INTRODUCTION

The Kharijites (al-khawarij, literally, ‘those who go out’) occupy a prominent place in early Islamic history and historiography as some of the most notorious rebels of the Umayyad period. They can be characterized as loosely connected groups of insurgents apparently motivated by a combination of piety and grievances against the authorities, although their origins remain obscure. The Islamic tradition links the emergence of the Khawarij to the first civil war (fitna; 656–61) between the fourth caliph, ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, and Mu‘awiya b. Abi Sufyan, who in 661 secured rulership over the Islamic polity and is commonly considered the founder of the Umayyad caliphate. After Mu‘awiya, Umayyad rule would last, with the partial exception of the period of the second civil war of c. 683–92, until its overthrow by the Abbasid movement in 749–50. Kharijism thus seems to have come into being almost concurrently with the Umayyad ruling house, and it produced most of its particularly successful proponents whenever Umayyad power was weakening.

Kharijite revolts were mostly small affairs, easily repressed and with little impact overall on political developments. Nevertheless, Kharijism received a lot of attention from early Islamic scholars, particularly the extreme piety its adherents are said to have expressed. Their zealotry reportedly led them to seek a martyr’s death in battle against those they considered unbelievers, which they understood as a necessary requirement for living and dying according to God’s will.

Indeed, the Khawarij left a lasting impression in the Islamic tradition, so much so that the very term ‘Khariji’ came to mean ‘rebel’ in general, with a distinct religious undertone implying that those labelled Kharijite were also rebels against good Islamic practice and doctrine. As a twelfth-century heresiographer put it:

Anyone who rebels against the rightful leader agreed upon by the community, whether the rebellion took place at the time of the Companions against the rightly-guided leaders or against their Successors or against the leaders of any time, is called a Kharijite.²

This concept has survived until today – the term (neo-)Kharijite is frequently employed to describe militant Islamists and takfiris, as well as inconvenient political opponents...
such as the Muslim Brotherhood. In turn, the early Kharijites have also been called ‘Islam’s First Terrorists’.4

Terminology is an important aspect in identifying and assessing Kharijism in the Umayyad period (and beyond). In the fragments of source material that are commonly attributed to Kharijite rebels, they rarely use the term ‘Khariji’ or ‘Khawarij’ to refer to themselves.5 Instead, they use the appellation al-shurat, ‘those who sell themselves’, presumably in reference to the Qur’anic passages that promise Paradise to those who offer their lives for God’s cause,6 an idea that was by no means exclusive to Kharijism.7 Other terms applied to the Kharijites, which they sometimes also used to describe themselves, include al-muhakkima (after their famous slogan la hukma illa li-llah, ‘judgment belongs to God alone’) and al-Haruriyya/ahl Harura, alluding to formative events in the history of Kharijism (see below). Some terms were only used by detractors of the Kharijites, like mariqa (‘those who overshoot/stray from the mark’).8

The following survey of Kharijism in the Umayyad period seeks to provide an overview of major events and prominent rebels in this period. It will begin with a discussion of the available primary source material for studying Umayyad-era Kharijites and then address the economic, social, and tribal backgrounds of the Khawarij. We will look at Kharijite doctrine and subdivisions, and briefly sketch approaches to Kharijism in the scholarly secondary literature. The conclusion will pull together the various themes addressed in this piece and present further avenues of research.

THE SOURCES

One of the problems involved in analysing Umayyad-era (and later) Kharijism is the unfortunate circumstance that only very little primary source material allegedly produced by the Kharijites themselves has survived. There are no extant chronicles, for example, that would tell us the history of early Islam from a specifically Kharijite point of view, nor any Kharijite tabagat or tafsir works. Our main sources of information regarding Kharijite history and thought are the works of the Islamic tradition, which was almost entirely hostile to Kharijism9 and presents its own challenges: the sources are late, fragmentary, often contradictory, and full of literary motifs that obscure the historical events behind them (if indeed the purported events actually took place).10 Thus, we learn about Kharijite rebels and their intentions almost exclusively from heavily reworked representations by their enemies, which necessarily produces a skewed image.11

A separate set of sources is formed by texts from archives in North Africa and Oman, where Ibadism, the only surviving branch of Kharijism, has thrived to this day.12 Ibadi sources offer some alternative views of early Kharijism, but there is no such thing as an objective source and so they, too, have their own agenda – many Ibadi scholars are highly critical of Kharijism and are keen to emphasize that Ibadism has little or nothing to do with it.13 Other Ibadi authors seek to rehabilitate Kharijism and thus legitimize Ibadism by rejecting the ‘mainstream’ Islamic tradition’s portrayal of the Kharijites.14 However, as Ibadism is largely outside the purview of this chapter, Ibadi source material will not feature prominently in the remainder of this section.

All this is not to say that some genuine Kharijite material might not have survived in non-Kharijite works; indeed, this seems quite likely. Patricia Crone claimed to
have identified fragments of a Kharijite discussion regarding the necessity of the
imamate,\textsuperscript{15} and Adam Gaiser argues that early Islamic material on Kharijite martyrs
contains remnants of earlier Kharijite attempts to create their own heroic martyrdom
cycles; these stories were appropriated by Ibadi scholars to fashion the group’s own
hagiographies and identity.\textsuperscript{16} The problem, of course, lies in securely identifying
such fragments and remnants as both early and originally Kharijite in the absence
of established criteria. In fact, Michael Cook has convincingly shown one such
fragment, a letter from the alleged founder of Ibad Kharijism to the caliph ‘Abd al-
Malik b. Marwan (r. 685/692–705), to have been misattributed regarding both the
sender (whose historicity he calls into question) and the recipient.\textsuperscript{17}

The Kharijite material that purportedly survived in the works of the Islamic trad-
ition consists mostly of poetry and sermons. The Kharijites had a reputation for their
oratory skills, exhorting their comrades to battle, disparaging corrupt rulers and cele-
brating their fallen in rousing verses.\textsuperscript{18} This might explain the relative abundance of
allegedly Kharijite poetry in early Islamic literature.\textsuperscript{19} Similarly, the famous sermon
attributed to Abu Hamza, a late Umayyad-era Kharijite leader, is quoted in a large
number of early Islamic works.\textsuperscript{20} The extant Kharijite poetry and sermons have been
conveniently collected and edited in a number of compilations.\textsuperscript{21} However, as they
are transmitted in the works of the early Islamic tradition, the difficulties of proven-
ance, attribution, and authenticity that characterize this tradition need to be taken
into account in the analysis of this ‘Kharijite’ material. We cannot simply assume that
these fragments are genuine expressions of Kharijite identity and thought.

