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The Khārijites in Iran

I

Division into Sects

The importance of the Khārijite question in Iran is in part due to the fact that as early as the mid-VIIth century the Khārijites, as the group which was most ruthlessly persecuted by the caliphate because they themselves would not consent to any terms, sought refuge in the territory of Iran, where they could easily survive far from the centre of the world of Islam. The Khārijites found the atmosphere in Iran favourable to them. After the battle of Nahrawān in 658—this was the first great defeat and pogrom in the history of Khārijism carried out by 'Alī—some of those who escaped took refuge in Iran. They fled to the distant provinces, to Kirmān and Sīstān. According to a Khārijite legend, which was later repeated by Shī'ite and orthodox literature, only nine of the conspirators escaped from this pogrom and of these two reached Sīstān. These were the founders of the Sīstānian Khārijites¹. Shahrastānī expressed himself more generally, writing that the Iranian Khārijite' sects stemmed from these fugitives².

The first to seek refuge in Iran were the Muḥakkima. The next influx of Khārijites, from the Azāriqa faction, overran Fārs and Kirmān. There were 20000 of them³, but the strongest group were the 'Ajārīda who were active in Sīstān and Khurāsān

¹ Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh-i mudhāhib-i islām* (per. trans. of *K. al-farq bain al-firaq*), ed. M. Jawād Ma'shkūr, Tehrān 1344, p. 46.

² Ash-Shahrastānī, *K. al-milal wa'n-nihal*, ed. W. Careton, London 1842, p. 87-88.

³ Al-Malaṭī, *K. at-tanbih wa'r-radd*, ed. S. Dederling, Leipzig 1936, p. 41. S. Dederling, the editor of Malaṭī, accepted the Fatāa version of this name. According to Ash'arī, 'Amr al-Qanā, together with 'Ubaid b. Hilā and the two 'Abd Rabbihi, one of the four who came forward with doctrinal criticism ('ātū) of Qaṭarī. Cf. Ash-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn wa'l-ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn*, ed. H. Ritter, Istanbūl 1929, p. 87. The date of Nāfi's death is given according to Ibn al-Kathīr, *Al-bidāya wa'n-nihāya fi't-tārīkh*, Cairo 1932-39, IX, p. 30.

and in the southern districts of Kirmān and Makrān⁴. Further fragmentation rapidly took place among the Khārijites in Iran: they split up into many warring sub-sects with a complicated pattern of relationships and contacts. The classification and sub-division of the Khārijite sects active in Iran which has used with only small corrections down to the present day, is derived from A s h ' a r ī ' s analysis in his *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn*. As a scholar he had great authority and was the spiritual leader of the Nīshāpūr school of philosophy. A s h ' a r ī ' s law, which was later accepted by B a g h d ā d ī and S h a h r a s t ā n ī, was based on two principles: the basic assumption is the differentiation of doctrines according to their principles and this gave rise to the next—division into further sub-sects according to chronology. Studies in comparative religion by B a g h d ā d ī⁵, S h a h r a s t ā n ī and A s h ' a r ī, with the exception of some fragments dealing with the earliest factions, do not give precise historical information and enable events in the history of Khārijism to be dated only roughly.

The Muḥakkima were the first of the very many Khārijite sects to appear. Later, the Azāriqa, Najadāt, Şufriyya (Şifriyya) and 'Ajārīda sects made an appearance. These were the first four of the sects, according to a l - M u b a r r a d⁶. S h a h r a s t ā n ī places the Baihasiyya sect between the Najadāt and 'Ajārīda, but B a g h d ā d ī counts this as part of the Ibāḍiyya, arguing that the Baihasiyya were derived from the Ibrāhīmiyya, who were led by a member of the Ibādī group called I b r a h ī m. Both S h a h r a s t ā n ī and B a g h d ā d ī however name the Tha'ālibiyya and Ibāḍiyya, after which S h a h r a s t ā n ī ends his list with the Şufriyya, while B a g h d ā d ī mentions two more sects: the Shabībiyya and Şālibiyya⁷.

