

# Was Muṭarrif b. al-Mughīra al-Thaqafī a Khārijite? Rebellion in the Early Marwānid Period\*

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## Abstract

*This article reassesses the “Khārijite” rebellion of Muṭarrif b. al-Mughīra b. Shu‘ba al-Thaqafī in 77/696–97 and recontextualizes it within a different “category” of revolt. Analyzing both the history and the historiography of this uprising, the article argues that Muṭarrif’s rebellion is best understood not within a Khārijite framework, but rather as part of a series of revolts carried out by other Iraqi tribal notables (ashrāf) in the same period. This reevaluation is based, for example, on the composition of Muṭarrif’s following, which shows clear connections with other important Iraqi/eastern leaders, such as Muṣ‘ab b. al-Zubayr, Ibn al-Ash‘ath, and Yazīd b. al-Muhallab. These connections, observable in other structural patterns common to Marwānid-era rebellions as well, point to a similarity of grievances, reactions, and aims whose salience far exceeded the context of individual revolts. More broadly, this article also seeks to challenge the received scholarly understanding of Khārijism and to question its usefulness as a category of historical analysis, suggesting instead different approaches to a renewed engagement with this phenomenon.*

The Khārijites (Ar. *al-khawārij*) are perhaps the most notorious rebels and heretics in early Islamic history. Their origin is traced back to the first civil war (*fiṭna*) of the Muslim community in 35–40/656–61, in the course of which they denounced the main parties to the conflict as unbelievers and dissociated from them both spiritually and physically.

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Their history is difficult to reconstruct because the extant source material is late and fragmentary, a problem for early Islamic history in general that is exacerbated here by the lack of surviving Khārijite works. Excepting perhaps some poetry and a few speeches (questions of authenticity and attribution remain thorny), what we know about them is largely dependent on hostile outside sources, which has had a lasting effect on their image in the Islamic tradition and modern scholarship alike.<sup>1</sup>

What, then, makes a Khārijite a Khārijite? At first glance, the defining characteristics of Khārijism seem evident: excessive piety, based on a strict understanding of the letter of the law; the willingness to use equally excessive violence against opponents; and, as a result, an unfortunate penchant for considering those who did not share their views unbelievers whose blood was licit to shed. Remaining true to God's will meant a constant battle against these unbelievers, and so Khārijite doctrine, as presented in the (mainly Sunnī) Islamic tradition and reproduced in modern scholarship, posed a serious threat to the social and political fabric of empire because of its inherent rebellious potential, even if historical Khārijism in its militant form largely did not survive the eighth century CE.

The resulting stock image of the Khārijite as a violent fanatic motivated by excessive devotion to a godly life has dehistoricized the treatment of Khārijite rebellions. At a closer look, this particular "category" of rebellion appears to serve as a container term for very different phenomena whose connections are often dubious; it frequently tells us little about why a particular revolt has been labeled "Khārijite." In fact, we may have to question the category altogether: not only is there little coherence among the many different Khārijite rebellions of the seventh to ninth centuries CE, but the core of what Khārijism is supposed to be about is also diffuse at best. The lowest common denominator appears to have been the rejection of both 'Uthmān and 'Alī, the Prophet's third and fourth "rightly guided" successors, as well as the rejection of claims to exclusive rights to the caliphate by Quraysh, the Prophet's tribe. Coupled with this was a pronounced puritanism that centered an ethos of militant piety and rigid standards for personal piety, especially concerning the leaders of Khārijite factions. But these criteria—including rejection of the notion that the caliphate should be restricted to Quraysh—were not unique to the Khawārij. Moreover, there is a distinct tribal element to such revolts in the Umayyad era, at least, that raises doubts as to the purely religious motivations of these rebels, and there are enough instances of "Khārijite" insurgents not fitting the mold that we should reassess the phenomenon entirely: closer scrutiny might lead us to view these rebels in a different and perhaps more easily explainable light.<sup>2</sup>

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1. For an introduction to the history of and scholarship on the Khārijites, see H.-L. Hagemann and P. Verkinderen, "Kharijism in the Umayyad Period," in *The Umayyad World*, ed. Andrew Marsham, 489–517 (London: Routledge, 2020). For the source issues more specifically, see *ibid.*, 490–93, and H.-L. Hagemann, *The Khārijites in Early Islamic Historical Tradition: Heroes and Villains* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 6–8 and the notes thereto.

2. For a problematization of this issue, see A. Gaiser, "Tradition, Text and Taxonomy at the Origins of the Ibādī Movement: A Study in Critical Approaches to Early Ibādism," paper presented at the tenth Conference on Ibadi Studies, Toronto, June 16–19, 2019 (I am very grateful to the author for making his draft paper available to me); Hagemann and Verkinderen, "Kharijism," 493–97, 501–2.

A good example, and the case study of this paper, is the rebellion of Muṭarrif b. al-Mughīra b. Shu‘ba al-Thaqafī. Muṭarrif was governor of al-Madā’in<sup>3</sup> at the time of his uprising in the mid-690s CE and a well-established member of the Muslim elite. His entanglement with the Khārijite leader Shabīb b. Yazīd al-Shaybānī is a curious episode that is often absent from accounts of Shabīb’s adventures. Muṭarrif has frequently been depicted as a Khārijite, or at least as allied to Shabīb’s Khawārij, but as we shall see, the case is rather more complicated. The most detailed account of his revolt is found in al-Ṭabarī’s (d. 310/923) *Ta’rīkh*, which will serve as the main narrative template here, although it is not the earliest. Other fairly comprehensive portrayals are preserved by al-Balādhurī (d. ca. 279/892; the earliest extant depiction of this revolt),<sup>4</sup> Miskawayh (d. ca. 421/1030), Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201), Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233), Šibt b. al-Jawzī (d. 654/1256), and al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333).

This article aims to remedy the current lack of a thorough study of Muṭarrif and his rebellion. The first section will summarize the revolt as presented by al-Ṭabarī and survey the information available on Muṭarrif in the Islamic (historical) tradition more broadly. The second section will analyze the background of Muṭarrif’s rebellion and discuss the interpretations offered in previous scholarship. I will argue for a rereading of his rebellion as belonging to a different “category” of revolt, highlighting notable connections with important other uprisings in the process. Section 3 is historiographical and will look at how the sources approach Muṭarrif and in what ways they differ in their depictions of his revolt. The article will conclude with some suggestions as to how future scholarship might usefully approach the study of rebellions labeled “Khārijite” specifically and the issue of revolt in the early Islamic period more generally.

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3. Al-Madā’in is the Arab-Muslim name for the former Sasanian capital Ctesiphon, a metropolis comprising several cities (whence al-Madā’in, “the cities”), located on the Tigris approximately 35 kilometers southeast of modern Baghdad. In the early Islamic period, it was part of the conquered territory administered from Kūfa.

4. Al-Zubayr b. Bakkār’s (d. 256/870) *al-Akhhbār al-Muwaffaqiyyāt* appears to be the earliest work to mention Muṭarrif, but it does not recount his revolt; see Ibn Bakkār, *al-Akhhbār al-Muwaffaqiyyāt*, ed. Sāmī Makkī al-‘Ānī, 2nd ed. (Beirut: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1996), 462. Ibn Sa‘d (d. 230/845) only names four other sons of al-Mughīra, two of whom (‘Urwa and Ḥamza) are rather well known and in Ḥamza’s case connected with Muṭarrif’s revolt; Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad ‘Umar (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 2001), 8:387–88. The information he provides on them is scarce, however. ‘Urwa is mentioned as governor of Kūfa, transmitter from his father and “the best of his family” (*kāna khayra ahli dhālik al-bayt*). The others warrant only a one-liner each, stating that they transmitted from their father. Likewise, Khalīfa b. Khayyāt’s (d. 240/854) *Ta’rīkh*, ed. Akram Ḍiyā’ al-‘Umarī, 2nd ed. (Riyadh: Dār Ṭayba, 1985), does not mention Muṭarrif but talks about ‘Urwa as governor of Kūfa on three different occasions over a very wide date range that might indicate somewhat jumbled information: once in the year 50/670 (during Mu‘āwiya’s reign) as successor of his father upon the latter’s death (p. 210), once in 75/694–95 under ‘Abd al-Malik (p. 294), and once in 95/713–14 under al-Walīd (p. 310). Alternatives are given in the first two cases, with Ziyād b. Abīhi the broadly agreed-upon successor of ‘Urwa’s father, al-Mughīra. The appointment of 75/694–95 is the most supported by the sources overall, although a report in al-Balādhurī’s *Ansāb* mentions ‘Urwa’s governorship of Kūfa before Ziyād’s appointment; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashraf*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār and Riyāḍ Zirīklī (Beirut: Dār al-Fīkr, 1996), 13:351. No further information is given on ‘Urwa in Khalīfa’s *Ta’rīkh*. His *Ṭabaqāt* does not mention Muṭarrif either and gives no information on the brothers apart from ‘Urwa and Ḥamza’s parentage; Ibn Khayyāt, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt*, ed. Akram Ḍiyā’ al-‘Umarī (Baghdad: Maṭba‘at al-‘Ānī, 1967), 155.

