears in a treatise on Qurʾānic exegesis by the famed theologian Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), who cites his account of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib's

16. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl fī asmāʾ al-rijāl*, ed. Bashshār ʿAwwād Maʿrūf (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1983-1992), x, 393. Cf. these traditions in al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, ed. Ḥamdī ibn ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Salafī (Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Taymiyya, 1983-), II, 73 (al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī on the *witr* prayer); VII, 70 (Abū Bakr's prayers during Ramaḍan); IX, 99 (pietistic wisdom of Ibn Masʿūd); X, 26-27 (on the most excellent good works) and 191 (proscription of smacking cheeks and lacerating chests); and XII, 47 (the Prophet's recitations Friday mornings) and 91 (the Prophet's prayers at night). See also idem, *Musnad al-shāmiyyīn*, ed. Ḥamdī ibn ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Salafī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1983), IV, 365 (on reciting al-Fātiḥa during prayer).

17. Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-ṣaghīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1983), I, 25 (ʿĀʾisha on cleaning semen from the Prophet's clothing); cf. Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, V, 325-27 for Ḥāmid ibn Yaḥyā's Egyptian pupils.

18. Originally from Baghdād, Ibn al-Ward settled in Egypt later in life; see al-Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, ed. Shuʿayb al-Arnaʾūṭ *et al.* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah, 1996), XVI, 39.

19. Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *al-Tamhīd li-mā fī l-Muwaṭṭaʾ min al-maʿānī wa'l-asānīd* (Rabat: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa'l-Shuʾūn al-Islāmiyya, 1967-1992), VII, 142 (Sufyān al-Thawrī's interpretation of Q. 57:4).

20. Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Tamhīd*, XVII, 416 (biographical notice on ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Maʿmar, a *muḥaddith* and *qāḍī* of the Umayyad period); idem, *al-Istīʿāb fī maʿrifat al-aṣḥāb*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī (Cairo: Nahḍat Miṣr, c. 1960), IV, 1620 (the Prophet's admonition to Abū Juḥayfa against gluttony).

21. Idem, *al-Intiqāʾ fī faḍāʾil al-thalātha al-aʾimma al-fuqahāʾ*, ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda (Beirut: Dār al-Bashāʾir al-Islāmiyya, 1997), 79 (on an Alexandrian's dream about Mālik ibn Anas). On Muḥammad ibn Khallād al-Iskandarānī, see Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda (Beirut: Dār al-Bashāʾir al-Islāmiyya, 2002), VII, 118-19.

collection of the Qurʾān (on which, see below).[22] By contrast, scholars such as Ibn al-ʿAdīm (d. 660/1262), al-Qazwīnī (d. 682/1283), and al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) cited al-Yaʿqūbī's geographical work, *Kitāb al-buldān*, rather frequently by comparison. [23] These medieval authors call him by many names: Aḥmad ibn Wāḍiḥ, Ibn Wādiḥ, Ibn Abī Yaʿqūb, and Aḥmad al-Kātib (i.e., Aḥmad 'the scribe')—though they never refer to him by the *laqab* 'the honey merchant' (*al-ʿassāl*).[24] Indeed, even the designation of this scholar as 'al-Yaʿqūbī' is a modern phenomenon based on the version of his name that appears on the colophons of the extant manuscripts of his works. Most notably, al-Yaʿqūbī's contemporary and fellow geographer Ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamadhānī (d. *c.* 289-90/902-3) cites the author of the *Kitāb al-buldān* as 'Ibn Wādiḥ al-Iṣfahānī', indicating that the author was at one point in his career known for being of Iranian rather than Egyptian extraction.[25] Daniel too hastily dismisses Ibn al-Faqīh's reference as isolated; in fact, it is not. Abū Manṣūr al-Thaʿālibī (d. 429/1039) also ranks "Aḥmad ibn Wāḍiḥ" among a long list of literary elite who hailed from Iṣfahān.[26]

Although it is unlikely that the Egyptian honey-merchant named 'Aḥmad ibn Isḥāq ibn Wāḍiḥ' known to the *ḥadīth* scholars is the same 'Aḥmad ibn Abī Yaʿqūb ibn Wāḍiḥ' who authored the *Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī* and *Kitāb al-buldān,* the honey-merchant *ḥadīth* scholar may, however, have been the author of the *Kitāb mushākalat al-nās li-zamānihim* conventionally attributed to al-Yaʿqūbī, insofar as the work differs so starkly in style and content from the work known as *Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī.*[27] This is mostly speculative. What

22. *Mafātīḥ al-asrār wa-maṣābiḥ al-abrār*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAlī Ādharshab (Tehran: Mirāth-i Maktūb, 2008), I, 24 ff., calling the work *Tārīkh Ibn Wāḍiḥ*. Earlier citations of the *Tārīkh* might be found in the Leiden manuscript of an anonymous history of the Abbasids called *Dhikr Banī ʿAbbās wa-ẓuhūrihim* (Leiden Or. 14.023), which cites Yaʿqūbī's *Tārīkh* directly. See Qāsim al-Sāmarrāʾī, "Hal kataba l-Tanūkhī kitāban fī l-tārīkh?" *al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmī al-ʿArabī* 50 (1975): 531. For a description of the manuscript, see Jan Just Witkam, *Inventory of the Oriental Manuscripts of the Library of the University of Leiden* (Leiden: Ter Lugt, 2006-2016), 15: 11

23. Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughyat al-ṭalab fī tārīkh Ḥalab*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1988), I, 88, 107-8, 123, 141, 150, 156, 173, 219, 263, 265, 478; Zakariyāʾ ibn Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī, *Āthār al-bilād wa-akhbār al-ʿibād* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), 187 (citing Yaʿqūbī, *Buldān*, 333-34). See Daniel, 216 n. 43 for references to al-Yaʿqūbī's *K. al-Buldān* in al-Maqrīzī's *Khiṭaṭ*

24. For these variants, see M.J. de Goeje, ed., *Bibliotheca geographorum Arabicorum* (Leiden: Brill, 19272), VII, 361-73.

25. Ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamadhānī, *Mukhtaṣar Kitāb al-buldān*, in de Goeje, ed., *Bibliotheca geographorum Arabicorum*, V, 290-92; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1977), I, 161. This is a passage that no less exhibits the extensive familiarity with the pre-Islamic history of the Persian Sasanid dynasty that characterizes al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle. Shiʿite sources know of an Aḥmad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Iṣfahānī, but he is a figure of the mid-fourth/tenth century who died in 354/965 and, therefore, too late to be identified with the author of al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle. See al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām*, ed. Bashshār ʿAwwād Maʿrūf (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2001), VI, 479-80; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār* (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, 1956-72), XLV, 105, LXXXVIII, 267.12, and XCII, 225.-8.

26. *Yatīmat al-dahr wa-maḥāsin ahl al-ʿaṣr*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo: al-Saʿāda, 1956-58), III, 299 (citing the lost *Kitāb Iṣfahān* of Ḥamza ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Iṣfahānī, d. between 350/961 and 360/970).