Coins are the second kind of Kharijite source material in existence.\textsuperscript{22} They are usu-
ally identified as Kharijite in three ways: by identifying names on coins with Kharijite
leaders known from the literary sources; by linking the date and mint of an unsigned
coin to information in the literary sources about who controlled that mint at that
date; and/or by linking unusual legends or visual motifs on coins to Kharijite doc-
trine, also derived from written sources.\textsuperscript{23}

An example of the first method are the earliest extant Kharijite coins, minted
in the late 680s to 690s in Fars and Kirman, which carry the name Qatari, whom
the Islamic tradition identifies as one of the leaders of the Azariqa, a particularly
violent subdivision of Khawarij apparently active in that region during that period.
These coins, in Arab-Sasanian style, are almost identical to coins minted by govern-
ment officials: they even use the caliphal titles \textit{amir al-muʾminin} (‘commander of the
believers’) and \textit{ʿabd Allah} (‘servant of God’), attributing them to Qatari. However,
the slogan \textit{la hukma illa li-llah} takes the place of other religious formulae in the
obverse margin (see Figure 23.1).\textsuperscript{24}

Probably the last Kharijite coins from the Umayyad period were minted in Kufa in
745–6, and they exemplify the second method of identifying Kharijite coins: they are
unsigned, but because al-Dahhak b. Qays, the leader of a Kharijite rebellion during
the third \textit{fitna}, had taken control of Kufa at that time, it is likely that they can be
attributed to him. This Kufan dirham also carries the slogan \textit{la hukma illa li-llah} (see
Figure 23.2).\textsuperscript{25}

In some cases, scholars have identified coins as Kharijite only because they
carry legends or symbols that deviate from the standard pattern, especially if these
inscriptions can be connected to something the written tradition associates with
Kharijism. The slogan \textit{la hukma illa li-llah} is a good example: the presence of this
legend on a coin is often considered enough to identify it as Kharijite and assume the presence of Kharijite activity, even in the absence of corroborating evidence in the written sources. However, it should be noted that this particular legend also appears on coins minted by other insurgents who are not usually identified as Kharijites in the sources, such as the Zanj. Another example is a coin minted by the governor of Kirman, al-Hakam b. Abi al-ʿAs, in the year 56/675–6, which carries an unusual legend that could be read as bism Allah rabb al-Hakam (‘In the name of God, the lord of al-Hakam’) or rabb al-hukm (‘The lord of judgment’); the latter has been connected to the la hukma slogan, causing speculations on potential Kharijite sympathies on the part of this governor (see Figure 23.3).

There also remains the question of how far we can take the numismatic evidence. As it is dependent on the contextualization provided by the written sources, it can be tempting to read too much into coins and their relation to historical events and developments. For example, it has been argued that the similarity of Kharijite coins

Figure 23.1  Dirham in the name of ‘Qatari, Commander of the Believers’ (in Pahlavi), mint: BYSh (Bishapur, in Fars), year 75 AH (694–5 CE). Obverse margin (in Arabic letters): la hukma illa lillah. Stephen Album Rare Coins Auction 20 (18 September 2014) lot 115 https://pro.coinarchives.com/ (photograph courtesy of Stephen Album).

Figure 23.2  Anonymous dirham, mint: al-Kufa, year 128 AH (745–6 CE). In the upper quarter of the outer obverse margin: la hukma illa l-llah. Stephen Album Rare Coins Auction 20 (18 September 2014) lot 250 (photograph courtesy of Stephen Album).
to government coins is due to a conscious decision by the Kharijites to minimize or leave out completely ‘markers of sectarian identity’ for economic reasons: Kharijite coins had to be accepted by non-Kharijites as well. However, it is also possible that the lack of a ‘sectarian identity’ on Kharijite coins is indicative of the lack of specific ‘heterodox’ positions that would have needed to be hidden.

In sum, the study of Kharijism in the Umayyad period (and later) is mostly based on sources hostile to it. Modern assessments of seventh- and eighth-century Kharijites have thus already been filtered through the lens of ninth- and tenth-century approaches to this phenomenon, written down by scholars, many of whom worked toward establishing some kind of consensus regarding the events of early Islamic history that emphasized the values of stability and communal togetherness.

**HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF KHARIJITE REBELLIONS IN THE UMAYYAD PERIOD**

Early Islamic historical sources display an extraordinary interest in rebellions. A good number of these rebellions are labelled ‘Kharijite,’ although no clear distinction between Kharijite and non-Kharijite revolts is immediately observable; we will return to this issue in the conclusion. In the following, the term ‘Kharijite rebellion’ is thus applied to any uprising labelled as Kharijite in the sources. There is no space here for a detailed overview of the history of Kharijite uprisings during the Umayyad period, although an updated survey is badly needed: the last monograph in a European language that focuses on the history of Kharijite rebellions dates back more than a century. (See the map in Figure 23.4, and Figure 23.5 and Table 23.1 at the end of the chapter, for an overview of the tribal affiliations of Kharijite leaders and the list of Kharijite revolts in the Umayyad period.)

The Islamic tradition places the roots of Kharijism in the division of the early Muslim community caused by the policies of the third caliph, ʿUthman, and his subsequent murder in 656, which led to the first ʿfitna and the first schisms in Islam. ʿAli b. Abi Talib, ʿUthman’s successor, was not accepted by many among ʿUthman’s
proponents and critics. He first dealt with the critics, defeating the Prophet’s wife ʿA’isha and the important Companions Talha and al-Zubayr near Basra (the so-called Battle of the Camel, in 656). Then, after having secured Iraq, ʿAli turned his attention to ʿUthman’s cousin and governor of Syria, Muʿawiya b. Abi Sufyan. It is at the first serious confrontation between the Syrian and Iraqi armies at Siffin, near al-Raqq, in 657 that the origin myth of the Kharijites is located.

ʿAli’s acceptance of Muʿawiya’s proposal during the battle at Siffin to have an arbitration rather than war decide on the conflict between them is said to have caused the defection of part of his army. These defectors, who are considered the first Kharijites, are sometimes called al-Muhakkima, after their slogan la hukma illa li-llah (‘Judgment is God’s alone’): presumably, they meant by this that giving in to Muʿawiya’s demand amounted to putting human judgment above God’s judgment. However, the precise meaning of the Kharijite maxim (and thus of their protest) has been questioned; it has even been proposed that the entire arbitration story at Siffin is a fabrication that was concocted to explain the slogan, and that the origin of the Kharijites has nothing to do with Siffin.

Having concluded the truce at Siffin, ʿAli returned to Kufa, but a number of his former supporters seceded and set up camp at Harura, near Kufa. Reportedly, the term al-Haruriyya as an appellation for Kharijites goes back to this episode. It seems that ʿAli managed to convince (all or most of) the mutineers there to come back into the fold, but as the arbitration dragged on, more Kharijites left Basra and Kufa and gathered on the bank of the Nahrawan canal, east of the Tigris. There, a battle took place between these defectors and ʿAli, during which the former were heavily defeated.
and most of them killed. This battle, usually dated to the summer of 658, was a pyrrhic victory for ʿAli: it set off a number of violent uprisings against him in Iraq, by survivors of Nahrawan and their sympathizers, and ʿAli’s murder in January 661 is said to have been motivated by the events at Nahrawan. Al-Baladhuri mentions five of these uprisings in the six months after Nahrawan. The groups involved in these were small (typically estimated at 200 men), and they all took place in the Kufan-controlled parts of Iraq and the Jibal. They were easily put down by ʿAli’s troops.