The internal sub-division of the Khārijites into sects (or groups) was almost certainly just as unclear to the contemporary observer. In his *Murūj adh-dhahab*, M a s ' ū d ī, who was generally well-informed, mentions the Khārijite sects in completely haphazard order: Ḥamziyya, Ibāḍiyya, Mahriyya, Khalqīyya, Şufriyya, Najadāt⁸. M u ṭ a h h a r includes names which were completely unknown to earlier authors in his long list of the Khārijite sects in his *Kitāb al-bad' wa't-ta'rīkh* (*Book of creation and history*). He mentions the following Khārijite sects: Ḥamziyya, Azāriqa, Najadāt, Raisibiyya, Ibāḍiyya, Baihasiyya, Ḥazimiyya, Khalafiyya, Qaṭawiyya,

⁴ M a l a ṭ ī, p. 41.

⁵ B a g h d ā d ī, often refers to the opinion of K a ' a b ī, a theologian who is known by the name of B a l k h. Cf. EI 2, s.v.

⁶ A l - M u b a r r a d, *K. al-kāmil fi'l-lughā wa'l-adab*, Cairo 1308 [1890], II, p. 170.

⁷ B a g h d ā d ī, pp. 67–68; S h a h r a s t ā n ī, *Milal*, pp. 86–103. M a l a ṭ ī gives still other divisions (pp. 38, 43, 135 ff), which are mutually contradictory. For him the basic sect is the Ḥarūriyya, which is at times used as a synonym for khārijism and at times as one of the Khārijite sects. Cf. also H. L a o u s t, *La classification des sectes dans le Farq d'al-Baghdadi*, "Revue des Études islamiques", 1961 XXIX, p. 19.

⁸ M a s ' ū d ī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, ed. C. Barbier de Meynard, P. de Courteille, Paris 1861–1877, V, p. 440.

Mibhūtiyya, Şifriyya, 'Ajārīda, Kīziyya, Ibādiyya, Bid'iyya, Sabiyya, Tha'ālibiyya. And therefore even in the Middle Ages general names were used to describe all the Khārijites, without trying to define their interior sub-divisions, in order to bring some order to this confused situation. They were thus called Ḥukmiyya, Ḥarūriyya, Khawārij (ar. pl. of Khārijī) and Shurāa. And the pejorative name for them was al-māriqa (those who have broken loose, apostates)⁹.

The sub-division of Khārijism into ever more factions and streams was a symptom of changes within the movement. The 'Azraqites originated in the Najadāt group, but as a break-away faction were regarded as infidels (*kāfir*) by their mother-group¹⁰. Furthermore, as a result of the dispute between two prominent 'Azraqites, Maimūn and Shu'aib, this faction split completely as follows: the Khazimiyya and 'Ajārīda ('Ajārīda orthodoxy?—B.S.) supported Shu'aib; the Ḥamziyya and Qadariyya supported Maimūn. It is worth noting that Maimūn, like 'Ajarrad came from Balkh¹¹. This split did not mean that the Azraqa group was now divided only into two factions around these leaders. The fact that the Azraqites later split into four sub-groups—we learn of this from *Ash'arī*—shows that at the time when these two large groups were formed around the persons of Maimūn and Shu'aib there were already at least five sub-sects in existence among the Azraqites: for the Maimūniyya must be added to the four already mentioned.

Subsequently, further sub-division led to the Aṭrāfiyya splitting off from the Ḥamziyya group which was formed in about 795¹²; both of these groups were active in Sīstān. The Aṭrāfiyya, a doctrinally weak sect, numbered Muḥammad b. Zarak among its members. He later left this sect and joined Ḥusain b. Rukād¹³. The founder of the Ḥamziyya, Ḥamza b. Adrak, also supported Ḥusain b. Rukād¹⁴. This would seem to indicate that there was some very early group which was in existence within the Azāriqa sect at the time when the four first groups mentioned above were being formed, and certainly before the formation of the Ḥamziyya¹⁵. If, as is suggested by the sources referred to, the Aṭrāfiyya took a dissident line together with Ḥamza, they could not have developed into a separate group earlier than the last five years of the VIIIth century.