27. The praise of Abū Bakr as "the most ascetic of the Muslims" is incongruent with the portrayal of Abū

remains indubitable is that al-Yaʿqūbī did in fact have a long tenure in Egypt as well.

Some indications of al-Yaʿqūbī's time in Egypt are subtle. For instance, the reliance of the early sections of his *History* on an early Arabic translation of *Cave of Treasures*—a source also utilized by the Coptic historian Eutychius of Alexandria (d. 940 CE)—suggests a common Egyptian milieu shared by the two authors.[28] However, other indications of his tenure in Egypt, especially his familiarity with the affairs of the Ṭūlūnid dynasty, are far more decisive. In fact, the 4th/10th-century Egyptian historian Ibn al-Dāya knows al-Yaʿqūbī as an administrator of the land-tax (*kharāj*) for Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn in Barqa (modern-day al-Marj in northeastern Libya) during the rebellion of Ibn Ṭūlūn's son al-ʿAbbās in 265/878.[29] Al-Yaʿqūbī's entry on Barqa in his geographical work survives and is not insubstantial, a fact which would seem to confirm Ibn al-Dāya's assertion. Further evidence suggests that al-Yaʿqūbī fondly remembered his tenure with the Ṭūlūnids and ultimately lived to see the dynasty's collapse. The historian al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) ends his account of the Ṭūlūnid dynasty with an anecdote about how, on the night of ʿĪd al-Fiṭr in 292 AH (5 August 905), Aḥmad[30] ibn Abī Yaʿqūb found himself pondering what had befallen the Ṭūlūnids as he fell asleep. In his sleep, he heard a spectral voice (*hātif*) declare, "Dominion, its pursuit, and honor departed when the Ṭūlūnids vanished (*dhahaba l-mulk wa-l-tamalluk wa-l-zīna lammā maḍā Banū Ṭūlūn*)." [31] These sentiments towards the Ṭūlūnids are affirmed in several lines of poetry an earlier Egyptian historian, al-Kindī, attributes to al-Yaʿqūbī in his *K. al-Wulāt*:[32]

If you ask about the glory of their dominion,
  then wind and wander the Great Square, now overgrown
And behold these palaces and all they encompass
  and take delight in the bloom of that garden
If you contemplate, there too will you find a lesson
  Revealing to you just how the ages change

Although nostalgic perhaps for the glory days of the Ṭūlūnids, by the poem's end al-Yaʿqūbī seems to welcome the Abbasid assault that brought the Ṭūlūnid reign to an end.

Bakr in the *Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī* (see below). The chronological scope of this short work also fits well with the chronological scope of Aḥmad ibn Isḥāq al-Miṣrī's lifespan. For an English translation of the text, see W.G. Milward, "*The Adaptation of Men to Their Time*: An Historical Essay by al-Yaʿqūbī," *JAOS* 84 (1964), 329-44 (the passage about Abū Bakr is on p. 333).

28. Sidney Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic: The Scripture of the 'People of the Book' in the Language of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 186.

29. Ibn Saʿīd, *al-Mughrib fī ḥulā l-Maghrib*, ed. Z. Hassan *et al.* (Cairo, 1953), 122, *kāna yatawallā kharāj Barqa*.

30. Read "Aḥmad" for "Muḥammad" in the printed text—a reading supported by Kindī's *Kitāb al-wulāt* cited below.

31. Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawāʿiẓ wa-l-iʿtibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-l-āthār*, ed. Ayman Fuʾād Sayyid (London: Muʾassasat al-Furqān, 2002), I.2, 112 and n. 1 thereto.

32. Abū ʿUmar Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Kindī, *The Governors and Judges of Egypt (Kitāb al-wulāt wa-Kitāb al-quḍāt)*, ed. Rhuvon Guest (Leiden: Brill, 1912), 250.

On this Abbasid victory, he declares:[33]

> So [the factions] rushed to embrace the Dynasty of Prophecy and Guidance [i.e., the Abbasids]
>
> And wrested themselves free of the Partisans of Satan

The laudatory manner in which al-Yaʿqūbī describes the Abbasids as 'the dynasty of prophecy and guidance' is the sole hint of al-Yaʿqūbī's Shiʿite inclinations outside the *History.* However, one should not overestimate the importance of this evidence: al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. early 5th/11th century) cites verses attributed to al-Yaʿqūbī where he seems to welcome the death of the caliph al-Muktafī (r. 289-95/902-8), stating "when [the caliph] died, his affliction lived on (*lammā māta ʿāsha adhāhu*)."[34]

There are, however, other indications of his abiding interest in the Hāshimites that could be broadly construed as pious reverence for the Prophet's clan and its descendants. Abū l-Ḥasan al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956) lists among the sources he relied upon to write his *Murūj al-dhahab* a *Kitāb al-Tārīkh* of a certain Aḥmad ibn [Abī?] Yaʿqūb al-Miṣrī "concerning the stories of the Abbasids (*fī akhbār al-ʿAbbāsiyyīn*)."[35] It is tempting to view this as a clear attestation to al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle. Houtsma succumbed to the temptation and thus attempted to identify the author of al-Yaʿqūbī's *History* with the individual cited by al-Masʿūdī ("Praefatio," vi).

But the evidence works against Houtsma's identification. First, the work that modern scholars know as *Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī* is by no means so narrow that one would characterize it as primarily about the Abbasids—al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle is a universal, not a dynastic, history. Al-Maqrīzī also knows of a certain Aḥmad ibn Abī Yaʿqūb al-Kātib who composed a *K. al-buldān* and "a book on the history of Hāshimites, which is large (*kitāb fī tārīkh al-hāshimiyyīn wa-huwa kabīr*)."[36] Furthermore, Ibn al-Dāya likely quotes extensively this same history mentioned by al-Masʿūdī and later al-Maqrīzī,[37] yet none of Ibn al-Dāya's quotations from Aḥmad ibn Abī Yaʿqūb's work on the Abbasids resemble any passage found in al-Yaʿqūbī's *History*—whether in content or style. Whereas al-Yaʿqūbī's *History* mostly adopts a detached and economical style of narrative prose, the passages of the work that Ibn al-Dāya quotes are often anecdotal, highly personal, and related on the authority of Aḥmad ibn Abī Yaʿqūb's ancestor Wāḍiḥ, a *mawlā* of the Abbasid caliph al-Manṣūr and a

33. Ibid. Cf. *EI2*, art. "Ṭūlūnids" (M. Gordon) and Thierry Bianquis, "Autonomous Egypt from Ibn Ṭūlūn to Kāfūr, 868-969," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt, vol. 1: Islamic Egypt, 640-1517*, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 107-8.

34. *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabāʾ wa-muḥāwarāt al-shuʿarāʾ wa-l-bulaghāʾ*, ed. (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, 1961), II, 534.

35. *Murūj al-dhahab wa-maʿādin al-jawhwar*, ed. Ch. Pellat (Beirut: Manshūrāt al-Jāmiʿa al-Lubnāniyya, 1965-79), I, 16.

36. *K. al-Muqaffā al-kabīr*, ed. Muḥammad al-Yaʿlāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1991), I, 738.