### The Rebellion of Muṭarrif b. al-Mughīra (77/696–97) According to al-Ṭabarī<sup>5</sup>

Muṭarrif is first mentioned in the context of Shabīb's Khārijite rebellion in the mid-690s CE, during which time the governor of Iraq (then based at Kūfa), al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf (d. 95/714), appointed Muṭarrif as governor of al-Madā'in. When Muṭarrif learned that Shabīb was approaching the city, he wrote to al-Ḥajjāj to ask for reinforcements.<sup>6</sup> At some point after the arrival of the reinforcements, Shabīb crossed the Tigris and reached Bahurasīr (western al-Madā'in), whereupon Muṭarrif cut the remaining bridge between them. So far, so good. But then the story takes an unexpected turn: Muṭarrif asked Shabīb to send over some of his companions so that they could study the Qur'ān together and debate Shabīb's agenda. Shabīb agreed to this, hostages were exchanged, and four days of discussion followed.<sup>7</sup> Al-Ṭabarī preserves two versions of this debate. The first occurs in a short section on Muṭarrif that is not part of al-Ṭabarī's main account of the rebellion and consists of the brief statement that Muṭarrif and Shabīb did not agree on anything.<sup>8</sup> The second version of the debate is placed within the main account of Muṭarrif's revolt; it is much more detailed and tells a somewhat different story, as the following will show.<sup>9</sup> Notably, both reports are narrated on the authority of Abū Mikhnaf.

According to the main account, Muṭarrif received Shabīb's envoys and inquired about their beliefs and demands. He was told the following: "We call to the Book of God and the *sunna* of his Prophet. We object to the expropriation of the spoils, the failure to apply the *ḥudūd*, and rule through oppression."<sup>10</sup> Muṭarrif agreed wholeheartedly with these (rather general) statements, but an alliance between him and the Khārijites ultimately failed because they could not agree on the criteria and mode of election of the caliph. The Khawārij insisted that leadership should be held by the most virtuous of men, regardless of his ancestry. Muṭarrif, however, advocated for a *shūrā* (a "consultative council") like that convened by Muḥammad's second successor, 'Umar I (d. 23/644), on his deathbed in order to choose the new ruler; this *shūrā*, Muṭarrif said, should be restricted to Quraysh. He argued that opposition to al-Ḥajjāj and the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik would garner

5. The main version of the report on Muṭarrif's revolt covers about twenty pages in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. Michael Jan de Goeje et al., 3 parts in 16 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1879–1901), 2:979–1003. A brief account of Muṭarrif's engagement with Shabīb is also found earlier in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 2:946–48. This brief earlier report mentions the reasoning behind Muṭarrif's decision to revolt (fear of al-Ḥajjāj) but does not go into detail regarding the rebellion itself, as the main focus of the account is on Shabīb.

6. One of the commanders sent by al-Ḥajjāj as backup was Sabra b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Mikhnaf, whose father had died in battle against the Azāriqa (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 2:855–56). Sabra was a second cousin of Abū Mikhnaf, al-Ṭabarī's source for the Muṭarrif account.

7. A similar pattern is apparent in the rebellion of al-Ḥārith b. Surayj, discussed in this issue by Reza Huseini. Al-Ḥārith arrested the delegation that had been sent to him after their debate, and he himself was the rebel (unlike Muṭarrif at this stage), but it is worth noting that debate between the opposing parties seems to have been part of the conflict resolution toolkit employed in this period. My thanks to Reza for pointing out this commonality.

8. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 2:947.

9. Ibid., 2:983–87.

10. Ibid., 2:984.

more support if the people knew that the rebels sought to have the Arabs elect *al-riḍā min Quraysh* ('the approved one from Quraysh').<sup>11</sup>

The Khārijite envoys, for their part, were appalled at this suggestion of a policy change and left Muṭarrif. Shabīb tried to convince him that Quraysh did not have a better claim to rule than anyone else did, but Muṭarrif continued to assert election by *shūrā* and membership of Quraysh as the only legitimate criteria. The negotiations with Shabīb eventually failed,<sup>12</sup> but having been inspired by the insurgents, Muṭarrif now felt that he could no longer fake obedience to the Umayyads, "these oppressors."<sup>13</sup> This decision is interjected quite abruptly in the story—so far, there has been no indication that Muṭarrif was dissatisfied with al-Ḥajjāj or ʿAbd al-Malik. Other sources have Muṭarrif transmit an account in which he accompanies his father, al-Mughīra, to the court of Muʿāwiya and which shows al-Mughīra to have an ambiguous, if not outright negative, opinion of the caliph.<sup>14</sup> But this particular report is not included by al-Ṭabarī, and there is no clear explanation for Muṭarrif's sudden dissatisfaction with ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Ḥajjāj in the account of his revolt, either.

It should be noted, however, that al-Ṭabarī's narrative does propose a further trigger for Muṭarrif's revolt: even though no alliance was forged between him and Shabīb, Muṭarrif feared very strongly that al-Ḥajjāj would nonetheless punish him for debating with the Khārijites. He therefore called his confidants (*ahl thiqātihi wa-ahl naṣā'ihihi*) and informed them of his plan to rebel independently in anticipation of al-Ḥajjāj's reaction. They, too, were afraid of al-Ḥajjāj and so advised Muṭarrif to leave al-Madā'in. He gathered his men and went to al-Daskara, northeast of al-Madā'in, where he finally revealed to them his intentions. The two commanders whom al-Ḥajjāj had sent along with some troops to help Muṭarrif fight Shabīb pretended to agree with him, but they left in secret and brought al-Ḥajjāj news of Muṭarrif's uprising.<sup>15</sup>

These two explanations are not mutually exclusive, but it is possible that they reflect originally separate narratives; the first has Muṭarrif in a proactive role, whereas he appears timid and on the defensive in the second. What the accounts of Muṭarrif's rebellion do not state explicitly but what certainly also played a role in kicking off the revolt was timing. The year 77/696–97 saw plenty of upheaval, with the uprising of Shabīb in Iraq and the continuous insurgency of the Azāriqa in Iran, which had been going strong for about a decade at that point; there had also been at least one other serious Iraqi revolt shortly before the outbreak of Muṭarrif's rebellion.<sup>16</sup> This was a period of unrest, and al-Ḥajjāj's attention was split between several different conflicts, meaning that Muṭarrif chose a good moment to break with the Umayyads.

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11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 2:985–86.

13. Ibid., 2:987.

14. Ibn Bakkār, *Akhhbār*, 462; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wa-maʿādin al-jawhar*, ed. Charles Pellat (Beirut: al-Jāmiʿa al-Lubnāniyya, 1966–79), 4:338–39.

15. Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:986–89.

16. See below.

From al-Daskara, Muṭarrif set out for al-Jibāl in western Iran and collected supporters along the way. He first reached Ḥulwān; al-Ḥajjāj's governor in the city (Suwayd b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sa'dī) was unwilling to fight Muṭarrif but feared al-Ḥajjāj's wrath and so engaged Muṭarrif half-heartedly until they came to an agreement that had Muṭarrif move on.<sup>17</sup> Muṭarrif fought and killed some Kurds, then made his way to Hamadhān but deliberately avoided entering the territory because the governor was his brother Ḥamza, whom he tried to protect from al-Ḥajjāj's anger. However, he petitioned his brother for supplies, which he received, although Ḥamza was utterly dismayed at his brother's antics.<sup>18</sup> With good reason, it turns out: when al-Ḥajjāj was informed of Ḥamza's support, he ordered Ḥamza's own *shurṭa* ('police or security force') chief to arrest him,<sup>19</sup> and Ḥamza may have died in prison.<sup>20</sup>

Having moved on from the region of Hamadhān, Muṭarrif finally reached Qum and Qāshān, which were considered safe from al-Ḥajjāj's reach.<sup>21</sup> From there, Muṭarrif sent letters to al-Rayy to gather support for his cause, described as opposition to injustice and implementation of properly Islamic rule, and a significant number of men joined him. He also sent out his own agents (*'ummāl*) to collect taxes.<sup>22</sup> The resistance he encountered up to this point was limited, presumably because al-Ḥajjāj was busy with Shabīb and a large portion of the army under the general al-Muhallab was engaged in combating the Azraqī Khārijites led by Qaṭarī b. al-Fujā'a. The lack of local resistance may have been due to the fact that the region was at that time still predominantly non-Muslim; to the Zoroastrian and Christian inhabitants of the area, it probably did not matter who collected the taxes. The accounts of Muṭarrif's activities in this region are almost entirely focused on

17. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 2:989–91.