The Khārijites Khalafiyya, led by Khalaf who came from the Maimūniyya faction,

⁹ Muṭaḥḥar, *K. al-bad' wa't-ta'riḥ*, Paris 1899–1919, V, pp. 134–135. According to L. Massignon (EI 1) shurāa meant "irreconcilables". The shurāa Khārijite sect which operated in the Harāt, Iṣṭakhr and Kirmān regions and did not recognise Abū Bakr or 'Umar, was, according to Malaṭī, p. 43, exceptionally mild and harmless to others.

¹⁰ *Ash'arī*, p. 89.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

¹² *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, ed. M. Bahār, Tehrān 1314, p. 156.

¹³ *Shahrastānī*, *Milal*, p. 97.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁵ *Shahrastānī*, *Milal*, p. 97; *Baghdādī*, p. 56; *Ash'arī*, p. 96. The founder of the Khāzimiyya was Khāzim b. 'Alī. Cf. *Shahrastānī*, *Milal*, 97.

were operating in Kirmān and Makrān. In Sīstān this faction was represented by the Ḥamziyya, who were close to the Shu'aibiyya. The majority of Khārijites in Harāt, Kūhistān, Bushang and Sīstān, and in Khurāsān and Makrān, as far as the Kirmān and Sind borders, belonged to the Ṣufriyya and Ḥamziyya at the end of the VIIIth century¹⁶. This then was the situation at the situation when the followers of Ḥamza split away¹⁷. At the beginning of the caliphate of Yazīd (720–724) the influence of the Ṣufriyya extended only to Khūzistān, where they were in competition with the Shabībiyya although some believe that the Shabībiyya were a faction of the Ṣufriyya, and others that they were a faction of the Azāriqa¹⁸.

We have concluded that the Khārijites of East Iran belonged to a faction of the 'Ajārīda. To some degree their influence extended as far south as Khūzistān. In West Iran, and also in the North in Gurgān, Nasā and Armenia, the Shaibaniyya Khārijites of the Tha'alibiyya faction were found¹⁹ and they also stretched into the Khurāsān region where the 'Ajārīda were active. The Shaibaniyya were not a typical Khārijite faction: they were driven out of the Khārijite movement for taking the part of Abū Muslim and giving him assistance²⁰.

Thus in Iranian Khārijism, there were three main streams: the Azāriqa, 'Ajārīda and the Tha'alibiyya. The first Khārijites in Iran were the Muḥakkima, who were sometimes called the Muḥakkima al-awwālī²¹, but they were only the nucleus of the movement and themselves disappeared among the numerous Khārijite sects shortly after their arrival in Iran. The moral and doctrinal problems which then brought with them has developed in the conditions of the Arabian desert among the nomads under the influence of a long war between 'Alī and Mu'āwiya in Ṣiffīn in 656.

Changes in the Khārijite teachings

The world of the desert Arabs was dominated by inter-tribal strife. In the period when the Arabs first came into the historical limelight, the first stage of tribal integra-

¹⁶ R. Rubinacci, 'Ajārīda, EI 2; Mas'ūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, V, p. 231.

¹⁷ *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, p. 156.

¹⁸ Baghdādī, p. 70; Ash'arī, p. 118; L. Massignon, *Shabīb*, EI 1, IV; H. Laoust, *Les schismes dans l'islam*, Paris 1965, pp. 38, 40.

¹⁹ Shahrastānī, *Milal*, p. 99.

²⁰ Baghdādī, pp. 62–63.

²¹ Ash'arī, p. 103. The Ibāḍiyya, one of the great Khārijite factions, seem to have had little influence in Iran. Their chief fields of operations were Africa and the Yemen. But there were also some Iranians among them: we can find Hilāl b. 'Atiyya al-Khurāsānī among the ibāḍite missionaries and one of the well-know ibāḍite doctors was Abū Ghānim Bishr b. Ghānim al-Khurāsānī, the author of the *al-Mudawwana*. The ibāḍists appeared in Fārs at the beginning of the VIIIth century (cf. T. Lewicki, *al-Ibāḍiyya*, EI 2,) but we may conclude from the fact that there were not many references to this that their influence was minimal. Of the three most important Khārijite sects, the Azāriqa, Ṣufriyya, Ibāḍiyya (cf. Наубахти, *Шитские секты*, Москва 1973, p. 199), only one attained a leading position in Iran: the 'Azāriqa.