37. See Ibn Dāya, *al-Mukāfaʾa wa-ḥusn al-ʿuqdā*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1900), 45-48, 61-62, 66, 83-85, 119-20, 144-45; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, ed. ʿUmar ibn Ghurāma al-ʿAmrawī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1995-2000), LXVIII, 209.

household steward (*qahramān*) of the Abbasid court, via his father, Abū Yaʿqūb ibn Wāḍiḥ.[38]

Taken together, the many references to al-Yaʿqūbī leave the impression that he was deeply enmeshed in the bureaucratic circles of the Abbasid era. Yet these notices also offer us little by way of insight into al-Yaʿqūbī's religious views. Staunch Shiʿite loyalties would certainly not have precluded al-Yaʿqūbī from enjoying such a career, as the history of the famously Shiʿite Nawbakhtī family amply suggests.[39] The only hint of a Shiʿite interest one finds in this biographical material comes from al-Yaʿqūbī's lost work on the Hāshimids and Abbasids, but his interest in the scions of the Hāshim tribe can just as easily be attributed to his family's political attachment to the Abbasids as it can to any purported sectarian allegiances. In summary, the surviving biographical data on al-Yaʿqūbī are too paltry and too indeterminate to be of much use in describing his sectarian loyalties.[40] There is little information about the author of the *Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī* other than what occurs in the chronicle itself, and what information we can glean from other sources is not only fragmentary but also bereft of any indications that al-Yaʿqūbī harbored Shiʿite loyalties.

Evidence from the *History*

If research into Yaʿqūbī's biography yields little by way of insights into his sectarian identity, then we are forced to examine the text of the *History* itself. Two strategies have been adopted to deduce al-Yaʿqūbī's Shiʿite inclinations from his chronicle to date with uneven results.

The first strategy is the least successful and relies on a rather shallow analysis; it focuses on the chapter headings al-Yaʿqūbī employs in his *History*. Previous scholars have sought to see these headings as a window into his sectarian biases inasmuch as al-Yaʿqūbī conspicuously designates only the reigns of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib and his son al-Ḥasan with heading 'the caliphate of … (*khilāfat …*)', whereas the reigns of other rulers simply appear under the rubric of "the days (*ayyām*) of *x*." The idea is that, by using these different rubrics, al-Yaʿqūbī discriminates between the legitimacy of ʿAlī and al-Ḥasan and the illegitimacy of other rulers and, thus, reveals his Shiʿite bias.

Elton Daniel has convincingly undermined the viability of this superficial reading. Daniel first questions whether such rubrics can justifiably be regarded as work of al-Yaʿqūbī's authorial hand or if such rubrics merely result from the vicissitudes of the text's transmission. Indeed, such textual minutiae and adornments are rarely immutable features

38. As Daniel (217-21) convincingly demonstrates, this Wāḍiḥ is not the notorious Wādiḥ al-Maskīn, slave-client (*mawlā*) of the Abbasid prince Ṣāliḥ ibn al-Manṣūr, whom the chronicles often denounced as a "vile Shiʿite (*rāfiḍī khabīth*)" and who was beheaded and crucified for betraying the Abbasids by aiding the ʿAlid rebel Idrīs ibn ʿAbd Allāh to escape to the distant Maghrib. See Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, vol. II, ed. Wilferd Madelung (Beirut: Klaus Schwarz, 2003), 540-41; Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1879-1901), 3: 560-61; cf. Najam Haider, "The Community Divided: A Textual Analysis of the Murders of Idrīs b. ʿAbd Allāh (d. 175/791)," *JAOS* 128 (2008): 459-75. This Wāḍiḥ turns out to have been a eunuch (Ar. *khaṣī*) and, hence, could not possibly have been al-Yaʿqūbī's ancestor.

39. Cf. *EIr*, art. "The Nawbakti Family" (S. W. Anthony)

40. Daniel, 217-21.

of a text during its transmission history over the centuries. Rather, these textual features tend to be subject to erasure and expansion—dependent, in other words, on the whimsy of copyists. Houtsma's 1883 edition of al-Yaʿqūbī's *History*, the basis for all subsequent re-printings of the chronicle in the Arabic-speaking World and beyond, relied solely on a single, late Cambridge manuscript, copied in Shiʿite-dominated, Ṣafavid Persia in Rabīʿ I 1096/February-March 1685. Since the publication of his edition, an earlier, albeit undated, manuscript has come to light in the John Rylands Library in Manchester.[41] Any comparison of the Cambridge and Rylands manuscripts reveals that, although the two manuscripts descend from a common template (even the textual lacunae are the same), such headings, rubrics, and pious formulae following the names are far from immutable; rather, they are subject to erasure, expansion, and revision in the course of textual transmission and are often the product of the whims of a copyist.[42]

Moreover, as Daniel further noted, al-Yaʿqūbī provides his readers with some indication in the preface to the second section of his *History* that '*ayyām*', or 'days', will indeed serve as a rubric for organizing his history, suggesting that the term is void of sectarian valence. Hence, al-Yaʿqūbī states that, after recounting the Prophet's death, he will relate, "the stories of the caliphs after him and the conduct of each caliph one after another (*sīrat khalifatin baʿda khalīfatin*), as well all his conquests and all that he achieved and transpired during his days (*fī ayyāmih*)" (*Tārīkh*, II, 3). Thus does al-Yaʿqūbī in a single breath refer to each of the Prophet's successors as *caliphs* and specify that the stories of the caliphs' reigns will be subsumed under accounts of each of their "days (*ayyām*)." Al-Yaʿqūbī extends this pattern to most of the caliphs' reigns, beginning each section with "then *x* ruled as caliph (*thumma 'stakhlafa*)"; he only makes an explicit exception for the Umayyads, each of whom, he says rather, "reigned as king (*malaka*)."[43]

There is, finally, a long-standing tendency in the scholarly literature to overemphasize the importance of al-Yaʿqūbī's use the heading '*wafāt*' to mark off entries for the deaths of certain Imams of the Twelver Shiʿa. Two points are worth highlighting here. The first is that, while al-Yaʿqūbī does devote considerable attention to the deaths of some of the earlier Imams of the Twelver Shiʿa as well as their teachings, he does not do so in every case. In the case of Mūsā al-Kāẓim and ʿAlī al-Riḍā, the *wafāt* headings that mark off their obituaries in the printed text are Houtsma's own insertions (II, 499, 550), present neither in the Cambridge nor the Rylands manuscripts.[44] While their lengthy death notices certainly reveal that the imams of the Imāmi-Shiʿa are an important interest for al-Yaʿqūbī, this interest unquestionably wanes the closer the chronicle comes to al-Yaʿqūbī's own era. Hence, his obituary for the eighth Imam ʿAlī al-Riḍā (II, 550), who died under mysterious

41. T. M. Johnstone, "An Early Manuscript of Yaʿḳūbī's *Taʾrīḫ*," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 2 (1957): 189-95, re-affirming reaffirms Mingana's dating of the manuscript, for paleographic reasons, to the mid-14th century.