After Muʿawiyah’s takeover in 661, a spate of new, mostly small Kharijite uprisings took place in Iraq by groups who allegedly had disagreed with ʿAli, but had refused to fight him; now that Muʿawiyah had assumed power, they decided to revolt. The earliest of these, led by Farwa b. Nawfal al-Ashtāju’a of the Banu Murra, was the first to defeat a government force sent against them. Located in Kufan territory, his substantial group (about 500 men) was finally defeated by a mixed Kufan-Syrian force in the summer of 661. Over the next two years, seven other uprisings (of 20 to 400 men) are mentioned in the sources in the Kufa area; all of them were defeated by armies sent by the city’s governor, al-Mughira b. Shu’ba. In the remaining years of Muʿawiyah’s reign after 663, no more Kharijite uprisings are mentioned in Kufan territory.

Simultaneously, the Basra area saw its first Kharijite uprisings. Between 661 and 681, the sources mention five Kharijite uprisings that started in Basra. As in Kufa, these were small affairs (typically 70 men) and usually swiftly repressed by the governor.

The uprisings labelled Kharijite up to this point have a number of characteristics in common. They were all carried out by relatively small groups. Analysis of the names of the participants and other indications about their backgrounds in the sources show that these early Kharijite rebellions were mostly led by Arabs from the main Iraqi tribes, residing in Kufa and Basra, with a predominance of Mudaris. Among the participants, we find representatives of several Iraqi tribes, but also a number of mawali. Two groups are said to have consisted almost exclusively of mawali, and at least one of these was also led by a mawla.

Most of these early uprisings follow a conspicuous pattern: a number of Kharijites meet regularly in the house of one of their leaders, often described as very pious and respected men, to complain about the rule of the Umayyads. They choose a leader, who grudgingly accepts. Sometimes a number of them get arrested by the governor at this stage. At a certain moment, they decide to rebel openly and leave the city. We do not hear much of their activities, but some are said to harass and even kill Muslims who do not agree with them. They are then attacked by forces sent by the governor, defeated, and either killed or given a safe-conduct (aman).

The governorships of Ziyad b. Abihi (665–73) and his son ʿUbayd Allah (674–84) in Iraq, during the caliphates of Muʿawiyah and Yazid, are described in the sources as periods of a heavy crackdown on dissent in Basra and Kufa. This drove even one of the most well-known and respected quietist dissenters in Basra, Abu Bilal Mirdas b. Udayya, to revolt with a group of 40 men in the year 680–1.

This repression may have also been one of the driving factors for the explosion, and changed nature, of Kharijite revolts during the second fitna. A large number of Kharijites, including the eponymous ‘founders’ of what were later identified as the four main branches of Kharijism (see below), joined the revolt of ʿAbd Allah
b. al-Zubayr (r. 683–92) against Yazid b. Mu’awiya (r. 680–3). After Yazid’s death, the Kharijites reportedly broke with Ibn al-Zubayr because of religious disagreements and went their own way.47

One of these groups, called al-Najadat after their first leader, the Bakri chief Najda b. ‘Amir al-Hanafi, who had already rebelled in the Yamama after al-Husayn’s killing at Karbala’ in 681, conquered Bahrain, the Yamama and parts of the Hijaz. They set up their own polity which lasted for almost ten years, until they were finally defeated by a Basran army in the year 693.48 A second group, al-Azariqa, also named after their first leader Nafi b. al-Azraq (the son of a manumitted slave, of the same tribe as Najda, the Banu Hanifa), became known as the most extremist Kharijite group in history. They are remembered for massacring and looting Muslim populations in the area of Ahwaz before being pushed into Fars and further into Kirman by successive Basran armies sent against them. They were defeated by the top general al-Muhallab b. Abi Sufra, in the service of first the Zubayrids and then the Umayyads, in a long series of campaigns that culminated around the year 697, when the mawali in the group seceded from the Arabs led by the famous Qatari b. al-Fujaj a. Both groups were decidedly defeated in the next year.49

A number of elements in these uprisings during the second fitna are different from previous ‘Kharijite’ revolts. For the first time, the revolts ceased to be a local Iraqi phenomenon: they spread out far beyond the boundaries of Iraq, as far as Sistan and Yemen, and there are reports that local people in the provinces joined the revolts. Despite the widespread distribution of Kharijite rebellions during the second fitna, their leadership was more homogenous than during the early uprisings. It was drawn almost exclusively from Iraqi northern Arab tribes: of the 14 leaders of the Kharijite revolts during the second fitna, seven were from Bakr b. Wa’il (of which four hailed from the Banu Hanifa), five were Tamimis, one was a mawla, and one has not been identified (see Table 23.1 at the end of this chapter for an overview of the tribal background of Kharijite leaders). Whereas the earlier rebellions were short-lived aff airs (a couple of days to a few months), carried out by small groups (often less than 100 men, maximum 500), these new rebellions stood out for being much larger (allegedly, Najda had 6,000 followers, and Qatari 10,000 or even 15,00050), and they held out much longer (the rebellion in the Arabian Peninsula started in 680–1 and was quelled only in 692; the uprising kicked off by Ibn al-Azraq in 683–4 ended only in 697–8). Furthermore, although guerrilla tactics were still widely used by the rebels, they also tried their hand at using government structures: physical proof thereof survives in the coins from Fars struck in the name of Qatari,51 the last leader of the Azariqa (see Figure 23.1). It has been argued that ‘Abd al-Malik’s famous reform of the imperial coinage was primarily meant to counter the ideological challenge posed by these Kharijite groups.52

After these large rebellions had been quelled, the first four decades of the eighth century saw a period of relative quiet on the Kharijite front. The Kharijite rebellions that did take place were mostly limited to two areas: the Jazira and Sistan. In the Jazira, a particular type of small uprising developed, characterized by ‘a heady fusion of pastoralist muscle and theatrical asceticism’ attractive to members of local tribal groups.53 The first, and most dangerous, of these was started in the final years of Qatari’s rebellion (around 695) by a certain Salih b. Musarrrih but became successful
only under Shabib b. Yazid, a Shaybani who had been dropped from the diwan. Shabib had his base in the plains to the east of the Tigris, but he severely threatened Kufa itself and took the important town al-Mada'in in Iraq in 696 with his band that had by then reportedly grown to about 1,000 men. He finally drowned in the Karun river in Ahwaz, allegedly on his way to join Qatari in Kirman. A number of these rebellions, which were invariably led by (and mostly comprised) tribesmen of the local Bakr b. Wa'il (especially the Banu Shayban) and Tamim, took place in the Jazira in this tradition in the 730s especially. These were generally small affairs, limited to the area east of the Tigris, whose 'historiographic coverage far outstrips their political significance'. In Sistan, Kharijism reportedly arrived during Qatari’s rebellion in Fars in the 690s, and rebellions ascribed to Kharijites frequently dislodged government control from Sistan until the coming of the Saffarids in the 860s. In Sistan, the identity of the leaders of the rebellions is not always known, but at least in one case, he was a Shaybani, too.