18. *Ibid.*, 2:991–92.

19. *Ibid.*, 2:994–95.

20. As stated explicitly in al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 7:401. The other sources do not mention this, however, and at least one report has Ḥamza reappear in the rebellion of Ibn al-Ash'ath. See below.

21. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 2:992; Šibt b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, ed. Kāmil Salmān al-Jubūrī et al. (Beirut: al-Risāla al-Ālamiyya, 2013), 9:224. The region of Qum, in particular, was a popular refuge for rebels and discontented subjects, not least because of its geography: it was a mountainous region, and it was very difficult to retrieve someone who did not want to be found once that person had reached Qum's salt desert. For instance, the Banū Ash'ar, supporters of the rebellion of Ibn al-Ash'ath, fled to Qum after the revolt's failure to escape al-Ḥajjāj's wrath and ultimately settled there with the support of the local Zoroastrian community. See al-Ash'arī al-Qummī, *Tārikh-i Qum*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Ṭīhrānī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Tūs, 1982), 242, 245–46, 258–60, 262–65. J. Calmard's entry "Qum," in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman et al. (Leiden: Brill Online), relates al-Ḥajjāj's persecution of the Banū Ash'ar to their Shī'ī sympathies; the *Tārikh-i Qum* mentions their support for an 'Alid revolt as well (p. 242), but the account is seriously confused (the dating does not work out: the revolt it refers to is that of Zayd b. 'Alī [d. 122/740], who rebelled long after al-Ḥajjāj's death in 95/714). Later on, however, the *Tārikh-i Qum* itself states specifically that the reason for al-Ḥajjāj's enmity was the tribe's support of Ibn al-Ash'ath and that this explanation is to be preferred (p. 264); indeed, it fits the context and timing far better. The work mentions further rebels and people who had fallen foul of the authorities fleeing to Qum, such as Sa'd b. Jubayr (p. 38) and troops scattered after a battle between al-Muhallab and Qaṭarī (although Qaṭarī's men are here confused with al-Muhallab's soldiers; pp. 66–67). Against this background, it is all the more striking that the work does not mention Muṭarrif's uprising. I owe my insight into the *Tārikh-i Qum* to Reza Huseini.

22. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 2:992–94.

his interactions with his supporters and the government armies sent against him, making it difficult to piece together an accurate picture of the situation on the ground. The end, however, came when the governor of Iṣfahān eventually asked al-Ḥajjāj to send a much larger army against Muṭarrif's troops because of growing support for him. Following a long and fierce final battle, Muṭarrif was killed and his supporters scattered.

In the aftermath of the rebellion, various tribal groups tried—often successfully—to intercede (*shafaʿa*) for those of their people who had participated in the revolt, while some other survivors enjoyed the support of highly placed individuals and so were given safe-conducts.<sup>23</sup> These negotiations involved the governors of al-Rayy and Iṣfahān, who had led the battle against Muṭarrif, although in one case al-Ḥajjāj appears to have given instructions regarding one of the surviving rebels that meant his request for a safe-conduct was denied; the request was eventually approved when a new governor of al-Rayy was appointed.<sup>24</sup> These reports indicate that the treatment of rebels was generally within the purview of local governors rather than determined exclusively by the superordinate governor al-Ḥajjāj.

### What Do We Know about Muṭarrif?

Apart from Muṭarrif's rebellion, which the pre-eleventh-century CE works that mention him often do not address,<sup>25</sup> he remains a largely obscure figure. He does not appear to have left behind any offspring,<sup>26</sup> and little else is known about his personal life.<sup>27</sup> Muṭarrif's family belonged to Thaqif and was among the tribal notables of Kūfa; his father, al-Mughīra, had been Muʿāwiya's governor of the city and was renowned for his fairness. Al-Mughīra's sons are likewise described as noble and righteous people.<sup>28</sup> The family was of the same tribe as al-Ḥajjāj himself, and its Umayyad sympathies were well known.<sup>29</sup> When al-Ḥajjāj came to Kūfa to take up his governorship, he gave Muṭarrif and his brothers important positions

23. Ibid., 2:994–1003; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-taʾrīkh*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1997), 3:467; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 7:403.

24. Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:1001–2.

25. Al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī are the only pre-eleventh-century CE authors to discuss his rebellion. Sources that mention Muṭarrif but say nothing about his revolt include Ibn Bakkār, *Akḥbār*; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Ishrāf fī manāzil al-ashrāf*, ed. Najam ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khalaf (Riyādh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1990); and al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*. Among the later sources, Miskawayh and Ibn Kathīr are exceptions in passing over Muṭarrif's revolt entirely; in Miskawayh's case, the omission is due to his particular take on Muṭarrif's dealings with Shabīb, for which see below. Ibn ʿIdhārī gives only one line to this rebellion in *Kitāb al-Bayān al-mughrib fī akḥbār al-Andalus wa-l-Maghrib*, ed. Évariste Lévi-Provencal and Georges S. Colin, 3rd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1983), 1:34, which is probably due to his geographical focus (North Africa). The other works considered here that postdate the tenth century CE and address Muṭarrif give fairly detailed accounts of his uprising.

26. Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 13:352.

27. For the potential issue of his paternity, see below.

28. Wellhausen's pejorative remark that Muṭarrif did not resemble his father much (presumably referring here to al-Mughīra's qualities such as loyalty, shrewdness, integrity, and strength of character) is not supported by the sources. J. Wellhausen, *Die religiös-politischen Oppositionsparteien im alten Islam* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1901), 45.

29. See, e.g., M. A. Shaban, *Islamic History: A New Interpretation*, vol. 1, *A.D. 600–750 (A.H. 132)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 108: al-Mughīra's "loyalty to the Umayyads was almost exemplary."

precisely because of these factors. Muṭarrif was appointed governor over al-Madā'in, his brother ʿUrwa governor over Kūfa<sup>30</sup> and thus al-Ḥajjāj's steward, and his brother Ḥamza governor over Hamadhān.<sup>31</sup> Muṭarrif, in particular, is said to have been highly esteemed by al-Ḥajjāj<sup>32</sup> and his credentials were excellent, as acknowledged by the inhabitants of al-Madā'in among many others.<sup>33</sup> All three brothers are said to have done an exemplary job; by all accounts, this was a family whose support of the Umayyads had paid off.<sup>34</sup>

If we investigate Muṭarrif's family further, however, some fissures are revealed. Al-Mughīra was not quite as exemplary in his loyalty to the Umayyads as is sometimes stated. Several reports record his critical stance on Muʿāwiya and the Umayyad regime more generally. As mentioned, one such occasion is narrated on the authority of Muṭarrif himself; the report appears already in the earliest source we have for Muṭarrif (Ibn Bakkār's *al-Akḥbār al-Muwaffaqiyāt*), and the incident is listed by al-Masʿūdī as one factor that led to al-Maʾmūn's decision to have Muʿāwiya cursed from the pulpit.<sup>35</sup>

The evidence for Muṭarrif's brothers is mixed as well. They clearly enjoyed al-Ḥajjāj's favor, at least for a while, and ʿAbd al-Malik reportedly had a high opinion of ʿUrwa b. al-Mughīra, in particular.<sup>36</sup> But we also have a number of accounts that illustrate the brothers' contentious relationship with the Umayyads generally and with al-Ḥajjāj specifically.

ʿUrwa b. al-Mughīra, for instance, is mentioned among the companions of Muṣʿab b. al-Zubayr, who from the mid-680s CE served as governor of Iraq for his brother ʿAbd Allāh (Ibn al-Zubayr; d. 72/692), a caliphal contender and a rival of the Umayyads. ʿUrwa apparently accompanied Muṣʿab into the final Zubayrid battle against ʿAbd al-Malik in Iraq, at Maskin in 71/690–91, which saw the end of Muṣʿab.<sup>37</sup> This does not fit all that well with the image of a pro-Umayyad family. The most damning evidence, however, is an account of al-Ḥajjāj beating ʿUrwa to death for his perceived disloyalty. ʿAbd al-Malik had apparently written to ʿUrwa and another man to inquire about al-Ḥajjāj's conduct as a governor. The other man showed al-Ḥajjāj the letter and let him dictate the reply. ʿUrwa, by contrast, replied honestly, and his depiction of al-Ḥajjāj was less than flattering. ʿAbd al-Malik thereupon sent ʿUrwa's letter to al-Ḥajjāj, who retaliated by whipping ʿUrwa until he died.<sup>38</sup>

30. There is some confusion over when, exactly, ʿUrwa served as governor of the city. See n. 4 above.

31. Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 13:351 has Ḥamza appointed over the *ṣadaqa* of Kūfa and its environs at some point during al-Ḥajjāj's tenure, but this is a rare variant and of course does not contradict the reports of his governorship of Hamadhān.

32. Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *Ishrāf*, 245.

33. Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:979–81.

34. E.g., al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 7:397; al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:873, 916, 979–81; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī taʾrīkh al-umam wa-l-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā and Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1992), 6:192–93; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 3:465; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Giza: Dār Hajr, 1997–99), 12:279, 411; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mirʾāt*, 9:222.

35. Ibn Bakkār, *Akḥbār*, 462; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, 4:338–39. Al-Masʿūdī explicitly references al-Zubayr b. Bakkār's report in his own rendering. For other reports of al-Mughīra's ambivalence regarding the Umayyads, see, e.g., al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:38–39.

36. Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 7:397, 404.

37. Ibn Bakkār, *Akḥbār*, 439; al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:804.

38. Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 7:397, 404; 13:351.



It goes without saying that such stories need to be approached with caution. The account of ‘Urwa’s killing, in particular, is full of literary motifs and odd plot lines (e.g., why would ‘Abd al-Malik send ‘Urwa’s letter to al-Ḥajjāj in view of its contents and the fact that he supposedly held ‘Urwa in high esteem?). This is not unexpected, of course, but makes it difficult to weigh the historicity of the account. Another report simply has al-Ḥajjāj replace ‘Urwa as governor of Kūfa the year after the failure of Muṭarrif’s revolt (78/697–98),<sup>39</sup> although it is possible that the whipping episode happened later; as it appears to be unique to al-Balādhurī, who does not give a date, it is impossible to tell. According to a late source, Ibn Kathīr’s *Bidāya*, ‘Urwa died in Kūfa in 87/706–7 (after the death of ‘Abd al-Malik), but the source says nothing about any kind of conflict between ‘Urwa and al-Ḥajjāj.<sup>40</sup> Yet another account has ‘Urwa still alive in 95/713–14 and serving as governor of Kūfa.<sup>41</sup>

There is less explicit information about Muṭarrif’s brother Ḥamza b. al-Mughīra if we leave aside his material support for Muṭarrif’s rebellion, which may have been due to brotherly sentiment rather than enthusiasm for the endeavor.<sup>42</sup> Like Muṭarrif, he is portrayed as being afraid of al-Ḥajjāj’s notorious temper, which indicates at least some wariness toward ‘Abd al-Malik’s viceroy.<sup>43</sup> Other reports depict al-Ḥajjāj as suspicious of Ḥamza’s loyalties following his appointment as governor.<sup>44</sup> Long before Muṭarrif’s rebellion, Ḥamza also reportedly counseled his maternal uncle ‘Umar b. Sa’d b. Abī Waqqās against obeying ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād’s order to march against al-Ḥusayn, impressing upon him that losing all earthly riches and authority (‘Umar had just been appointed governor by ‘Ubayd Allāh) was preferable to meeting his maker with the blood of the Prophet’s grandson on his hands.<sup>45</sup> As is well known, Ḥamza’s pleas ultimately went unheeded.

It is possible that al-Ḥajjāj was well aware of the family’s spotty history with the Umayyads and sought to neutralize the threat by co-opting the brothers into the system of rule established after ‘Abd al-Malik’s victory over Ibn al-Zubayr. The fact that they belonged to his own tribe may have been a deciding factor. But as we have seen, this strategy did not pan out; even if we assume that al-Balādhurī’s account of ‘Urwa being beaten to death is fictional, Muṭarrif and Ḥamza eventually turned against al-Ḥajjāj. Why?

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39. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, 6:199.

40. Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 12:411. This is the earliest source I have come across that gives a concrete death date for ‘Urwa.

41. Ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta’rīkh*, 310.

42. As seen earlier, Ḥamza was in fact deeply distressed about Muṭarrif’s rebellion as he foresaw its bitter end. See the references in the following note.

43. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:991–92; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, 6:192–93; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 3:467, repeated in al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-‘Arab fi funūn al-adab* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub wa-l-Wathā’iq al-Qawmiyya, 1423 [2002–3]), 21:195.

44. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:995; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 3:467 (repeated in al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 21:195).

45. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:308–9.

### The Background to Muṭarrif's Rebellion

As noted, little research has been conducted on Muṭarrif's uprising. Some older works of scholarship mention the revolt but do not analyze it in detail.<sup>46</sup> Shaban and Crone address it, but again only superficially.<sup>47</sup> More recent overviews of Umayyad or early Islamic history, such as those by Hawting and Kennedy,<sup>48</sup> leave it out entirely.

Views on Muṭarrif's intentions and thus the nature of his rebellion diverge somewhat, which is not surprising given the portrayal of his rebellion in the sources,<sup>49</sup> but most studies place him in the context of Khārijism, with emphasis on his "piety" a close second. Many consider him a straightforward Khārijite, or at least an ally and sympathizer.<sup>50</sup> Some contend that Muṭarrif and Shabīb shared certain views about the illegitimacy of ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Ḥajjāj, but they do not explicitly call Muṭarrif himself a Khārijite, although they grant that he may have been motivated by piety (as is also often assumed for the Khawārij).<sup>51</sup> Wellhausen argued that Muṭarrif may have had strong Khārijite inclinations ("starke charigitische Anwandlungen") but did not act on them because he refused to be subordinate to Shabīb. As he did not want to fight Shabīb, either, he withdrew from al-Madā'in.<sup>52</sup> Van Vloten is a notable exception in that his very brief reference to Muṭarrif's revolt does not mention the Khārijites at all; he describes the rebellion as an attempt to establish just government, the reformatory drive of which was later taken up by the Umayyad caliph ʿUmar II, another figure with a reputation for great piety.<sup>53</sup>

46. ʿA. Dixon, in *The Umayyad Caliphate 65–86/684–705: A Political Study* (London: Luzac, 1971), 194, gives a brief overview of scholarly opinions on Muṭarrif, but he appears to have misunderstood two of the three views he summarizes, those of Weil and Van Vloten. Weil did not in fact consider Muṭarrif a follower of Shabīb (see n. 51 below); Dixon used the English translation (which I have not seen) of Weil's originally German work, so perhaps Weil's statements were mistranslated? On Van Vloten, see below.

47. See below.

48. G. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam: The Umayyad Caliphate AD 661–750* (London: Croom Helm, 1986); H. Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 2nd ed. (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2004).

49. On this, see the following section.

50. See, e.g., A. Dietrich, "Al-Ḥadjjād b. Yūsuf," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. (Muṭarrif does not have his own entry in the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; hopefully one is forthcoming in the third edition); J. Givony, "The Murji'a and the Theological School of Abū Ḥanīfa: A Historical and Ideological Study" (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1977), 53, 65; B. Spuler, *Iran in the Early Islamic Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 20; P. Crone, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 8, 133; D. Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam: The Genesis of a Military System* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), 122.

51. G. Weil, *Geschichte der Chalifen*, vol. 1 (Mannheim: Friedrich Bassermann, 1846), 442–43; Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 194–95 (on p. 191, however, Dixon also states that Muṭarrif's revolt was "associated with the Khārijites," and he includes Muṭarrif in the chapter on Khārijite revolts); P. Crone and M. Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 60–61.

52. Wellhausen, *Oppositionsparteien*, 45. Wellhausen says nothing more about Muṭarrif and does not address his rebellion, either. His *Das arabische Reich* does not mention Muṭarrif at all.

53. G. Van Vloten, *Recherches sur la domination arabe, le chiitisme et les croyances messianiques sous le khalifat des Omayyades* (Amsterdam: Johannes Müller, 1894), 26–27.

The explanation that turns on Muṭarrif's supposed piety is problematic for a number of reasons. Piety is not, per se, a reason for rebellion: plenty of other pious people did not turn to rebellion, after all, and the question of the legitimacy of armed resistance against an unjust ruler was hotly debated in scholarly circles.<sup>54</sup> More importantly, however, this particular explanation tends to reflect the widespread image of the Umayyads as impious and unjust. Recent scholarship has called this depiction into question and shown that the Umayyads in fact enjoyed the support of many scholars renowned for their piety,<sup>55</sup> so "pious opposition" to the Umayyads is not self-explanatory. And finally, although Muṭarrif is portrayed as a just and honorable man, he is in fact not depicted as exceptionally pious.