42. Johnstone, 195; Daniel, 225 ff.

43. Daniel, 223. Notably, the only Umayyad whose rise to power Yaʿqūbī describes in terms of assuming the caliphate (*al-istikhlāf*) is ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān (*Tārīkh,* II, 186). For a recent analysis of Yaʿqūbī's hostile portrayal of Yazīd ibn Muʿawiya, see Khaled Keshk, "How to Frame History," *Arabica* 56 (2009): 393-95.

44. Cf. Daniel, 226-27, 230.

and controversial circumstances, is neither partisan nor sensational and seems remarkably brief compared to previous obituary notices on al-Riḍā's predecessors.[45] His death notices on subsequent imams are either non-existent, as in the case of the ninth Imam Muḥammad al-Jawād (II, 552-53) and the eleventh Imam al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (II, 615), or terse and unremarkable, as in the case of the tenth Imam ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Hādī (II, 591-92, 614). Furthermore, while al-Yaʿqūbī devotes extended obituaries to the Imams ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (II, 363-65), Muḥammad al-Bāqir (II, 384-85), Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (II, 458-60), and Mūsā al-Kāẓim (II, 499-500) that prominently feature their teachings and virtues, he also accords similar treatment to ʿAlī ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAbbās (II, 355-56). The attention lavished on these figures is more easily explained with reference to al-Yaʿqūbī's interest in the descendants of the Hāshim clan of the Quraysh, about whom he composed a large history that is apparently no longer extant.[46]

Attempting to explain this pattern in al-Yaʿqūbī's treatment of ʿAlī's descendants, Houtsma and Brockelmann put forward a hypothesis (subsequently entertained by Marquet as well) that al-Yaʿqūbī belonged to the Wāqifa, or Mūsawiyya, trend of the Shiʿa[47]— i.e., those Shiʿa who believed that the line of imams stopped with Mūsā al-Kāẓim and that he defied death, entering into occultation in 183/799.[48] An argument in support of this hypothesis but not yet adduced is that, contemporary with al-Yaʿqūbī's tenure with the Ṭūlūnids in Egypt during the late 3rd/9th century, many Mūsawiyya Shiʿa, such as the followers of ʿAlī ibn Warsand al-Bajalī, were migrating westward from Baghdad into North African and the Maghrib.[49] But there's reason to challenge this hypothesis as well. If al-Yaʿqūbī's loyalties lay with those partisans of Mūsā al-Kāẓim who refused to recognize any of his successors, his account of Mūsā's death during the caliphate of Hārūn al-Rashīd becomes quite puzzling. Indeed, as noted by A.A. Duri, if al-Yaʿqūbī's account of Mūsā's death aligns with any view, it would not be that of Mūsā's partisans, but rather that of the Abbasid court, which exculpated the dynasty of any wrongdoing in Mūsā's death.[50]

The foregoing has argued that the established readings of the structural characteristics of al-Yaʿqūbī's *History* aimed at discerning his sectarian loyalties have produced unreliable results. How, then, does one begin to evaluate al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle as representative of a 'Shiʿite' view of history in any meaningful sense?

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45. For insightful analysis of just how far afield Yaʿqūbī's account of ʿAlī al-Riḍā's death from the hagiographical accounts of the Twelver-Shiʿa, see Deborah Tor, "An Historiographical Re-Examination of the Appointment and Death of ʿAlī al-Riḍā," *Der Islam* 71 (2001): 112 and n. 77 thereto, 126 n. 100.

46. Maqrīzī, *Muqaffā*, I, 738.

47. Houtsma, "Praefatio," I, ix; *EI*1, "al-Yaʿḳūbī" (Carl Brockelmann); Marquet, 136.

48. On this sect, see E. Kohlberg, "From Imāmiyya to Ithnā-ʿAshariyya," *BSOAS* 39 (1976): 529 ff.; M. Ali Buyukkara, "The Schism in the Party of Mūsā al-Kāẓim and the Emergence of the Wāqifa," *Arabica* 47 (2000): 78-99.

49. Wilferd Madelung, "Notes on Non-Ismāʿīlī Shiism in the Maghrib," *Studia Islamica* 44 (1976): 87-91; Wadād al-Qāḍī, "al-Shīʿa al-Bajaliyya fī l-Maghrib al-aqṣā," *Acts of the First Congress on the History of the Civilization of the Maghrib* (Tunis: University of Tunis CERES, 1979), 1: 164-94.

50. *The Rise of the Historical Writing among the Arabs*, ed. and tr. L.I. Conrad (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 67.

Rather than identify al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle with a specific, historical community of Shiʿa, one can adopt a second approach by starting with a workable, historical definition of the general features of Shiʿite beliefs in al-Yaʿqūbī's era. With such a working definition, one can then subject al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle to a 'Shiʿite litmus test' of sorts. The next section of the essay does just this by exploring al-Yaʿqūbī's treatment of ʿAlid legitimism during the so-called era of the 'Rāshidūn' caliphs. Granted, any delineation of the parameters of Shiʿism risks running afoul of the circular reasoning against which Daniel warns: namely, "using material from the history to claim that al-Yaʿqūbī was Shiʿite, but also using the premise that al-Yaʿqūbī was a Shiʿite to justify a Shiʿite reading of the text."[51] Yet, the reading proposed here is a historical one, rooted in what Muslims of al-Yaʿqūbī's era and subsequent times would recognize (or even virulently denounce) as a Shiʿite perspective on Islamic history, inasmuch as Rāfiḍī narratives and views on the controversies of early Islamic history had become an entrenched and debated feature of the sectarian landscape at least a century before the *History* was written. (As a result, such debates are also broadly attested.)[52] How, then, does al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle stack up?

Evaluations of the merits or demerits of Abū Bakr's succession to Muḥammad and the merits and rights of ʿAlī serve as the locus classicus for early sectarian debates over legitimate leadership in Islam. They provide an ideal arena for exploring the sectarian proclivities of al-Yaʿqūbī as a chronicler. Key to the rift that emerged between the Sunni and Shiʿi memories of the succession to Prophet were, respectively, the affirmation of the legitimacy of Abū Bakr's leadership as the Prophet's worthy successor and the dissenting objections against the legitimacy of his leadership in favor of the Prophet's son-in-law ʿAlī. Narratives rejecting the legitimacy of Abū Bakr's leadership emphasized that the oath of allegiance to him at the portico (*saqīfa*) of the Sāʿida clan had been too hastily rendered and invalidated the allegiance rendered to Abū Bakr due to the absence of the Prophet's kinsfolk, the Hāshim clan, from the proceedings. Hence, according to the dissenting view, Abū Bakr's appointment was illegitimate because it was an *ad hoc* decision (Ar. *falta*)[53] and had alienated the rights of the Prophet's household. Even a cursory reading of al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle will reveal that he eschews all arguments in favor of Abū Bakr's legitimacy, choosing rather to fill his narrative of Abū Bakr's succession with episodes that expose the ambition of Abū Bakr and his supporters and that underscore the truth of Hāshimid and ʿAlid legitimist claims to the Prophet's legacy. Al-Yaʿqūbī viewed Abū Bakr's rise to leadership over the Prophet's community as a combination of travesty and tragedy.[54]

Al-Yaʿqūbī lays the groundwork for his objections to Abū Bakr's caliphate early on in his chronicle with two set pieces, each essential to a distinctively Shiʿite view of early Islamic

51. Daniel, 210.

52. Josef van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra: Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1991-97), I, 308-12.