During the third fitna, after the murder of al-Walid II in 744, we see the return of larger Kharijite rebellions. A local uprising in the Jaziran Kharijite tradition apparently led by a Shaybani religious scholar turned into a full-blown rebellion under the former’s successor al-Dahhak b. Qays al-Shaybani, who conquered Kufa and Mosul. His army is said to have grown to 40,000 or even 120,000 men, reportedly because he paid high wages, but also because other contenders in the power struggle over the Islamic empire joined him, including the important general and son of the caliph Hisham, Sulayman. After al-Dahhak’s death in battle at Kafartutha in the Jazira at the hands of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwan II, the survivors joined that other powerful opponent of the Marwanids, the Talibid rebel 'Abd Allah b. Mu'awiya, in Fars. The remnants of al-Dahhak’s Kharijite group were finally defeated in Oman in 751–2. Independently from al-Dahhak, a qadi in Hadramawt by the name of 'Abd Allah b. Yahya (nicknamed Talib al-Haqq) started a rebellion in 745 that would engulf the entire south of the Arabian Peninsula, including Mecca. After he was killed by Syrian troops in 748, one of his followers, a member of the Omani ruling family al-Julanda, set up his own imamate, which also ended abruptly when the imam was killed by an Abbassid army in 752.

In North Africa, a series of Berber rebellions broke out in 739–40 near Tangier; they routed a number of caliphal armies and were only defeated in 743, by which time they were threatening the capital Kairouan. Later Ibadi sources claim the seeds of these revolts were planted by Kharijite and Ibadi missionaries sent from Basra 20 years earlier, who had played an important role in spreading Islam among these tribes, but doubt has been shed on the extent of the role of Kharijism in these rebellions. But the rebels do appear to have endorsed some form of ‘Kharijism’, reportedly in its Sufri and Ibadi forms, we do not know what exactly this entailed, and Ibadi and Sufri Islam in the mid-eighth century are very difficult to disentangle. It is just as likely, if not more so, that the political and economic marginalization of the Berber tribes under Umayyad rule was the underlying cause of these rebellions. At the very least, it made the rebels more susceptible to Kharijite and/or Ibadi teachings as an outlet for discontent. If these revolts can be classified as Kharijite/Ibadi, they were the first such rebellions outside the heartlands of Kharijite activity (Arabia, the Jazira, Iraq, Iran) but coincided with the reappearance of larger Kharijite revolts in those regions in the 740s.
Kharijism did not die out with the Umayyads. On the contrary, in the first decades of Abbasid rule, Kharijite and Ibadi uprisings in Oman and North Africa succeeded where their predecessors had failed, setting up longer-lived polities.  

KHARIJITE THOUGHT

A detailed depiction of the various sects of Kharijism is impossible within the confines of this chapter, and this has been done elsewhere already. The following will thus provide only a short overview of the doctrinal issues put forward by Kharijites as portrayed by Islamic heresiography. Equally, we will not discuss the pitfalls of (Islamic) heresiography and the problem of orthodoxy in Islam in detail — for this, the reader is asked to consult the works referenced in the notes.

The development of Kharijite doctrine according to the Islamic tradition began with a second origin myth: in 683, the Basran Kharijites are said to have split into four factions over specific questions of leadership (al-imama), secession (hijra) from the community, the treatment of non-Kharijite Muslims, and the fate of Kharijite sinners. (Were they to be excluded from the community? How should they be punished?) These four subdivisions — the Azariqa, the Najdiyya, the Sufriyya, and the Ibadiyya — are considered usul al-khawarij, the ‘roots of the Kharijites’, from whom all of the numerous subsequent subdivisions descended. This purported historical event has a distinct literary tone to it: all four of the alleged founders had previously supported Ibn al-Zubayr’s bid for the caliphate but withdrew their support when he refused to condemn the third caliph, Uthman; three of them (and thus their groups) are named after colours (Ibn Ibad; Ibn al-Azraq; Ibn Asfar; white, blue/green and yellow, respectively); and all of them appear to have come into existence with fully-formed, sophisticated and detailed religio-political doctrines, in the same year and in the same place.

Above all, Kharijism in all its forms is associated with piety. The sources abound with depictions of the Kharijites’ extraordinary religious devotion; their famous rallying cry la hukma illa li-llah exemplifies the focus on the divine word, with Kharijism the most Qur’an-centric form of early Islam: all Kharijite groups considered the Qur’an to be the most significant (if not the sole) source of authority on the basis of which a righteous Muslim life should be led. A number of Kharijites are thus also said to have rejected the use of hadith (the Tradition of the Prophet as recorded in historical reports). Their physical appearance reportedly displayed their piety as well: they were emaciated from constant fasting, and they sported prostration marks on their faces and calluses on their hands and knees from continuous prayer.

While piety was the Kharijites’ common denominator, they were divided over how it should be understood. They differed, sometimes significantly, regarding the correct understanding of the Qur’an and the resulting interactions with their environment, which by necessity included non-Kharijite Muslims and non-Muslims. As a rule, Kharijites of all colours did not have a problem with the latter at all; strictly following the Qur’anic stipulations regarding ahl al-kitab (‘people of the Book’, that is, non-Muslim monotheists), they were content to extract tribute from Jews and Christians and otherwise left them in peace. At least one Kharijite rebel is said to have been well-regarded by local Christians.
However, there was marked disagreement over the treatment of non-Kharijite Muslims. Most of the Kharijites we know from the sources apparently adopted a militant stance. Kharijite violence was based on the idea that the Muslim community had to be cleansed from sin, elevating the use of force to a higher level: opponents of the Khawarij were considered enemies of God who had to be fought for His sake. They often attacked non-Kharijite Muslims indiscriminately, and as they considered the latter polytheists and unbelievers, the most extreme Kharijite factions also allowed the enslavement and even the killing of their opponents’ wives and children, taking their property as spoils. The militants’ zealotry was the subject of fierce criticism on the part of the Islamic tradition, which focused on portraying excessive piety as dangerous and misleading, causing bloodshed and strife within the Muslim community.

The Azariqa is widely considered to have been the most violent Kharijite faction and thus received a lot of attention from early and medieval Muslim scholars. Azraqites apparently considered it the duty of every true Muslim to leave the ‘abode of unbelief’ (dar al-kufr) and – based on the Prophet’s example – emigrate to the ‘abode of Islam’ (dar al-islam), that is, to the Azariqa’s own camp. All others, including Kharijite quietists (al-qu’ud; ‘those who remain [at home]’), were regarded as unbelievers (kuffar) and could thus be lawfully killed or enslaved. They roamed the countryside and were said to have indiscriminately slaughtered everyone who disagreed with them (isti’rad); anyone who had committed a grave sin (sahib al-kabir) had to be excluded from the Azraqite community so as to prevent the corruption of the entire group, which would endanger its status as the only faction to be saved in the Hereafter. The concealment of one’s belief (taqiyya) in enemy territory was forbidden – martyrdom on the battlefield was the desired outcome, after all.

Most Kharijite subdivisions, even militant ones, rejected the Azariqa’s excessive violence against non-Kharijite Muslims and their insistence on jihad and hijra – the sources are full of reports of internal strife among the Khawarij. Sometimes, this was due to doctrinal changes resulting from the success of a certain Kharijite group: the Najdites, for example who came to dominate considerable territory on the Arabian Peninsula, quickly moderated their positions on the grave sinner (who should be punished but not excluded from the umma, as that would have weakened Najdite authority), as well as the treatment of non-Kharijite Muslims: considering that the Najdites were far outnumbered by their non-Kharijite subjects, it would have been impossible to kill or convert all of their subjects.