Muṭarrif's association with Khārijism as it is commonly conceived in both sources and scholarship is questionable as well. Although he is shown to agree with Shabīb's envoys on a number of points, these are rather general and phrased so as to be acceptable to almost anyone. Who would object to opposing tyranny or approve of the expropriation of spoils? In insisting on *shūrā* and Qurashī prerogative, Muṭarrif also diverges sharply from Khārijite doctrine as presented in the sources. True, the language of Muṭarrif's letters and speeches is indeed "Khārijite" in its focus on *jihād* against oppressors, as demonstrated in this missive to the people of al-Rayy: "We summon you to the Book of God and the *sunnah* of His Prophet, and to *jihād* against him who has obstinately rejected the truth, expropriated the spoils, and abandoned the judgment of the Book... And no one can obtain God's good pleasure except by adhering steadfastly to God's command and waging *jihād* against God's enemies."<sup>56</sup>

But Muṭarrif never proclaims the Khārijite *lā ḥukma illā li-llāh*, 'judgment is God's alone', and the foci of his discontent are very clearly al-Ḥajjāj and (to a smaller degree) 'Abd al-Malik, not his fellow Muslims. Not a word is said about his declaring them unbelievers. Indeed, before his final battle with the Syrian troops, when Muṭarrif addresses them in hopes of winning them over, he calls them "people of our *qibla*, people of our religion, people of our *da'wa*,"<sup>57</sup> and earlier, when he had declared his intention to rebel in front of his men, he had told those who disagreed with him to simply go on their way.<sup>58</sup> We hear nothing about his waylaying ordinary people to interrogate them on their religio-political beliefs or about acts of extreme piety; there are no exhortative poems declaring his contempt for the material world, no condemnations of 'Alī or Mu'āwiya or the arbitration at Ṣiffin, no references to any Khārijite forebears, no secession from a sinful *umma*—in short, none of the behaviors or beliefs associated with Khārijism are readily observable in Muṭarrif's rebellion. That later sources, in particular, nonetheless consider him a Khārijite may have to do with an increasingly generalized and stereotyped

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54. See, e.g., B. Lewis, "On the Quietist and Activist Traditions in Islamic Political Writing," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 49, no. 1 (1986): 141–47; K. Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence in Islamic Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

55. See, e.g., S. Judd, *Religious Scholars and the Umayyads: Piety-Minded Supporters of the Marwānid Caliphate* (London: Routledge, 2014).

56. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 2:993; translation by E. K. Rowson, *The Marwānid Restoration*, vol. 22 of *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, ed. E. Yarshater (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 140.

57. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 2:998.

58. *Ibid.*, 2:988–89.

understanding of Khārijism, reflected, for instance, in the definition of the twelfth-century CE scholar al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), who held that anyone who rebels against a rightful leader at any point in time is a Khārijite.<sup>59</sup> Muṭarrif's brief association with Shabīb surely did not help his image, either.

A more promising angle for understanding the background to Muṭarrif's revolt is suggested in Shaban's work. He argues that Muṭarrif, like many other Iraqis, was opposed to the Umayyad policy of stationing Syrians in Iraq and to the increasing concentration of authority in the office and person of the caliph. In Shaban's view, Muṭarrif's rebellion pursued the explicit aim of reinstalling the Medinan regime that had granted the provinces far-reaching autonomy.<sup>60</sup> The problem is that Shaban's interpretation is not all that clearly supported by the passages from al-Ṭabarī he cites,<sup>61</sup> and none of the other sources considered here support it either. Shaban himself states a little later that the establishment of a permanent Syrian garrison in Iraq happened in *reaction* to Muṭarrif and other Iraqi revolts;<sup>62</sup> indeed, the first Syrian troops to be used in Iraq were not an established garrison but a strike force against Shabīb, which was deployed in the year of Muṭarrif's rebellion.<sup>63</sup> Likewise, he shows that the “increasingly powerful office of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*” is a development that stands at the end of 'Abd al-Malik's reign rather than marking the immediate post-*fitna* years.<sup>64</sup> Shaban's claim that Muṭarrif and Shabīb had nothing in common<sup>65</sup> is bold at first sight; rhetorically, Muṭarrif closely resembles Shabīb and other Khārijites apart from his insistence on a *shūrā* to elect a Qurashī caliph. This rhetoric reflects narrative standardization, however, in that the issues raised—the call to the Book of God and the *sunna*, resistance to the expropriation of the spoils and unjust rule, a focus on *jihād*—are repeated over and over again by scores of Khārijite and other rebels of the early Islamic period.<sup>66</sup> If we understand such statements as opposition to centralized rule and to a Syrian presence in Iraq, we need to explain why rebels long before and long after the reforms of 'Abd al-Malik took effect expressed themselves in exactly the same language (or are said to have done so).

Shaban's depiction of Muṭarrif's intentions nonetheless nudges us in a fruitful direction. Particularly helpful is his contention that the revolt of another Iraqi tribal notable and former governor of Khurāsān, Yazīd b. al-Muhallab, in 102/720 reflects the same resentment as that expressed by Muṭarrif.<sup>67</sup> In fact, both of these revolts share similarities with other

59. Al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal wa-l-niḥal*, ed. Muḥammad Sayyid Kīlānī (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1961), 1:114.

60. Shaban, *Islamic History*, 108, 125.

61. That is, al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:984, 988, 993.

62. Shaban, *Islamic History*, 109–13.

63. Crone, *Slaves*, 228–29.

64. Shaban, *Islamic History*, 109–13; the quotation is on p. 113.

65. *Ibid.*, 108.

66. Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, 58–96; Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion*, 129; Hagemann, *Khārijites*, 98, 198, and n. 174 thereto.

67. Shaban, *Islamic History*, 125.

such rebellions that point to a common pattern. Scholarship has so far not made these connections explicit, so the following section will be dedicated to drawing them out.<sup>68</sup>

### Tribal Networks of Rebellion?

One of al-Balādhurī's reports states unequivocally that Muṭarrif was not a Khārijite but rather of the same opinion as those *qurrā'* (Qur'ān reciters, or perhaps more generally "men of religion") who participated in the rebellion of Ibn al-Ash'ath at the turn of the eighth century CE.<sup>69</sup> Dixon picked up on this point, but he focused on the *qurrā'* part, which led him to conclude that Muṭarrif was a "fanatical Muslim who wanted to reject the oppressors of the pious."<sup>70</sup> This reading of Muṭarrif is not sustainable. The reference to Ibn al-Ash'ath, I would argue, is more significant for our understanding of Muṭarrif's rebellion. Muṭarrif died in 77/697 and thus cannot have been a participant in Ibn al-Ash'ath's rebellion, but there are a number of commonalities between Muṭarrif, Ibn al-Ash'ath, and Ibn al-Muhallab. In each case we have a tribal notable with a strong following among the Iraqis (some of them tribal notables themselves<sup>71</sup>) and an eastern focus, a former pillar of the establishment and a protégé or ally of al-Ḥajjāj from an eminent family, who turns or is turned (depending on the reading) against the very system that put him in his prominent position in the first place.

One marker of this connection is a considerable overlap in terms of personnel, which illuminates yet another connection that actually predates Muṭarrif's rebellion significantly: as we saw above, Muṭarrif's brother 'Urwa had been a companion of Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubayr, and some of Muṭarrif's followers, such as al-Ḥajjāj b. Jāriya al-Khath'amī<sup>72</sup> and al-Naḍr b. Ṣāliḥ al-'Absī, had also fought for Muṣ'ab.<sup>73</sup> They subsequently went on to support Muṭarrif, and some of them further moved on to Ibn al-Ash'ath; Ibn Jāriya, for instance, was one of his commanders at the final battle between Ibn al-Ash'ath and al-Ḥajjāj at Dayr Jamājim.<sup>74</sup> He must have survived, as he then reappears among the troops of Yazīd b. al-Muhallab in 98/716–17 (before the outbreak of Yazīd's rebellion) when the latter was campaigning in Jurjān and Ṭabaristān.<sup>75</sup> Muṭarrif's brother Ḥamza is named among the followers of Ibn

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68. Dixon in *Umayyad Caliphate*, 194, states that Van Vloten considered Muṭarrif in the context of the revolts of other tribal leaders, but although the latter's work discusses Ibn al-Ash'ath immediately before turning to Muṭarrif, he does not draw a connection between the two or between Muṭarrif and other such rebellions.

69. Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 7:404; see also p. 395, 397.

70. Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 194.

71. This applies to Muṭarrif's companion Abū Zuhayr al-Naḍr b. Ṣāliḥ al-'Absī, for instance, a descendant of the famous pre-Islamic 'Absī leader Zuhayr b. Jadhīma (Ṣibt b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt*, 9:222) and on whose authority much of Abū Mikhnaf's account of Muṭarrif's rebellion in al-Ṭabarī is transmitted.

72. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:773–74.

73. He was part of the Zubayrid troops who fought the Azāriqa at Jayy (Iṣfahān) in 68/687–88. *Ibid.*, 2:764.

74. *Ibid.*, 2:1076; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1987–2000), 6:10.

75. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:1319–20.

al-Ash‘ath in at least one account.<sup>76</sup> Yet another former supporter of Muṭarrif, Bukayr b. Hārūn al-Bajalī, may also have been involved with Ibn al-Ash‘ath’s rebellion.<sup>77</sup> Ibn al-Ash‘ath himself had fought alongside Muṣ‘ab against the pro-‘Alid rebel al-Mukhtār (d. 67/687) in the mid-680s CE.<sup>78</sup> At the end of the chain, a portion of Ibn al-Ash‘ath’s supporters and family members is found in the rebel army of Yazīd b. al-Muhallab twenty years later.<sup>79</sup> Such patterns are very common beyond the context of Muṭarrif’s revolt. Ibrāhīm b. al-Ashtar al-Nakhā‘ī, for instance, had fought for al-Mukhtār before he joined the Zubayrids and died alongside Muṣ‘ab in battle against the Umayyads in 71/691.<sup>80</sup> His son later participated in the uprising of Yazīd b. al-Muhallab.<sup>81</sup>

Muṭarrif’s rebellion fits into the same framework as the revolts of Ibn al-Ash‘ath and Yazīd, so it makes sense to explain it in similar terms as well. The only monograph-length study of Ibn al-Ash‘ath’s rebellion in Western scholarship was published in 1977 and makes much of the support he received from the *qurrā’*, who are held responsible for the religious “radicalization” of his program.<sup>82</sup> More recent scholarship has argued against this view and focuses on issues such as Syrian-Iraqi rivalries and al-Ḥajjāj’s reduction of military stipends.<sup>83</sup> The revolt of Yazīd b. al-Muhallab has been interpreted along the same lines;<sup>84</sup> a monograph-length study of his rebellion remains a desideratum. The issue of military pay, in particular, appears to have been a major factor in the rebellion of another Iraqi tribal notable against al-Ḥajjāj shortly before Muṭarrif’s revolt—that of Ibn al-Jārūd, which culminated in the battle of Rustaqābādh. Again, some of Ibn al-Jārūd’s supporters and family members later reappear among Ibn al-Ash‘ath’s rebels.<sup>85</sup>

76. R. Sayed, *Die Revolte des Ibn al-Ash‘at und die Koranleser: Ein Beitrag zur Religions- und Sozialgeschichte der frühen Umayyadenzeit* (Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz, 1977), 240. We hear nothing about how he managed to escape his prison in Hamadhān, however, and as we saw, another report has him die there.

77. Ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta’rīkh*, 288 states that he was killed in 82/701–2 by Qutayba b. Muslim. Qutayba had fought against Ibn al-Ash‘ath, and Ibn Khayyāṭ has this as the year in which the final battles between Ibn al-Ash‘ath and al-Ḥajjāj’s troops took place. The passage in question comes at the end of a longer section on Ibn al-Ash‘ath’s uprising and those who participated in it. Bukayr’s killing is mentioned in the immediately following brief section on Qutayba’s campaigns against another rebel, ‘Amr b. Abī al-Ṣalt. This ‘Amr can presumably be identified as ‘Umar b. Abī al-Ṣalt b. Kanāra, the grandson of an Iranian notable who came to an agreement with the Muslim conquerors in 31/651–52. As part of this peace treaty, Kanāra’s son Abū al-Ṣalt was given to the Muslims as a hostage. He was later manumitted, and the family may have retained (the memory of) its pre-Islamic status: Abū al-Ṣalt’s son ‘Umar is called a *dihqān* in al-Ṭabarī’s *Ta’rīkh*. ‘Umar rebelled against the Umayyads and in 82/701 took al-Rayy, where he was joined by the remnants of Ibn al-Ash‘ath’s troops, possibly including Bukayr, after their defeat at Maskin in the same year. ‘Umar’s revolt was suppressed by Qutayba b. Muslim, and the survivors fled to Sīstān. See al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:2886–87 and 2:1019–20, 1118–19.

78. L. Veccia Vaglieri, “Ibn al-Ash‘ath,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.

79. Crone, *Slaves*, 111; Sayed, *Revolte*, 363, 366.

80. E. Daniel, “Ibrāhīm b. al-Ashtar,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd ed., ed. K. Fleet et al. (Leiden: Brill Online).

81. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:1397.

82. Sayed, *Revolte*, e.g., 213, 342–48.

83. Hawting, *First Dynasty*, 67–69; C. E. Bosworth, *Sistan under the Arabs* (Rome: ISMEO, 1968), 60.

84. Kennedy, *Prophet*, 105–8.

85. Crone, *Slaves*, 115. On Ibn al-Jārūd, see also Petra Sijpesteijn’s contribution in this issue.

Compared to Muṣ‘ab’s activities and the rebellions of Ibn al-Ash‘ath and Yazīd, Muṭarrif’s revolt is more poorly documented, but the outlined patterns indicate that it fits into a similar framework. Crone called this confluence of protagonists a “muddle [that] culminates in the Muṭarrif affair where all the participants are brought together in unlikely constellations.”<sup>86</sup> It appears, however, that these constellations are not so much unlikely as they are evidence of a similarity of grievances, reactions, and aims. Muṭarrif’s rebellion is not coherent in the Khārijite setting in which it is usually perceived, but it fits seamlessly into the context of Iraqi *ashrāfi* revolts of the Marwānid era. This point illustrates the importance of looking beyond standardized pious rhetoric, especially in the case of “Khārijite” rebellions. Finally, Muṣ‘ab’s tenure in Iraq has also not been subject to in-depth research yet; further study may reveal similar patterns and perhaps suggest a recasting of his battles against ‘Abd al-Malik not just as part of the overall Zubayrid-Marwānid conflict, but as an expression of specifically Iraqi/eastern interests as well.

### Historiographical Observations

There is a lot to unpack in the Muṭarrif story from a historiographical point of view, both because the accounts are rife with topoi and literary devices and because the sources differ sometimes substantially in how they portray his revolt. Previous studies of Muṭarrif’s revolt, however brief, are usually based on al-Ṭabarī and/or al-Balādhurī’s account, with the latter being less prominent. A historiographical investigation of these two narratives has not been undertaken yet; later sources are usually not even taken into account. This is unfortunate because a diachronic analysis of the Muṭarrif story reveals interesting patterns and breaks alike. A full study of the revolt’s historiography is beyond the scope of this paper, so the following will focus on some of the major features of and variations in the representation of Muṭarrif’s rebellion. The main point of contention seems to have been the question of Muṭarrif’s Khārijism. The spectrum of opinions displayed by the sources ranges from a clear pronouncement of his Khārijite affiliation to an equally clear denial,<sup>87</sup> with many less explicit accounts somewhere in between.

Let us begin with the two earliest comprehensive portrayals of Muṭarrif’s uprising, those of al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī. Muṭarrif’s affiliation with Khārijism is somewhat ambiguous in al-Ṭabarī’s version. As we saw, Muṭarrif is shown to have agreed with the Khārijites on all but one major point, and he is made to express himself in paradigmatically Khārijite language. Al-Ṭabarī’s account also displays more subtle ways of associating Muṭarrif with Khārijism, such as the reference to al-Daskara as the place where he declared his rebellion openly: Shabīb had just passed through it, and the town had a reputation as Khārijite territory well into the ninth century CE.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, al-Ṭabarī’s *Ta’rīkh* places the account

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86. Crone, *Slaves*, 229.

87. Muṭarrif a Khārijite: Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir’āt*, 9:213; implied in Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 3:467–68; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 21:196 (Muṭarrif’s story concludes with “thus end the reports on the Khārijites”). Muṭarrif not a Khārijite: al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 7:397, 404; Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam*, ed. Abū al-Qāsim Imāmī, 2nd ed. (Tehran: Surūsh, 2000), 2:301.

88. A. A. Duri, “Daskara,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.

of Muṭarrif's revolt directly after the death of Shabīb and before the final remarks on the defeat of the last Azraqī faction of the Khawārij, which implies a Khārijite context for his rebellion.

On the other hand, Muṭarrif's commitment to *shūrā* and Qurashī prerogative distinguishes him very clearly from Shabīb and the Khawārij in general. Most importantly, al-Ṭabarī's account never calls him a Khārijite explicitly. Muṭarrif does not declare the *lā ḥukma* slogan, he is not depicted as particularly pious, he is not joined by and does not join other Khārijite groups, and in the shorter version of the Muṭarrif story Shabīb is said to repudiate any obligations between them when it becomes clear that Muṭarrif—described here as the only political actor able to frustrate Shabīb's plans—does not agree with him.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, having heard of the battle between Shabīb and al-Ḥajjāj in Kūfa, Muṭarrif inquires about the outcome with one of his men, who replies that he “was hoping that Shabīb would win; even if he was in error, he would be killing another in error [al-Ḥajjāj].” The implication of this account is that Muṭarrif shares that view.<sup>90</sup>

There is also a narrative shift in the accounts that discuss Muṭarrif's interactions with the Khārijites at some length: instead of stressing the similarities between Muṭarrif and Shabīb, they foreground the one issue on which they disagree, namely, the correct election process for the legitimate leader; Muṭarrif's view here reflects the broad Sunnī consensus of later periods. Al-Ṭabarī's version emphasizes that Muṭarrif himself recognized that Shabīb would never follow him because of their differences on the question of legitimate leadership.<sup>91</sup> His Khārijism is thus called into question and at least a partial vindication of his revolt is attempted.