53. Even non-Shiʿite narratives portray Abū Bakr's appointment as ad hoc, but they do not see that fact as mitigating the legitimacy of his claim to the caliphate. E.g., see Maʿmar ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions (Kitāb al-maghāzī*), ed. and tr. S.W. Anthony (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 194-95 (xxi.1, 2).

54. My reading here contrasts with that of T. Khalidi, *Islamic Historiography: The Histories of Masʿūdī* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1975), 127, whose characterizations of these narratives I find to be quite far off the mark.

history: the incident at Ghadīr Khumm and the *ḥadīth al-thaqalayn* (II, 125). Al-Yaʿqūbī affirms that, on 18 Dhū l-Ḥijja 10/ 10 March 632, the Prophet delivered a sermon outside Medina near Ghadīr Khumm during which, having taken ʿAlī's hand in his own, the Prophet proclaimed, "Whoever regards me as his protector (*mawlā*), ʿAlī too is his protector. O Lord be a friend to those who befriend him and an enemy of all those who spread enmity against him!"[55] Al-Yaʿqūbī then has the Prophet utter the so-called *ḥadīth al-thaqalayn*. The Prophet admonishes his followers that he will precede them all to the eschatological Basin (*al-ḥawḍ*) where, gathered on the Day of Judgment, he will ask them concerning "the two precious items (*al-thaqalayn*)" that will safeguard their salvation until the Day of Judgment. When the Prophet's followers ask what the two items are, he answers: "God's Scripture (*kitāb Allāh*) and my kinsmen, the people of my household (*ʿitratī ahl baytī*)."

Although of weightier importance to the Shiʿa, neither the Ghadīr Khumm tradition nor the *ḥadīth al-thaqalayn* are foreign to authoritative Sunni collections of *ḥadīth*.[56] They are not, in other words, *prima facie* evidence of a rejectionist Shiʿi perspective. Indeed, in a version of the traditions attributed to the Companion Zayd ibn Arqam, also widespread in Sunni *ḥadīth* collections, the two pronouncements even appear in juxtaposition as they do in al-Yaʿqūbī's text.[57] Arguably, then, the presence of the traditions in the *History* might display the so-called 'benign Shīʿism (*tashayyuʿ ḥasan*)' that populates Sunni *ḥadīth* concerned with the merits and virtues of ʿAlī just as much as more hardline Shiʿite literature. More telling, however, is al-Yaʿqūbī's utilization of the two traditions. He does not feature these traditions, for example, alongside the Prophet's appointment of Abū Bakr to lead the prayers during his last illness or litanies of Abū Bakr's bounty of virtues as one of the Prophet's most trusted Companions—the most important indications of Abū Bakr's superior merits and worthiness to succeed the Prophet in Sunni narratives. Indeed, al-Yaʿqūbī excludes the Prophet's appointment of Abū Bakr as prayer leader entirely. Thus, his mention of the Ghadīr Khumm incident and the *ḥadīth al-thaqalayn* is no innocuous notation of the merits of ʿAlī. Al-Yaʿqubī mobilizes these two traditions to set up a far more scandalous narrative of Abū Bakr's accession to the caliphate following the Prophet's death.

Initially, al-Yaʿqūbī arranges the narrative set pieces for Abū Bakr's succession in the conventional manner: After the Prophet's passing, his Medinan followers, the Helpers, gather in the portico of the Sāʿida clan to appoint Saʿd ibn ʿUbāda their new leader, and the Hāshim clan retreats to prepare Muḥammad's corpse for burial. Abū Bakr, ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, and other Qurashī Emigrants hear word of the Helpers' plans to appoint a

55. *Man kuntu mawlāhu fa-ʿAlī huwa mawlāhu allāhumma wāli man wālāhu wa-ʿādi man ʿādāhu.*

56. For an analysis of these traditions, see *EI*3, art. "Ghadīr Khumm" (M.A. Amir-Moezzi); Maria M. Dakake, *The Charismatic Community: Shiʿite Identity in Early Islam* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2008), ch. 2; and Me'ir Bar-Asher, *Scripture and Exegesis in Early Imāmī-Shiism* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 39 ff. Dakake's odd (and probably careless) assertion that al-Yaʿqūbī's *History* gives this tradition "a brief mention, not a narrative account" and ranks among those works that "underplay" the importance of the event (*Charismatic Community*, 36, 38) ought to be rejected.

57. E.g., al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, II, 114-15; Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Vaduz: Thesaurus Islamicus, 2000), II, 1032 (*k. faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, no. 6378) and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, ed. Shuʿayb Arnaʾūṭ (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1993), XXXII, 10-12.

leader of their own and rush in order to stop the proceedings. In the tense deliberations that ensue, ʿUmar and Abū ʿUbayda ibn al-Jarrāḥ nominate Abū Bakr as the community's most worthy leader; the Helpers and Emigrants present agree to render him their oath of allegiance.

Al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle frames the conflict between the Helpers and the Emigrants in terms of the respective merits of the Quraysh, the Prophet's tribe, versus those of the Helpers. In this way, al-Yaʿqūbī prepares the reader for a parallel debate to ensue when the Prophet's kin from the Hāshim clan make their entrance. Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and Abū ʿUbayda speak with one voice when they aver, "The Messenger of God came from us [the Quraysh], thus are we the most deserving to occupy his place (*aḥaqqu bi-maqāmih*)" (II, 137)—but, conspicuously, fail to see how such logic applies to their absent, fellow tribesmen from the Hāshim clan. The Emigrant ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf likewise admonishes the Helpers to submit to the leadership of the Quraysh, declaring, "There is none equal to Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿAlī in your midst," but clumsily let slip mention of ʿAlī. In a revealing passage, the Helper al-Mundhir ibn Arqam pounces on ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's mention of ʿAlī retorting, "Indeed, there is one man, were he to pursue this matter, none would contest him over it (*law ṭalaba hādhā l-amr lam yunāziʿhu fīhi aḥad*)" (II, 137).

When the Helper al-Barāʾ ibn ʿĀzib tells the Hāshim clan of Abū Bakr's successful bid for the leadership of the community, the Prophet's kin are aghast, leading one of their number to gainsay the whole affair as invalid given their absence. The Prophet's uncle al-ʿAbbās utters a cry of disbelief at what he considers a debacle. Most outspoken is his son al-Faḍl ibn al-ʿAbbās, who exclaims, "O company of Quraysh! The caliphate does not become your right by virtue of guile (*bi-l-tamwīh*)! We [the Hāshim clan] are the household of the caliphate before you (*ahluhā dūnakum*) and our kinsman [ʿAlī] is far more deserving of it than you (*ṣāḥibunā awlā bihā minkum*)" (II, 138).