While the idea of fighting God’s enemies seems initially to have been common to all Kharijite groups, there also developed a non-violent strand of Kharijism. A sizeable number of quietist Kharijites (al-qu’ud) seem to have been involved in intellectual pursuits, especially in Basra in the second half of the Umayyad period, where they developed forms of (mostly) non-violent Kharijite doctrine. Like the militants, they considered it their most important duty to protest and fight against unjust, illegitimate rulership, but they accepted non-Kharijite rule, allowed most legal interactions (like marriage and inheritance) with non-Kharijites, and generally declined to participate in open revolt; indeed, they appear to have been respected members of their intellectual circles. ‘Intellectual’ Kharijism thus thrived in Basra and beyond. The focus on justice may have been one of the reasons why Kharijism in...
its two forms (and sometimes in a combination of both, as in the case of Abu Bilal) did not cease after ‘Ali’s assassination but continued throughout the Umayyad and into the Abbasid period.  

A second important point of doctrine commonly associated with Kharijism is the principle of egalitarianism regarding the office of imam. In contrast to the doctrine that rulership should be restricted to the Prophet’s tribe, the Quraysh, the Kharijites allegedly argued that it was due the most virtuous and pious man, Quraysh or not, Arab or not; the family of the Prophet was not granted a special position. The Kharijite imam was considered a *primus inter pares* who did not have a special status or privileges; the religious significance of his office was greatly reduced among most Kharijites, who considered their imam mostly a military leader, although he was also responsible for upholding Islamic public life, like the Friday prayer. If he erred or failed to maintain the divine law according to Kharijite standards, he had to be removed immediately to prevent him from leading the community astray. If he refused to step down, rebellion against such an unjust imam became obligatory. Needless to say, this principle contributed to the fissiparous nature of most Kharijite groups and led to the deposition even of some of their most famous leaders, like Najda and Qatari.

The impact of historical events on the development of Kharijite doctrine is obvious here as well: while the Kharijite leader never acquired the importance granted the Shi’ite imam or even the Umayyad caliphs, the Najdiyya’s military defeat and near-total dissolution by the forces of the governor al-Hajjaj apparently led its remaining members to arrive at the conclusion that there was no legal need for an imam at all. The Ibadiyya, on the other hand, found itself in the opposite situation: after their successes in North Africa and Arabia in the second half of the eighth century, Ibadi doctrine suddenly had to account for two Ibadi imams, both of whom claimed the title of *amir al-mu’minin*. It was eventually decided that more than one legitimate leader could exist, but that the title of ‘commander of the believers’ was reserved for the (theoretical) leader of all Muslims.

**KHARIJISM IN MODERN SCHOLARSHIP**

Even though Kharijites appear quite frequently in early Islamic literature, comparatively few studies of Kharijism have been conducted so far. This is partly because Kharijite subdivisions disappeared relatively quickly – while there might still have been some Kharijite communities in the tenth century, these were rather small, and it is questionable how much they had in common with seventh- and eighth-century Kharijism. Another reason is the scarcity of Kharijite source material discussed above – it is not surprising that most scholarship on Kharijism deals either with poetry or heresiography. Nevertheless, there have been a number of different approaches to early Kharijism in the roughly 130 years since the publication of the first monograph discussing Kharijite history. They vary, sometimes significantly, in their assessments of the Kharijites’ motives and intentions. Some emphasize the religious dimension of Kharijite protest, characterizing the rebels as particularly devout Muslims rejecting all human interference with the divine word. Others focus on the political and socio-economic grievances of the first Kharijites who mourned the loss of the privileges they
Kharijism in the Umayyad period

had enjoyed during the reign of ʿUmar I (r. 634–44), but lost with ʿUthman’s (r. 644–56) ascent to power. ʿAli’s agreement to Muʿawiya’s offer of a truce and arbitration was seen as a betrayal of his promise to return to the status quo of ʿUmar I’s rule. Yet another perspective attributes the rise of Kharijism to the increased imposition of centralized control by the early Muslim polity – formerly nomadic tribesmen in particular resented their loss of authority and sovereignty to Medina and later Damascus. Their opposition should thus be understood as a response to political developments rather than pious zealotry, even if the language of resistance was decidedly religious in nature. The Kharijites have also been described as a ‘charismatic community’, or as an ‘exclusivist, aristocratic community’, or, based on their alleged egalitarianism, as proponents of the anti-Arab shuʿubiyya movement. Finally, Kharijite revolts have also been regarded as expressions not only of deep religious devotion, but of the imminent expectation of the End of Days. Within this mindset, violence was a manifestation of the Kharijites’ desire to secure a place in Paradise by fighting all forms of perceived ungodliness before Judgment Day condemned one to eternal hellfire.

While these evaluations of Kharijism show some fundamental differences, they are nevertheless largely based on the same sources, the works of the early Islamic tradition. They also all attempt a positivist reconstruction of early Kharijite history; studies focusing on the narrative role of Kharijism in the Islamic tradition, on the other hand, have been far and few between, even though the literary nature of many of the stories about Kharijite rebels has been noted. An analysis of the representation of the first 50 years of Kharijism in early Islamic historiography does indeed reveal a host of well-known tropes within the material on Kharijite revolts. Kharijites were a popular literary tool that allowed the author-compilers to address a variety of concerns such as the status of ʿAli, the dangers of communal strife, or the legal aspects of rebellion, that had very little to do with the historical Khawarij themselves. Sometimes, Kharijite actors were even portrayed in a positive manner to highlight the wickedness of the Umayyads.

**CONCLUSION**

Kharijism is a diverse and complex phenomenon that all too often has been explained in a reductive manner. In concluding this chapter, we would like to take a step toward re-assessing this phenomenon. To begin with, we believe it is necessary to distinguish two broad concepts of Kharijism that overlap only in part. The first is a pietist intellectual tradition that apparently considered strict adherence to the word of God the sole basis for a just society and therefore rejected what it saw as the corruption of that ideal by the rule of the Umayyads (and later, the Abbasids). The second consists of a wide variety of violent uprisings directed against the Umayyad and Abbasid regimes, all labelled ‘Kharijite’ by early Islamic scholars.

The Islamic tradition, followed by much of the secondary literature, conflates these two concepts, which causes a major issue: the association of all these ‘Kharijite’ uprisings with the intellectual tradition of Kharijism implies a primarily religious motivation to all these revolts. This is exacerbated by the fact that the language of power and politics in the late antique and early Islamic Near East had a decidedly
religious tenor that sometimes conceals more prosaic intentions. In the case of Kharijite rebellions, there are a number of indications that they should not be understood exclusively in religious terms. First, there is an obvious geographical aspect: if Kharijite uprisings were primarily a religious phenomenon, how do we explain the conspicuous absence of Kharijite rebellions from Egypt, Syria, al-Andalus, and large parts of Iran? Second, there is a clear tribal factor in these uprisings: we can see a great overrepresentation of individuals from a very small number of Iraqi, northern Arab tribal subgroups in the leadership of these rebellions, and in many cases we find members of the same family – often brothers – among them. Third, the larger Kharijite uprisings coincide with the first, second and third fitnas. All this suggests that religious dissent was not the mainspring of all these Kharijite uprisings.