tion was being carried out, and the division into southern and northern genealogy of the links between the tribes²². This broad division of the Arabs into zones was a portent of social development to come, and also of the related conflicts which were to absorb a great deal of the Arabs' social energy. Moreover, these conflicts did not die out when they had lost their earlier significance. After the tribes had moved North to Syria or Khurāsān, outside the area of Arabia, in completely different economic and cultural conditions, these conflicts remained one relic of the old tradition, an anachronistic pattern of behaviour. At one time, the tribal struggles had fitted very well into the system of the desert nomads' world²³. War had divided the Arabs²⁴, but pan-Arab holidays had united all of them equally and maintained the whole of the Arab world in equilibrium. However, the unifying forces were the first to die out. The pan-Arab holidays ceased to be observed but the wars continued. This led not only to political disarray among the Arabs, and inability to unite all their forces, but also to growing enmity between the former opponents. They became enemies, and this made it impossible to pour oil on conflicts as they emerged. At one time, the longterm desert wars had not weakened the Arabs, but in the mid-VIIth century relations between various camps and tribes became so much aggravated that it seemed that their aim had become mutual extermination or even that this was the only way to end the conflict. Islam did not subdue the conflicts among the Arabs, but only changed the banners under which they were fought. We have ample evidence that the Arabs were unable to come to peaceful terms to end their disagreements and struggles; beginning with the first conflict which spread beyond the frontiers of the peninsula, the conflict of 'Alī with the Umayyads, and continuing through the struggle of the Khārijites, the revolt of the Yemeni Arabs in Khurāsān and the revolt in Mecca in 692 AD which was put down by Ḥajjāj. There was nowhere where they could meet, where custom would dictate armistice, as in the days of the old holidays. This was their tragedy. In every early Muslim conflict there was an inner contradiction between the traditional tendency to end it peacefully, and lack of opportunity for this to take place for now conditions in which these wars were being fought did not make provision for this. Members of other ethnic groups do not seem to have understood this split within Islam and did not understand how to adapt to the inner contradiction mentioned. And thus they did not take part on one side or other in purely Arab conflicts, or even if they were responsible for stimulating conflicts, they then stood aside. The Arabs themselves did not in fact admi

²² J. O b e r m a n n, *Early Islam*, in: *The Ideas of History in the Ancient Near-East*, New Haven-London 1955, pp. 246, 247.

²³ J. O b e r m a n n gives a list of these holidays (op. cit., pp. 255 ff). For further information on this subject see W. C a s k e l l, *Aiyam al-arab*, "Islamica" 1930, III, fasc. 5, pp. 59 ff.

²⁴ Wars within the groups were remnants of earlier systems which had existed before the formation of these groups. O b e r m a n n (op. cit., p. 284) discusses the conflicts between the following tribes: Bakr and Tamīm, Tamīm and Azd, Taghlib and 'Āmir b. Ṣa'ṣa'a, Kalb and Fazāra and between the Qays 'Ailān and Kalb-Quḍā'a confederations.