After this scene, al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle portrays ʿAlī's response as forbearing and, hence, key to letting cooler heads prevail. The chronicle also provides a list of Emigrants and Helpers who remain loyal to ʿAlī and refuse to give Abū Bakr their allegiance. Here, too, his chronicle seizes the opportunity portray Abū Bakr's supporters as animated by crude ambition to exclude the Hāshim clan from the caliphate. Abū Bakr turns to ʿUmar, Abū ʿUbayda, and al-Mughīra ibn Shuʿba for their advice, whereupon they recommend bribing the Prophet's uncle al-ʿAbbās with a share (*naṣīb*) for himself and his progeny in the rule of community in order to convince him to cajole the Hāshim clan into accepting Abū Bakr's leadership. The four plead with al-ʿAbbās to accept the Believers' choice of Abū Bakr as unanimous. The reply of the Prophet's uncle is damning: How can they claim the consensus of the Believers' when the Hāshimites dissent? How can they offer al-ʿAbbās a share in the community's rule if leadership rests on the Believers' consensus?

Matters worsen further still for Abū Bakr and his cadre when the Umayyad clan voices its support for ʿAlī. When the early Umayyad convert, Khālid ibn Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ, returns to Medina, he calls a gathering of Medinans together, summoning them to swear allegiance to ʿAlī "heads shaved (*muḥallaqīn al-ruʾūs*)" in repentance. Though only three persons step forward, the event suffices to spur ʿUmar and Abū Bakr to rush to Fāṭima's residence, which, aided by others, they begin to demolish. ʿAlī exits the house with sword in hand

and confronts ʿUmar. They wrestle until, at last, ʿUmar breaks ʿAlī's sword. Facing eviction from her home, the Prophet's daughter Fāṭima shrilly rebukes Abū Bakr and his supporters: "Will you expel me from my home? Or should I expose my hair and cry out to God in fury?" Al-Yaʿqūbī concludes the imbroglio remarking that, though one by one ʿAlī's supports rendered their allegiance to Abū Bakr, he withheld giving his for six months (II, 141).[58]

Al-Yaʿqūbī's narrative is a far cry from the irenic narratives that come to populate the emerging Sunni historical canon and must account, at least partially, for his exclusion from that canon. Medieval readers would likely find his narratives of Fāṭima and ʿAlī's opposition to Abū Bakr sectarian as well as invidious.[59] The Sunni historian al-Ṭabarī, although he does not entirely conceal the discontents of ʿAlī and the Hāshim clan in his annals, turns to the narratives composed by the notoriously anti-Shiʿite historian Sayf ibn ʿUmar al-Tamīmī (fl. late 2nd/8th century) to dilute their impact. Sayf ibn ʿUmar, for example, rather incredulously portrays ʿAlī as so eager to pledge allegiance to Abū Bakr that he accidently leaves home without being fully dressed.[60] Compared against an author of pious fictions like Sayf, al-Yaʿqūbī's effort to inveigh on behalf of pro-ʿAlid legitimist claims are unmistakable.

By the time al-Yaʿqūbī's narrative arrives at ʿAlī's bid for the caliphate in the wake of ʿUthmān's assassination, the Shiʿite subtext becomes all the more conspicuous. The comparably early Muslim chroniclers—such as Ibn Saʿd, al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī—wring their hands over the intractable controversies surrounding these events: Was ʿAlī complicit in ʿUthmān's murder? Did ʿAlī's sympathies lie with rebels who murdered ʿUthmān? Did Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr willingly offer ʿAlī their allegiance (*bayʿa*) or were they compelled by force of threat? While by no means uninterested in these issues, al-Yaʿqūbī bypasses these issues and, instead, seems to exult in ʿAlī's accession to the caliphate where these other chroniclers do not. His narrative teems with praise for ʿAlī's merits vaunted by the tongues of the Helpers and ʿAlī's loyal partisans. Thus does Khuzayma ibn Thābit al-Anṣārī publicly declare to ʿAlī that, among all the Prophet's followers, "you possess all that they can claim and they lack all that you can claim (*laka mā lahum wa-laysa lahum mā laka*)." "You have exalted the caliphate and made it resplendent," proclaims ʿAlī's Kūfan acolyte Ṣaʿṣaʿa ibn Ṣūḥān, "but it has added naught to you, for it is more in need of you than you of it." Most striking of all, however, is the declaration of Mālik al-Ashtar: "Listen people! This man is the legatee of the legatees (*waṣī al-awṣiyāʾ*) and the inheritor of prophets' knowledge" (II, 208).

This last statement attributed to al-Ashtar contains two especially important ideas that appear elsewhere throughout al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle. First, al-Ashtar assigns the

58. Al-Yaʿqūbī also notes the minority report that ʿAlī delayed his *bayʿa* to Abū Bakr a mere forty days. The refusal of ʿAlī along with the rest of the Banū Hāshim to proffer their *bayʿa* to Abū Bakr is standard in non-Shiʿite narratives as well. Cf. Maʿmar ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, 248-51 (xxvii.3); Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, II, 14.

59. Cf. Verena Klemm, "Die frühe islamische Erzählung von Fāṭima bint Muḥammad: Vom *ḫabar* zur Legende," *Der Islam* 79 (2002): 78-80.

60. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, I, 1825. Sayf's narratives, although indispensable to Ṭabarī's construction of Sunnī view of early Islamic history, represents the viewpoint of the ʿUthmāniyya. See S. W. Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic: Ibn Sabaʾ and the Origins of Shiʿism* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 101-6.

title *waṣī al-awṣiyāʾ* to ʿAlī. The appellation was widely regarded as a touchstone of the type of language that exposed one as a Rāfiḍī, or rejectionist, Shiʿite. Thus did the Imāmī traditionist Jābir al-Juʿfī fall out of favor with the Kufan *ḥadīth*-folk when overheard citing a tradition on Muḥammad al-Bāqir's authority by saying, "the legatee of the legatees reported to me ... (*ḥaddathanī waṣī al-awṣiyāʾ*)."[61] Second, and more important, is the ideological underpinning of designating ʿAlī as Muḥammad's *waṣī*. This designation implies that ʿAlī inherited a sacred bequest (*waṣiyya*), and hence his legitimacy, from the Prophet based on kinship—a claim of inheritance that neither Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, nor ʿUthmān could boast.