This raises the question how useful the term ‘Kharijite’ is for analytical purposes. On a very basic level, all Kharijite revolts seem to have been motivated by resentment against a government considered unjust, expressed in religious terms as deviating from God’s prescriptions. However, the sources’ use of ‘Kharijite’ as a blanket term may obscure different motivations for each of these rebellions. Indeed, considering the context in which they took place, their size, and geographical spread, it is at least questionable if the revolts against ʿAli, for instance, had much in common with the rebellion of al-Dahhak b. Qays or the uprisings of the Berber tribes in North Africa. The perceived injustices that lay at the basis of the various rebellions probably varied vastly, too. They likely included, among other things, attempts by the government to control resources and regulate the behaviour of their (Muslim) subjects, increased taxation pressure, lost privileges of tribal groups, unfair treatment of mawali and recent converts. This variety within the category of Kharijite revolts may well be one of the reasons why modern scholars have come to such widely varying conclusions about the nature of Kharijite uprisings. The focus on certain Kharijite groups and protagonists, most of them militants like the Azariqa, Shabib or al-Dahhak, has further contributed to obscuring the diversity of Kharijism.

If these rebellions were indeed as heterogeneous as we suspect, we also have to explain why early Islamic historiographers lumped them together under the term Kharijite, while at the same time not labelling all kinds of rebellions Kharijite. One reason may be that ‘Kharijite’ functioned as a kind of container term for all rebellions that did not fit into other, more clearly defined categories of revolt, for example uprisings by subjected communities against Islamic rule (the Kurds and the Zanj, for instance), or rebellions that aimed at bringing a rival elite family to power (such as various ʿAlid rebellions).

There is thus a need to re-appraise each of these uprisings individually, to analyze their specifics and the context in which they took place. Do they have any (political, doctrinal, socio-economic, ethnic) commonalities other than an expression of dissent? What do they have in common with, and what distinguishes them from, other contemporary uprisings that are not labelled Kharijite? Furthermore, a literary (historiographical, narratological) approach might be helpful in understanding how the form of early Islamic historical writing shaped the content of reports on Kharijism and thus yield deeper insight into this intriguing phenomenon of early Islamic history.
Figure 23.5  Tribal affiliation of Kharjite leaders in regions of the early Islamic Empire per decade and region, as mentioned in the sources.
Table 23.1  Kharijite Revolts in the Umayyad Period after Nahrawan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Leader’s tribal background</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Size of revolt</th>
<th>Region(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashras b. ‘Awf al-Shaybani</td>
<td>Shayban/Bakr b. Wa’il/Mudar</td>
<td>Rabi’ II 38/658</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Kufa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilal and Mujalid b. ‘Ullafa</td>
<td>Banu ‘Adi/Taym Ribab/Mudar</td>
<td>Jumada I 38/658</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Jibal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Ashhab b. Bishr + al-Ash’ath al-Bajali</td>
<td>Bajila/Yemen</td>
<td>Jumada II 38/658</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Kufa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sa’d/Sa’id b. Qifl al-Taymi</td>
<td>Taym Allah b. Tha’lab/a Bakr b. Wa’il/Mudar</td>
<td>Rajab 38/658</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Maryam¹</td>
<td>Sa’d/Tamim/Mudar</td>
<td>Ramadan 38/659</td>
<td>200/400</td>
<td>Kufa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Abd Allah b. Abi al-Hawsa’ al-Ta’i</td>
<td>Tayyi/Yemen</td>
<td>-Rabi’ I or II 41/661</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kufa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawthara b. Wada’ al-Asadi</td>
<td>Asad/Mudar</td>
<td>41/661</td>
<td>(small)</td>
<td>Kufa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mu’ayn/Ma’n b. ‘Abd Allah al-Muharibi</td>
<td>Muharib b. Khasafa/Qays/Mudar</td>
<td>41/661-2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kufa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Maryam</td>
<td>Mawla of the Banu al-Harith b. Ka’b (Azd/Yemen)</td>
<td>41/661-2 or 42/662-663</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kufa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Layla²</td>
<td>Mawla</td>
<td>-42/662-3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Kufa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayyan b. Zabyan al-Sulami</td>
<td>Sulaym/Qays/Mudar</td>
<td>(under Mu’awiya, r. 41-60/661-680)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Kufa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Mustawrid b. ‘Ullafa</td>
<td>Banu ‘Adi/Taym Ribab/Mudar (brother of Hilal and Mujalid)</td>
<td>(42) -Sha’aban 43/663</td>
<td>400&gt;300</td>
<td>Kufa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Tribe/Region</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mu'adh b. Juwayn al-Ta'i</td>
<td>Tayyi/Yemen</td>
<td>42/662-663</td>
<td>300 Basra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahm b. Ghalib al-Hujaymi +</td>
<td>Tamim/Mudar +</td>
<td>41/661-667</td>
<td>70 Kufa, Jukha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khatim Yazid b. Malik al-Bahili</td>
<td>Wa'il/Bahila</td>
<td></td>
<td>Basra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qarib b. Murra + Zuhhaf al-Ta'i</td>
<td>Azd/Yemen + Tayyi'/Yemen</td>
<td>50/670</td>
<td>70 Basra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ziyad b. Kharrash al-'Ijli</td>
<td>'Ijl/Bakr b. Wa'il/Mudar</td>
<td>52/672</td>
<td>300 Basra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tawwaf b. Ghallaq</td>
<td>'Abd al-Qays/Rab'ia/Mudar</td>
<td>58/678</td>
<td>70 Basra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayyan b. Zabyan al-Sulami</td>
<td>Sulaym/Qays/Mudar</td>
<td>58/677 or 59/678</td>
<td>Less than 100 Kufa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Bilal Mirdas b. Udayya</td>
<td>Rab'i b. Hanzala b. Malik/ Tamim/Mudar</td>
<td>60-61/680-681</td>
<td>40 Basra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Ubayda' Abida b. Hilal</td>
<td>Yashkur/Bakr b. Wa'il/Mudar</td>
<td>61/681</td>
<td>4 Basra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Talut + Abu Fudayk + Ibn Aswad</td>
<td>Banu Zimman b. Malik/ Bakr b. Wa'il/Mudar + Qays b. Tha'lababakr b. Wa'il/Mudar + Yashkur/ Bakr b. Wa'il/Mudar</td>
<td>64/683 Basra, Arabia (Mecca, Yamama)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nafi' b. al-Azraq + Banu Mahuz + Hanzalah b. Bayhas (Azariqa)</td>
<td>Banu Hanifa/Bakr b. Wa'il/Mudar + Banu Hanifa/Bakr b. Wa'il/Mudar + Tamim/Mudar</td>
<td>64-Jumada II 65/683-685</td>
<td>300&gt;600-700 Basra, Arabia (Mecca)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Abd Allah b. al-Saffar</td>
<td>Banu Sarim b. Muqa'is/Sa'd/Tamim/Mudar</td>
<td>64/683 Basra, Arabia (Mecca)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 'Abd Allah b. Ibad          | Banu Sarim b. Muqa'is/Sa'd/Tamim/Mudar | 64/683 Basra, Arabia (Mecca) | (continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Leader’s tribal background</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Size of revolt</th>
<th>Region(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Najda b. ‘Amir al-Hanafi</td>
<td>Banu Hanifa/Bakr b. Wa’il/Mudar</td>
<td>64-72/683-692</td>
<td></td>
<td>Basra, Arabia (Mecca, Yamama, Bahrayn, Yaman, Ta’if)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatari b. al-Fuja’a (Azariqa)</td>
<td>Banu Kabiya b. Hurqus b. Mazin/Tamim/Mudar</td>
<td>692-77 or 78/688-697</td>
<td>10,000-15,000</td>
<td>Isbahan, Kirman, Ahwaz, Basra Basra, Arabia (Mecca, Yamama)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Fudayk</td>
<td>Qays b. Tha’lab/Bakr b. Wa’il/Mudar</td>
<td>72-73/</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salih b. Musarrij</td>
<td>Imru’ al-Qays b. Zayd Manat/Tamim</td>
<td>Safar 76-Jumada I 76/695</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>Jazira (Tigris)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name 1</td>
<td>Name 2</td>
<td>Name 3</td>
<td>Name 4</td>
<td>Name 5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatari b. al-Fujaʾ (Azariqa)</td>
<td>Banu Kabiya b. Hurqus b. Mazin/Tamim/Mudar mawali</td>
<td>77 or 78-78/697-698</td>
<td>Kirman, Tabaristan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(mawali Azariqa)</td>
<td>Ubayda/Abida b. Hilal (Azariqa)</td>
<td>Yashkur/Bakr b. Waʿil/Mudar</td>
<td>78/698-699</td>
<td>Kirman, Tabaristan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Kharijites of Sistan)</td>
<td>Human b. ʿAdi al-Sadusi</td>
<td>Shayban/Bakr b. Waʿil/Mudar</td>
<td>708/6908</td>
<td>Sistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Khalada</td>
<td>Shawdhab, i.e. Bistam b. Murri al-Yashkuri</td>
<td>Yashkur/Bakr b. Waʿil/Mudar</td>
<td>86/705</td>
<td>Sistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Kharijites of Sistan)</td>
<td>(Kharijites of Sistan)</td>
<td></td>
<td>100-101/718-720</td>
<td>Jazira, Jukha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wazir al-Sakhtiyani</td>
<td>Bahlul b. Bishr</td>
<td>Shayban/Bakr b. Waʿil/Mudar</td>
<td>119/737</td>
<td>Sistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suhari b. Shabib</td>
<td>Dhuhl b. Shayban/Bakr b. Waʿil/Mudar (son of the famous Kharijite Shabib b. Yazid)</td>
<td>119/737</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Kufa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ibadis/Kharijites (?) of North Africa)</td>
<td>Berber</td>
<td>122-125/739-743</td>
<td>(small)</td>
<td>Jazira (Mosul), Kufa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saʿid b. Bahdal</td>
<td>Shayban/Bakr b. Waʿil/Mudar</td>
<td>after Walid II's death (d. 126/744)</td>
<td>Jazira, Kufa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 23.1 Cont.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Leader’s tribal background</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Size of revolt</th>
<th>Region(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bistam b. Layth al-Tha’labi</td>
<td>Shayban/Bakr b. Wa’il/Mudar</td>
<td>126-128/743-746</td>
<td>40&gt;200</td>
<td>Azerbaijan, Jazira, Jibal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Dahhak b. Qays al-Shaybani</td>
<td>Shayban/Bakr b. Wa’il/Mudar</td>
<td>127-128/744-746</td>
<td>thousands&gt;12,000&gt;40,000&gt;120,000</td>
<td>Jazira (Mosul), Kufa, Jibal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(‘Sufrinya’ of Shahrazur)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shayban b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, i.e. Shayban al-Saghir</td>
<td>Yashkur/Bakr b. Wa’il/Mudar</td>
<td>128-134/745-751</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>Jazira (Mosul), Jibal, Ahwaz, Fars, Sistan, Arabia (‘Uman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Abd Allah b. Yahya (Talib al-Haqq)</td>
<td>Banu Shaytan/Kinda/Yemen ((proto-)Ibadi)</td>
<td>129-130/746-748</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Arabia (Mecca, Hadramawt, San’a’)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 His following apparently comprised mostly mawali.
2 There were mawali among the rebels.
3 The majority of their following were Tamimi tribesmen.
4 Joined by many locals.
5 Large mawali following among this group of Azraqi Kharijites.
6 Interestingly, his following consisted mostly of tribesmen from Banu Shayban/Bakr b. Wa’il.
7 Qatari was deposed by the mawali among the Azariqa. He took the Arab Azraqis to Tabaristan, where he was killed. His men, now under ‘Ubayda b. Hilal, were besieged and destroyed.
9 His following comprised Yashkuri and Shaybani (i.e. Bakri) horsemen.