Al-Balādhurī's portrayal of Muṭarrif illustrates this tendency even more clearly. His account is similar to al-Ṭabarī's in terms of broad outline and chronology, but al-Balādhurī includes a number of elements that are entirely missing from al-Ṭabarī, while dropping others that al-Ṭabarī chose to mention. Their material is also transmitted on different authorities: al-Ṭabarī uses Abū Mikhnaf (d. 157/774) almost exclusively, whereas al-Balādhurī names several authorities, especially Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 204 or 206/819 or 821), who, however, seems to have relied on Abū Mikhnaf. The reports exhibit telling differences that may be attributed to the generations of Abū Mikhnaf or Ibn al-Kalbī but are more likely the result of distinct authorial choices on the part of al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī. Al-Balādhurī clearly had access to at least some of Abū Mikhnaf's material, as he quotes the latter in both the *Futūḥ al-buldān* and the *Ansāb*, but it is equally clear that he chose not to use much of this material when discussing subjects such as early Khārijism, which in al-Ṭabarī's work is largely covered on the authority of Abū Mikhnaf.

Al-Balādhurī's account lacks many of the rhetorical features employed by al-Ṭabarī, such as Muṭarrif's speeches and letters, which, as demonstrated earlier, are really quite Khārijite in tone. What al-Balādhurī's portrayal, like al-Ṭabarī's, does underline is Muṭarrif's

89. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 2:947–48.

90. *Ibid.*, 2:992; the translation is Rowson's in *Marwānid Restoration*, 139.

91. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 2:987.



insistence on *shūrā* and Qurashī leadership.<sup>92</sup> The effect is that Muṭarrif's alleged Khārijism appears even more muted in al-Balādhurī's account than it does in al-Ṭabarī's. In fact, as noted, al-Balādhurī preserves a statement that specifically denies Muṭarrif's Khārijism and connects him to a later *ashrāfī* rebellion: "Some people said that Muṭarrif held the same views as the Khawārij, but this is not true. He held the same views as those of the *qurrā'* who rebelled with Ibn al-Ash'ath."<sup>93</sup>

The *Ansāb*'s account is also keen to stress that al-Ḥajjāj is ultimately to blame for the disaster that was Muṭarrif's revolt. Episodes such as al-Ḥajjāj's gruesome murder of Muṭarrif's brother 'Urwa paint him in a terrible light. Moreover, the story of Muṭarrif's rebellion proper begins with a report in which al-Ḥajjāj implies that 'Abd al-Malik may be more beloved than the prophets. Muṭarrif is outraged and calls al-Ḥajjāj an unbeliever whose killing is lawful. A few lines down, another report has al-Ḥajjāj state unambiguously that 'Abd al-Malik is more beloved by God than the prophets were. Muṭarrif is shown to reject the words, but instead of confronting al-Ḥajjāj, he just carries on "refuting what must be refuted" (*inkār al-munkar*), that is, living a righteous life. This version thus distances him from his more "Khārijite" reaction in the first report, and the account accordingly concludes that Muṭarrif was not a Khārijite.<sup>94</sup> Needless to say, the impression of al-Ḥajjāj created by these accounts is highly unfavorable. That this is intentional is indicated by the fact that both episodes—al-Ḥajjāj's killing Muṭarrif's brother and declaring 'Abd al-Malik superior to the prophets—are unique to al-Balādhurī.

Given the length of al-Ṭabarī's account of Muṭarrif and the fact that the material was most likely available to him, it is striking that these stories are largely absent from his *Ta'rikh*. The report of al-Ḥajjāj's killing 'Urwa, for instance, is quoted by al-Balādhurī on the authority of Ibn al-Kalbī > Abū Mikhnaf. Al-Ṭabarī does not include this episode even though he relies exclusively on Abū Mikhnaf for the story of Muṭarrif's rebellion, as we have seen, which again implies deliberate authorial choice. Al-Ṭabarī does stress repeatedly that al-Ḥajjāj was widely feared because of his harshness and that this fear caused otherwise good people to make hasty, unwise decisions. But al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rikh* emphasizes the importance of keeping community and empire together, and so the framing of Muṭarrif's rebellion is different in the two works. Al-Balādhurī is much more apologetic about Muṭarrif's actions and essentially dilutes—or occasionally outright denies—Muṭarrif's Khārijism. Placement, too, is important here: unlike al-Ṭabarī, al-Balādhurī includes Muṭarrif's rebellion in his section on al-Ḥajjāj (*min akhbār al-Ḥajjāj*) rather than in the following chapter on Khārijism during 'Abd al-Malik's reign. The notion that al-Balādhurī's and al-Ṭabarī's accounts of Muṭarrif are largely the same<sup>95</sup> is thus correct only if we consider the basic information and sequence of events alone.

Perhaps the most intriguing case among our sources, however, is that of Miskawayh, who solved the problem of Muṭarrif's rebellion in a rather unique way. The title of his

92. Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 7:400.

93. Ibid., 7:404; see also p. 397.

94. Ibid., 7:397.

95. As maintained by Rowson, *Marwānīd Restoration*, 128, n. 475; Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 191.

account already indicates his approach: “The stratagem of Muṭarrif with which he deceived Shabīb until he had diverted him from his course” (*Makīdat li-l-Muṭarrif b. al-Mughīra kāda bihā Shabībān ḥattā ḥabasahu ‘an wajhihi*).<sup>96</sup> Miskawayh’s narrative follows the others as far as Muṭarrif’s asking Shabīb for envoys to hold a debate. He mentions the drawn-out discussion and reports that the two sides disagreed on everything. This is where it gets really interesting, because in Miskawayh’s version Shabīb then realizes that Muṭarrif’s request for a debate had been only a ruse to delay the Khārijites until the forces deployed by al-Ḥajjāj could catch up to them, whereupon he leaves with due haste.<sup>97</sup> The entire remainder of Muṭarrif’s story, most significantly his rebellion, is absent from Miskawayh’s work, which also means that there is nothing on Muṭarrif’s brothers other than a short reference to ‘Urwa as al-Ḥajjāj’s deputy in Kūfa and as the commander of his troops during the prolonged fight against Shabīb.<sup>98</sup> Miskawayh thus casts Muṭarrif as an explicit opponent of the Khārijites and an ally of al-Ḥajjāj.

Most sources after Miskawayh tend to follow the main strands of the Muṭarrif tradition as found in al-Ṭabarī rather than in al-Balādhurī. Ibn Kathīr follows Miskawayh in that he does not address Muṭarrif’s revolt at all and renders the brothers as supporters of the Umayyads.<sup>99</sup> Overall, however, later sources seem to be more comfortable with presenting Muṭarrif as a Khārijite than even al-Ṭabarī was; Šibt b. al-Jawzī, for instance, announces Muṭarrif’s rebellion with the words “in this year Muṭarrif rebelled against al-Ḥajjāj, repudiated ‘Abd al-Malik, and followed Khārijism” (*wa-fihā kharaja Muṭarrif b. al-Mughīra b. Shu‘ba wa-khalā ‘Abd al-Malik wa-ra’ā ra’y al-Khawārij*).<sup>100</sup>

That Muṭarrif’s religio-political stance and legacy were uncertain is further indicated by an intriguing report transmitted by both Ibn al-Athīr and al-Nuwayrī. According to this report, al-Ḥajjāj claimed that Muṭarrif was actually the son not of al-Mughīra but of Maṣqala b. Sabra al-Shaybānī.<sup>101</sup> Understanding the significance of this statement requires some knowledge of Arab tribal relations and early Khārijite history. As mentioned above, Muṭarrif’s family and al-Ḥajjāj belonged to the same tribe, Thaqīf, which belonged to Qays ‘Aylān. The Shaybānīs belonged to Bakr b. Wā’il, which, in turn, was part of the Rabī‘a confederation. The statement attributed to al-Ḥajjāj draws attention to the fact that there were plenty of Rabī‘a tribesmen among the Khārijites; the Shaybānīs, in particular, were notorious for producing Khārijites (including Shabīb). Qays ‘Aylān, by contrast, was not known for Khārijite sympathies. The twofold implication of the claim is that Muṭarrif was indeed a Khārijite and that he therefore cannot have been a member of Thaqīf. This

96. Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, 2:301.