As an argument in favor of ʿAlī's unique legitimacy as the Prophet's successor, the notion of ʿAlī as the Prophet's *waṣī* stands among the very earliest put forward in philo-ʿAlid and Shiʿite historiography. Thus, for example, does ʿAlī's loyal acolyte, Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr, write to rebuke Muʿāwiya ibn Abī Sufyān for defying ʿAlī's bid for the caliphate, "Woe to you for comparing yourself to ʿAlī, who is the inheritor (*wārith*) of God's Messenger, his *waṣī*, the father of his progeny (*abū waladih*), and first of all to follow him."[62] The idea appears also in the earliest poetry extolling the rights of ʿAlī, as in the following lines of the Shiʿite poet Abū l-Aswad al-Duʾalī (d. 69/688):[63]

I love Muḥammad with the deepest love
  and ʿAbbās and Ḥamza and the *Waṣī* [i.e., ʿAlī]
Sons of the Messenger's uncle and each near relative
  Most beloved of people each and all to me

Closely tied with the pro-Hāshimid and pro-ʿAlid legitimism that pervades—indeed drives—al-Yaʿqūbī's narrative is the notion that ʿAlī as the *waṣī* also inherits not merely a political right to rule the community's affairs but also the Prophet's knowledge. This idea emerges clearly in the *bayʿa* scene recounted above where the affirmation of ʿAlī's status as Muḥammad's *waṣī* not only underscores ʿAlī's legitimacy as the ruler of the *umma* but also undercuts the claims to legitimate leadership put forward by his predecessors, especially Abū Bakr and his cohort, who could not themselves lay claim to the title. When rendering his allegiance to ʿAlī upon assuming the caliphate, Mālik al-Ashtar simultaneously identifies ʿAlī as the Prophet's true *waṣī* and "the inheritor of the prophets' knowledge (*wārith ʿilm*

61. Abū Yūsuf al-Fasawī, *K. al-Maʿrifa wa-l-tārīkh*, ed. Akram Ḍiyāʾ al-ʿUmarī (Medina: Maktabat al-Dār, 1989), II, 716. That in referring to *waṣī al-awṣiyāʾ* Jābir al-Juʿfī refers not to ʿAlī but rather his descendent, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, is made apparent by a tradition recorded in Ibn Bābūyah, *ʿUyūn akhbār al-Riḍā* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī, 1984), I, 288. Writing in the late-eighth century, the Kufan *akhbārī* Sayf ibn ʿUmar al-Tamīmī likewise attributes the invention of the title *khātam al-awṣiyāʾ* for ʿAlī as originating in the invidious view of the heresiarch Ibn Sabaʾ; see Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic*, 82 ff.

62. Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim al-Minqarī, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: al-Muʾassasa al-ʿArabiyya al-Ḥadītha, 19622), 119. Cf. M. A. Amir-Moezzi, *Spirituality of Shiʿi Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 13-15 and M. Yazigi, "Defense and Validation in Shiʿi and Sunni Tradition: The Case of Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr," *Studia Islamica* 98-99 (2004): 67-68.

63. Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbas, Ibrāhīm al-Saʿāfīn, and Bakr ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2008), XII, 232.

al-anbiyāʾ)." Mālik al-Ashtar's *bayʿa* is also not the first time that al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle introduces the idea that ʿAlī possessed a measure of preternatural, prophetic knowledge thanks to his close kinship to the Prophet and the favor the Prophet bestowed upon him. These ideas first manifest in poetry composed by the Prophet's bard Ḥassān ibn Thābit during the dispute over Abū Bakr's assuming the leadership of the community. Ḥassān praises ʿAlī as follows (II, 144):

> You preserve for us God's Messenger; and his testament
> is yours—and who is nearer in kinship to him? Who?
> Are you not declared his brother? Are you not his legatee (*waṣī*),
> And of the Fihr tribe the most knowledgeable of the Scripture and Sunna?

These verses provide one of the clearest and earliest expressions of ʿAlī's superior merits in al-Yaʿqūbī's *History.* That the ideas of ʿAlī's legitimacy as the Prophets true successor, his legatee (*waṣī*), and therefore an inheritor of prophetic knowledge reappear again at ʿAlī's assumption of the caliphate is of paramount importance for understanding al-Yaʿqūbī's historical perspective.

Sometimes al-Yaʿqūbī manifests his exalted view of ʿAlī only subtly, as when the caliph ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān's collection of the Qurʾān creates an opportunity for al-Yaʿqūbī to highlight ʿAlī's unrivaled authority on the Qurʾān. As ʿAlī is the most learnèd of the Quraysh, al-Yaʿqūbī lists in extended detail the unique features of ʿAlī's neglected codex in an account that overshadows his treatment of the caliph ʿUthmān's famous collection (II, 152-54).[64] Implicit in al-Yaʿqūbī's account seems to be the widespread Shiʿi view that ʿAlī was the most learned of the Companions, but although he compiled the Qurʾān and presented it the *umma*, the Prophet's recalcitrant Companions rejected his codex (*muṣḥaf*) for ʿUthmān's recension nonetheless.[65] Yet, the idea that ʿAlī inherits the knowledge of God's prophets from Muḥammad as his *waṣī* also features prominently, too. These ideas appear in a striking scene from the caliphate of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān that features ʿUthmān's most strident, piety-minded critic: Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī. For al-Yaʿqūbī, Abū Dharr represents not merely the dissent of the piety-minded against the abuses of political power or the corruption of wealth during ʿUthmān's caliphate,[66] he is also staunchly partisan and

64. Cf. Th. Nöldeke, F. Schwally, G. Bergsträßer, and O. Pretzl, *The History of the Qurʾān*, tr. W.H. Behn (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 220 (II, 9-11). Yaʿqūbī's account of the arrangement of the *sūra*s in ʿAlī's Qurʾān codex is, to my knowledge, unique; cf. Shahrastānī, *Mafātiḥ al-asrār*, I, 24-28. Other accounts assert, rather, that ʿAlī organized his codex according to the order of revelation; see Arthur Jeffery, *Two Muqaddimas to the Qur'anic Sciences* (Cairo: al-Khaniji Booksellers, 1943), 14-16. On Shiʿite views of ʿAlī's Qurʾān more generally, see Etan Kohlberg and Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *Revelation and Falsification: The* Kitāb al-qirāʾāt *of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Sayyārī* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 25-27.

65. Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, ed. ʿAlī Akbar al-Ghaffārī (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, 1968-71), II, 633; cf. H. Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival: A Bibliographical Survey of Early Shīʿite Literature* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003), 2-4. It is worth noting that ʿAlī's enemies denied that he possessed exceptional knowledge of the Qurʾān and rejected any notion that his insight into the revelation was anything more than even ordinary Companions; see ʿAmr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-ʿUthmāniyya*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1955), 92-93.

66. A topic that features in *Mushākalat al-nās li-zāmanihim* as well; see Tayeb El-Hibri, *Parable and Politics*

loyal to ʿAlī. With unbridled conviction, Abū Dharr declares (II, 198):

> Muḥammad inherited the knowledge of Adam and that which exalted the prophets, and ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib is the legatee of Muḥammad and the inheritor of his knowledge.