Note: this overview is based on the main primary sources for early Islamic history as well as the Ta’rikh-e Sistan. Where possible, names and dates have been checked against the EI2 and EI3; where the sources give different names/dates/locations, we have usually adopted the relevant information given by the latter two works. Other than the revolt of Talib al-Haqq, who is commonly identified as a proto-Ibadi, rebellions led by (allegedly) early Ibadi figures are not included in the list. The figures in the ‘size of revolt’ column should be read as follows: ‘x-y’ means the sources claim a revolt consisted of between x and y number of rebels; x>y means that the size of a revolt reportedly changed from x to y number of rebels; x/y means that different sources give diverging numbers.
NOTES

1 This chapter is part of the research conducted within the framework of the European Research Council project 'The Early Islamic Empire at Work – The View from the Regions Toward the Center' (2014–19; advanced grant no. 340362) directed by Stefan Heidemann at Universität Hamburg.


3 See for example Kenney 2006; Timani 2007.

4 Foss 2007.

5 The term appears in poetry attributed to Kharijites of the Azraqi subdivision. See for example ʿAbbas 1974, 105–6, 125.

6 The concept of selling oneself for the sake of God finds expression for example in Qurʾān 9:46; 9:83; and particularly 9:111.

7 On Umayyad and Kharijite poetry sharing the same ‘nexus of ideas’ of selling oneself to God, see Marsham 2009: 102. See also al-Jomaib 1988: 364–5. For ‘Kharijite’ ideas expressed by non-Kharijites more generally, see Hagemann (forthcoming): chapter three.

8 See for example al-Jawhari’s (1979: 1554) definition of mariqa: ‘the Kharijites are called mariqa, from (the Prophet’s) saying ‘they stray (yamruquna) from the religion like an arrow strays (yamruqu) from a game animal.’ See also al-Baladhuri 2003: II, 334; al-Tabari 1879–1901: I, 3388; Ibn Aʿtham 1968–75: IV, 105–6, 128.

9 A significant exception to this tendency is the anonymous Tarikh-e Sistan, which portrays the Khawarij as pious warriors, ascetics, noblemen, and fighters against injustice and corruption. See Gold 1976: for example 87–8, 116, 123–5, 130–5, 140. See also Meisami 1999: 113–15, 133.

10 On the problematic nature of the early Islamic tradition, see for example Leder 1992; Noth and Conrad 1994; Beaumont 1996; Robinson 2003.