97. *Ibid.*, 2:301–2.

98. *Ibid.*, 2:281–82, 310.

99. Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 12:261, 271, 279.

100. Šibt b. al-Jawzī, *Mir’āt*, 9:213; the account of the rebellion begins on p. 222.

101. Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 3:467–68; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 21:196. Al-Nuwayrī’s account of Muṭarrif, including his alleged Shaybānī paternity, is almost verbatim the same as Ibn al-Athīr’s and so does not represent an independent source. Maṣqala b. Sabra is otherwise unknown, as far as I can tell; the key point here is his particular tribal membership.

particular way of associating Muṭarrif with Khārijism, or perhaps rather with rebellion, is found in only one earlier source. Al-Balādhurī mentions a conflict between al-Mughīra and Maṣqala b. Sabra over a slave girl, of which he transmits different versions. Among these, one report states that al-Ḥajjāj claimed that Muṭarrif was in fact Maṣqala's son and thus of Bakr b. Wā'il instead of Thaqīf because of his rebellion against the government (*law kāna min Thaqīf lam yakhruj 'alā al-sultān*); Khārijites are not expressly mentioned here.<sup>102</sup> Another variant, however, which is told at a different point in the text of the *Ansāb*, says that Maṣqala's former slave girl was the mother of 'Urwa b. al-Mughīra, not of Muṭarrif. But 'Urwa's paternity is not questioned, and in any case this version does not affect Muṭarrif's tribal membership.<sup>103</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, despite his detailed rendering of Muṭarrif's rebellion, does not include this story. In al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb*, it is not told in the context of Muṭarrif's revolt. But in both Ibn al-Athīr's and al-Nuwayrī's works it carries the specific reference to Khārijism and concludes the section on Muṭarrif, a placement that further underlines his association with the Khawārij.

### Conclusion

This article has sought to make two main points. The first, and major, one pertains to our understanding of Khārijism and its markers in the early Islamic period. The second point, a corollary of the first, entails the recontextualization of the case study of this paper as belonging to a different "category" of rebellion and in the process draws attention to personal/personnel links between various *ashrāfi* revolts that indicate larger historical patterns and processes at play.

Was Muṭarrif b. al-Mughīra a Khārijite? I would contend that the answer depends entirely on what we understand Khārijism to be. As noted earlier, Khārijism seems to be something of a catch-all term that may not hold up under close scrutiny. On a very basic level, virtually all revolts labeled Khārijite appear to have been motivated by resentment of a government considered unjust, and in that sense Muṭarrif was, perhaps, indeed a Khārijite. But this very basic definition would apply to almost all rebellions, which renders the category pointless, and the use of "Khārijite" as a blanket term also obscures the different motivations behind many of these revolts.

Two factors have contributed to the term's conceptual fuzziness. First, the sources' employment of certain standard phrases and images implies a false continuity from one revolt to the next. The call to the Book of God and the *sunna* of Muḥammad and the objections to the misuse of spoils and unjust rule are Khārijite fundamentals, but this is also standard rebel language in the early Islamic period and does not say much about the specific ideological stance of particular rebels, all of whom had their own ideas of what they meant by these slogans.<sup>104</sup> The same goes for Muṭarrif's call to "*al-riḍā*," which in Umayyad times

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102. Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 13:349.

103. *Ibid.*, 7:397. Elsewhere, however, he states that 'Urwa's mother was the same as his brother Ḥamza's, namely, Ḥafṣa bt. Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ; *ibid.*, 13:351.

104. See above, n. 66.

was a common reference, usually in combination with the call for *shūrā*.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, the main points made by Shabīb's Khārijites with which Muṭarrif agreed—properly Islamic rule, opposition to injustice, fair use of the spoils—are not actually offensive, let alone heretical. It is thus necessary to look beyond the particular language used and the sentiments invoked.

Second, heresiographical categories and distinctions crystallized only much later, well beyond the ninth century CE. There is a well-known tendency in the source material, however, to apply these categories and distinctions to much earlier figures and contexts as well, even though they often fit these only uneasily. That “Khārijite” came to mean “rebel” in general further complicated the situation. In light of all this, then, how useful is the term “Khārijite” for analyzing rebellion in the early Islamic period?

If we want to understand what Khārijism actually was (or was not), a useful first step may be to distinguish between two broad phenomena that overlap only in part. The first is Khārijism as a pietist intellectual tradition that considered strict adherence to the word of God the sole basis for a just society and therefore condemned what it saw as the corruption of that ideal by the rulers of the day. Adherents of this tradition were usually quietist, if not always pacifist, and moved in the same or similar circles as other scholars of their time, as part of the “general religious movement,” in Watt's term.<sup>106</sup> The second phenomenon consists of a wide variety of violent uprisings directed against early Islamic authorities, all labeled “Khārijite” by the sources. These two forms of Khārijism (“intellectual”/“ideological” vs. “historical”) overlap in part, but the extent to which they tend to be conflated uncritically in sources and scholarship alike has had problematic results, not least because it automatically ascribes the same religious motivation to highly diverse phenomena.<sup>107</sup>

What we need is an extensive reevaluation of Khārijism, and for this goal, detailed studies of the second (“historical”) phenomenon appear more promising. These will require comprehensive investigation of the sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and prosopographical contexts of individual “Khārijite” rebellions, instead of focusing mainly or exclusively on the “sectarian” issue; as argued above, militant piety may sometimes have been a contributing factor, but only rarely was it the sole reason for a rebellion. This approach is particularly important in the case of revolts that are difficult to categorize, of which Muṭarrif's was far from the only one. The uprising of al-Kharrīt b. Rāshid against ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, for instance, similarly bears many of the hallmarks of Khārijism but does not fit the pattern in other ways. Like Muṭarrif, al-Kharrīt called for a *shūrā*, and he was a tribal leader as well.<sup>108</sup> Wilkinson called his rebellion a Khārijite revolt “of the wrong type” (from an Ibādī

105. P. Crone, “On the Meaning of the ʿAbbasid 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., 95–111 (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1989). Of note, Yazīd b. al-Muhallab, too, called for *al-riḍā* and *shūrā*, as did Ibn al-Zubayr and the rebels al-Mukhtār and al-Ḥārith b. Surayj (for the latter, see Huseini's contribution in this issue). See *ibid.*, 97–98.

106. W. M. Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973). Figures such as the famous scholar Jābir b. Zayd, who is claimed by both Ibādīs (who consider him one of their first *imāms*) and (proto-)Sunnīs, is a good example of this phenomenon.

107. For a more detailed discussion of this point, see Hagemann and Verkinderen, “Kharijism,” 501–2.

108. For an overview, see C. Pellat, “Al-Kharrīt,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.; for a more detailed

perspective, presumably),<sup>109</sup> but al-Khirrīt's case may warrant reassessment, too. What does a Khārijite revolt "of the right kind" look like outside the Ibādī ideal type?

Indeed, the main question is whether we can identify particular patterns or criteria that distinguish "Khārijite" rebellions from other revolts, and here the study of socioeconomic and prosopographical contexts is particularly important. My reexamination of Muṭarrif's rebellion, though a single case study, has shown how fruitful this approach can be. I have argued that his uprising makes more sense in the context of the Iraqi *ashrāfī* revolts of the late first/seventh and early second/eighth centuries; its miscategorization as a Khārijite revolt is useful in that it allows us to begin narrowing down what Khārijism was or was not, while simultaneously making suggestions about other categories of rebellion. Such analyses should be expanded.<sup>110</sup> The fact that Muṭarrif's rebellion, but also the one led by al-Khirrīt, for instance, can simultaneously look like a Khārijite as well as an *ashrāfī* revolt has to do, on the one hand, with historiographical patterning and authorial choices: Muṭarrif's Khārijism can be muted or enhanced by a particular phrasing or placement, and the story seems to be at least as much about the figure of al-Ḥajjāj as focal point (and instigator?) of Iraqi complaints as it is about Muṭarrif himself. On the other hand, the ambiguous appearance of such revolts is also a result of the very real overlap of people and networks of rebellion. These might indicate shared grievances that were and remained salient well beyond the contexts of individual revolts. Studies such as that pursued here might thus be able to both clarify some of the terminological and contextual complexities in rebellion narratives and give us further insight into power structures and struggles as they pertained to early Islamic society more generally.

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treatment, see J. C. Wilkinson, *Ibādism: Origins and Early Development in Oman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 145–47.

109. Wilkinson, *Ibādism*, 145.

110. My Hamburg project studies four such "categories" (*ashrāfī*, Khārijite, pro-ʿAlid, and non-Muslim/mixed rebellions). Over the next several years, we aim to hone in on precisely such personal, tribal, regional, economic, and other connections as indicators of shared interests, ways of expressing dissent, and (self-) positioning within power structures.

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