This idea that ʿAlī inherits the prophets' knowledge as the Prophet's successor is not unique to al-Yaʿqūbī by any means. It is striking that Abū Dharr's declaration fits quite well with the saying of the fifth Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir, who related that, when ʿAlī reported that he could hear Gabriel's voice and see light (*al-ḍawʾ*), the Prophet replied:

> Were I not the Seal of the Prophets, then you would share prophecy with me. Were it not so, you would be a prophet. Rather, you are to be the executor and inheritor of a prophet's legacy, chief of the executors and Imam of the God-fearing.[67]

Yet, do such pronouncements on ʿAlī's superior merits, his preternatural knowledge, and his unassailable rights as the sole legitimate successor to Muḥammad reflect al-Yaʿqūbī's own Shiʿite vision of Islamic history? Confirmation that indeed they do can be found in the very organization of his chronicle. On the one hand, these are the utterances of his narrative's most heroic and praiseworthy protagonists. On the other, al-Yaʿqūbī's account of ʿAlī's caliphate is bereft of criticism one finds of his predecessors and ends with a lengthy treatment of the pious sayings and wise maxims ʿAlī bequeathed to his partisans. These take up nine pages in Houtsma's edition of the Arabic text (II, 242-51)—this is quite a sizeable amount relative to his chronicle's scope that is without parallel within its pages. No other figure receives such treatment at al-Yaʿqūbī's hands—let alone any of the other so-called 'Rāshidūn' caliphs. Abū Bakr, by contrast, faces his death with naught but regret and a litany of deathbed confessions of his wrongdoings (II, 155-56),[68] whereas ʿAlī offers bezels of wisdom and timeless guidance.

Conclusion

If one is to find any indication of al-Yaʿqūbī's putatively Shiʿite perspective on Islamic history, one must look to his treatment of the controversies over the succession to the Prophet where such views are most conspicuously manifest. As seen above, al-Yaʿqūbī's

in Early Islamic History: The Rashidun Caliphs (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 6-7.

67. Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (repr. Beirut: Dār al-Sāqiya li-l-ʿUlūm, 2001), XIII, 163: *law lā annī khātam al-anbiyāʾ la-kunta sharīkan fī l-nabuwwa fa-in lā takun nabiyyan fa-innaka wasiyyu nabiyyin wa-wārithuh bal anta sayyidu l-awṣiyāʾ wa-imāmu l-atqiyāʾ*.

68. Sunnī scholars such as al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) attributed the forgery of Abū Bakr's deathbed confessions to a certain ʿUlwān ibn Dāwūd [ibn Ṣāliḥ] al-Bajalī (d. 180/796-97), who appears as the common link for all versions of the tradition cited; cf. Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl fī naqd al-rijāl*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, n.d.), III, 108-10. The tradition is indeed cited by scholars of the Shiʿa in anti-Sunni polemics; e.g., see (Ps.)-Faḍl ibn Shādhān, *al-Īḍāḥ*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī al-Armawī al-Muḥaddith (Tehran: Dānashgāh-ye Tehran, 1984), 518 and Ibn Bābūyah al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991), *al-Khiṣāl*, 171-73. However, the longest, best-preserved versions appear in Sunni works. See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, I, 2139-41; Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, I, 62-63; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Dimashq*, XXX, 417-23.

narrative of the succession to the Prophet and his celebration of the survival of the pro-ʿAlid cause and its realization during the caliphate of ʿAlī—despite all the tragedies inflicted upon the cause subsequently—leave little doubt about the Shiʿite perspective put forward in his chronicle. At its seminal stages, Islamic historiography never split into merely two hostile binaries, with the Sunni cult of the *ṣaḥāba* at one end and the Shiʿite exaltation of the Prophet's household and damnation of their rivals on the other. As Scott Lucas has compellingly argued, the Rāfiḍī position cultivated by certain Shiʿa and the cult of the *ṣaḥāba* espoused by the *ḥadīth* folk were, rather, two extreme poles of a spectrum that accommodated a panoply of perspectives on the Prophet's Companions (ʿUthmānī, Murjiʾī, Zaydī, Ibāḍī, Muʿtazilī, etc.)[69]—albeit historiographical perspectives that proved less durable than the two that came to predominate in the ensuing centuries. Yet, a careful reading of the narratives al-Yaʿqūbī recounts in his chronicle allows one to easily discern his place at the 'rejectionist', or Rāfiḍī, Shiʿite end of this spectrum.

Hence, any attempt to underplay how trenchantly pro-ʿAlī al-Yaʿqūbī's *History* is or to minimize its hostility towards Abū Bakr and ʿUmar will miss an important point about the chronicle. The narratives honed in Yaʿqūbī's chronicle are simply irreconcilable even with the so-called 'benign Shiʿism (*tashayyuʿ ḥasan*)' tolerated among the *ḥadīth* folk. He belongs in an entirely different genus of scholars than those scholars who were famous for espousing the benign Shiʿism tolerated by the *ḥadīth* folk. Partiality towards ʿAlī indisputably features in the writings of such giant *ḥadīth* scholars as al-Nasāʾī (d. *c.* 303/915), who may have even died for his dedication to ʿAlī,[70] and al-Ḥākim al-Naysāpūrī (d. 405/1014), who courted controversy for his staunch criticism of Muʿāwiya ibn Abī Sufyān;[71] yet, even given what little we know about the precise Shiʿite community to which al-Yaʿqūbī belonged, the chronicle signals to us that he stands apart from figures such as these. None of these figures nor their likes would have tolerated or espoused the portrayals and characterizations of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar that one finds in al-Yaʿqūbī's *History.*

Finally, if one does *not* read al-Yaʿqūbī's *History* as a Shiʿite chronicle, one must ponder what is lost. Specifically, one loses perspective of al-Yaʿqūbī's own authorial self-awareness and the stakes at play for him in the process of crafting the narratives of his chronicle. Al-Yaʿqūbī is but one of many Abbasid-era historians writing in a tumultuous sea of contested historical memory, but his authorial vision for his chronicle sets him apart from his contemporaries in palpable ways. Al-Yaʿqūbī's chronicle is no mere receptacle of older, disparate accounts. As Chase Robinson has noted, al-Yaʿqūbī chronicle is an 'iconoclastic'

69. Scott C. Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunnī Islam: The Legacy of the Generation of Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Maʿīn, and Ibn Ḥanbal* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 221-85. Cf. Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic*, 101-6 and W. Madelung, "al-Haytham b. ʿAdī on the offences of the caliph ʿUthmān," in *Centre and Periphery within the Borders of Islam: Proceedings of the 23rd Congress of l'Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisantes*, ed. G. Contu (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 47-51.

70. Christopher Melchert, "The Life and Works of al-Nasāʾī," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 59 (2014): 403-5.

71. S. C. Lucas, "al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī and the Companions of the Prophet: An Original Sunnī Voice in the Shīʿī Century," in *The Heritage of Arabo Islamic Learning: Studies Presented to Wadad Kadi*, eds. Maurice Pomerantz and Aram Shahin (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 258-71.

one that sails against the prevailing winds the emerging Sunni historiography;[72] certainly his Shiʿite perspective factors into this iconoclastic perspective. Hence, to lose sight of the extent to which al-Yaʿqūbī filled his chronicle with narratives crafted to resonate with the vision of the early Islamic community cultivated by the Shiʿa causes modern readers to lose sight of how he navigated this sea of historical memory. Losing sight of al-Yaʿqūbī's Shiʿi perspective blinds us to his authorial vision and, therefore, a key contribution of his chronicle to Islamic historiography.

72. *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 36, 132-33.

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