11 On this, see also Gaiser 2009.

12 We will not discuss Ibadism in great detail. Ibadism developed into an actual, distinct movement with its own doctrines and political views, but only from the last decades of the Umayyad period onwards, resulting in the establishment of polities in the Maghrib, Oman and Yemen. Interest in this group has increased significantly over the past few decades. Scholarly studies of Ibadi history and thought are now quite numerous. See for example Rebstock 1983; Francesca 2003; Wilkinson 2010; Gaiser 2010a; Hoffman 2012; Ziaka 2014; Francesca 2015. For a comprehensive bibliography of Ibadi studies, see the revised and enlarged edition of Al-Ibadiyya: A Bibliography (Custers 2016).

13 See for example Atfayyish 1980.

14 For (medieval and modern) Ibadi assessments of Kharijism, see Hoffman 2014; Crone and Zimmerman 2001.


19 See for example O. Rescher’s translation of the chapter on Kharijites from al-Mubarrad’s Kamil (Rescher 1922).

20 For Abu Hamza’s sermon and the works that transmitted it, see Crone and Hinds 1986: 12, 129–32; Dähne 1998; Dähne 2001: 17.

21 ʿAbbas 1974; Maʿrif 1983.

22 For an overview of Kharijite coins, see Walker 1941: 111–13; Mochiri 1986; Wurtzel 1978; Gaiser 2010b.
23 For the last method, see Mochiri 1986 (however, most of his conclusions have not been accepted among numismatists).
26 Gaiser 2010b.
28 Album 2011: 24 no. 11.
29 On this, see Bates 2000.
31 Gaiser 2010b: 171, 175–6, 180, 182.
33 The following overview, unless stated otherwise, is based on the main primary sources for early Islamic history as well as the Tarikh-e Sistan. For the wider political context, Kennedy 2016 and Hawting 1986 still provide the most accessible surveys of Umayyad history. See also Marsham (forthcoming).
34 That is, one of the above-mentioned terms related to Kharijites (khariji, baruri, shari, and so on) is used by the sources to refer to (the leader of) these rebels.
35 Wellhausen 1901.
36 Crone 2004: 54.
38 Robinson 2000: 111.
39 Al-Baladhuri 2011: 24 no. 11.
40 Specifically, in the Shahrazur-Masabadhan area, nowadays in Iraqi Kurdistan, between Halabja and Sulaymaniyya.
44 Eight ‘northerners’ (Mudar: one from Asad, two from Qays, three from Tamim and allies; Rabi’a: two from Bakr b. Wail) vs. four Yemenis, in addition to two mawali leaders and one of unidentified background. On the tribal affiliations of Kharijites and (proto-) Ibadis, see also Wellhausen 1902: 242; Watt 1973: 37; Wilkinson 2010: 157–60; Gaiser 2016: 118.
45 For a study of the topoi in reports on the early Kharijites’ election of their leaders, see Hagemann (forthcoming): chapter three.
48 EI2, ‘Nadjadāt’ (R. Rubinacci).
49 EI3, ‘Azāriqa’ (Keith Lewinstein).
50 These numbers should not be taken at face value, but they do give an impression of the scale of the revolts.
54 It is unclear how precisely Salih and Shabib are connected, if at all. See Robinson 2000: 117–19.
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56 See the Tarikh-e Sistan (1935) and Bosworth 1968 for an overview of the activities of the Kharijites in Sistan.
58 El2, ‘al-Dahhāk b. Kays al-Shaybāni’ (L. Vecchia Vaglieri); Wellhausen 1901: 49–51.
63 Gaiser 2016: 118–19.
64 For the Rustamids in North Africa (r. 778–909), see El2, ‘Rustamids’ (M. Talbi); for the Ibadī imamates in Oman, see al-Rawas 2000.
67 Noted for example by Cook 1981: 64. See also Lewinstein 1992: 75–96, who shows that the ‘subdivision’ of the Sufriyya is essentially an umbrella category for those alleged Kharijites whose precise sectarian affiliation is undetermined.
68 Watt 1973: 20, 28, 75.
70 See for example al-Baladhuri 2003: 317–19, 446.
71 Robinson 2000: 111.
74 Hagemann (forthcoming): chapters two and five.
75 On the concept of emigration (hijra) in the early Islamic Near East, see Crone 1994a.
76 Watt 1973: 15, 22, 24. However, Lewinstein 1991 argues for a more complex picture, positing that the group was initially also accused of being too lenient (morally and legally) with its own followers, but that this charge had mostly disappeared from the tradition by the early tenth century, when the ‘mainstream’ heresiographers began to compose their works.
77 See Hagemann (forthcoming): chapters two and five, 205–12, and the references there. See also the various entries in the second and third edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam: for example, ‘Azariqa’ (Keith Lewinstein); ‘Nadjadat’ (R. Rubinacci); ‘Sufriyya’(Keith Lewinstein and Wilfred Madelung); ‘al-Ibadiyya’ (T. Lewicki); ‘Abu Fudayk’ (Keith Lewinstein); ‘Abu Bayhas’ (Keith Lewinstein).
79 Kenney 2006: 34.
80 Watt 1973: 25–33.
81 On Kharijism in the Abbasid period, see Vaglieri 1949; Watt 1977.
82 Watt 1973: 36–7; Donner 1998: 108. However, as stated above, most leaders of early Kharijite rebellions were Arab tribesmen rather than mawali. See also Crone 1994b.
83 Kenney 2006: 33.
85 Kenney 2006: 32.
86 Crone 1998.

89 For example, al-Muqaddasi (1906: 306, 323, 469) reports communities of Kharijites in a number of towns in Sistan, Khurasan and Kirman.
92 Brünnow 1884.
93 Brünnow 1884; Wellhausen 1901; Pampus 1980 (who also mentions the influence of socio-economic factors). Hawting 1978 takes a rather different approach to the question of Kharijite beliefs and relates the la hukma slogan to similar processes within Jewish communities arguing over the use of oral law vis-a-vis the Scripture.
97 Bosworth 1968: 38.
98 See the remarks in Dabashi 1989: 138.
100 Szigorich 2009: 196–230, where he also notes some resemblance between (stories about) Christian and Muslim forms of violent piety and martyrdom; el-Hibri 2010: 237–8, 246–9; Gaiser 2016 (who further develops Szigorich's comparative analysis of Christian and (Kharijite) Muslim martyrdom narratives).
101 For such tropes in general, see Noth and Conrad 1994. For their appearance in reports of Kharijism, see Hagemann (forthcoming): chapter one.
102 Hagemann (forthcoming). For the use of Kharijite precedent in Islamic legal discourse, see Abou el Fadl 2001.
103 One obscure reference to ‘khawarij’ in Egypt is attributed to ‘Ali b. Abi Talib as he returns from Siffin (al-Tabari 1879–1901: I, 3392–3), but there is nothing to indicate that these Egyptian rebels have anything in common with ‘Ali’s Kharijite opponents in Iraq.
104 There are reports of a North African revolt that had spilled over to reach the Iberian Peninsula around the year 740, but Kharijism does not appear to have been an indigenous Andalusian phenomenon. See Gaiser 2016: 119.

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