non-Arabs to their circle. They attempted to resolve their conflicts within the context of the clan or tribe, or as though they were clan-genealogical conflicts this was for example the case when the Khārijites broke away, although in fact the essence of the conflict over Muḥammad's successor, which was the basic theme of early Muslim conflicts, was settled as though it had been a clan or tribal conflict. Genealogy was an exceptionally significant matter for the Arabs, and was their way of looking at history. J. O b e r m a n n took the evolution of the jihād as the basis for his analysis of the question of the change which took place in conflicts which had originally been pan-Arab, at the stage of the early caliphate²⁵. In the days of Muḥammad and Abū Bakr there had been an internal war among the Arabs: Mūslims fighting against pagans. In the succeeding period, under 'Umar, this changed into a war of the Muslim Arabs against the unbelievers, who were mainly non-Arab. After the death of 'Umar, the jihād became a war conducted by the Muslim Arabs among themselves. The non-Arab subjects of the caliphate, the mawālī, did not take an active part in these conflicts, At this stage, the jihād became again an internal Arab institution as a struggle amongst Arab tribe, and non-Arabs were in no way interested in its continuance. J. O b e r m a n n believes that the mawālī wars were the last stage in the development of the jihād, that is, war between Muslims of non-Arab descent and Arabs²⁶. Although they had accepted Islam, the mawālī were not granted full rights and privileges by those of the Arab race and it was therefore in these circumstances difficult for them to identify with the Muslim community. Even the very radical Khārijite programmes were not attractive to the mawālī if they maintained the same principles on their status. For this reason, the principles of Shī'ism were much more beneficial for them, although they were in general less radical. From the very beginning, the background of Shī'ism was a struggle for power, with the degree of relationship to the Prophet accepted as the decisive argument which would settle the question of the right to the caliphate. But because from the very beginning 'Alī's group contained people from outside the Arab world, and therefore people who were fortuitous in a dispute where the two sides were aligned according to genealogy, characteristics developed in the movement which could be accepted by people of other tribes. There were serious inner contradictions in the succession struggle itself. There was a gap in the evidence. Equal rights were accorded to two opposing parties using two arguments: family affinity in the case of the 'Alids and tribal affinity to support the Umayyads. This made it possible—and later essential—to interpret and debate the values and rights of the claimants who had come forward, and also the correctness of each of the two standpoints of the 'Alids and the Umayyads according to the principles of legitimism. During these debates, a third possibility was created, which reconciled the other two: granting the right to rule Muslim communities not on the basis of clan or tribal rights but on the basis of moral qualifications and evaluation made by society without entering into questions

²⁵ O b e r m a n n, p. 282.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 282.

of charisma and the resultant ability to hand down from generation to generation. This solution to the conflict put forward by the Khārijites in theory refuted the principle of the priority of the Arab element in the caliphate, although in practice, due to the xenophobia which can be detected in the Khārijites particularly in Iran, this pattern was not shaken. It was only under the influence of members of other tribes which found expression in Shī'ism, that the Khārijite concept of the Prophet's successor lost its hermetic, in-group character and became an open principle, in practice giving access to this highest honour in Islam to representatives of other nationalities. However, the formulating of these egalitarian slogans was not in itself enough to ensure their acceptance by all opposition groups. Those same principles which became to a considerable degree in theory universal among the Khārijites, were understood among the Shī'is to mean that enthronement was dependent on appropriate origins. Although in theory this assumption avoided the question of the dependence of the right to rule a community on the genealogy of the candidate for leadership, this slogan was understood in different ways by Arab and non-Arab converts. Especially the latter which included the very influential and powerful Iranian community adapted it to their traditional customs. The monarchical tradition in the Iranian state was also reflected here in the form of seeking for charisma in the leader. This meant that the circle of those who qualified was very small. We may thus conclude that the way in which the principles for appointing the successor to the Prophet were understood did not depend on their literal meaning, but on the extent to which these principles influenced, or could influence, the current position of the converts, and the influence they could have on their position in the future. Shī'ism, both in the doctrinal and political sphere, was to a considerable degree formed by an ethnically non-Arab, extraneous element which had immigrated to the Arab, Muslim core area, dār al-Islām, and it was adapted to the needs of these newcomers. Khārijism did not have these opportunities, for in its original pure form it was a movement which carried on the law of the desert and could not create any possibility for converts of adapting to its principles, because it was a doctrine which was attempting to settle general Muslim conflicts, and those which extended beyond the natural frontiers of the Arab world, through the means that were available to the early desert stages of Islam. This explains why such a radical movement as Khārijism was an isolated movement in Iran, which was the target of both sides: of the Khārijites struggling with the caliphate in Iran, and of Iranians, who were lending support to the struggle, but not taking part in it to the extent might have been expected in view of the fact of their long struggle against their Arab conquerors.

The Khārijites, who formed one of the streams in early Islam, did not accept the principle of legitimism. According to their beliefs, anyone, even a slave, who had been chosen by a Muslim community could become an imām. The moral value of the candidate was the decisive criterion, rather than his descent. The Khārijites were the group of 'Alī followers who had left him when he consented to the proposals made by Mu'āwiya. He had acted as arbiter in settling the succession struggle after the death of Muḥammad. Khārijism must have suddenly become

a very important problem, a serious phenomenon affecting the whole state, if the caliph enters into negotiations with them, if special military detachments made up mainly of volunteers (*al-muṭawwi'a*) were used to combat them, and if hired mercenaries were used to deal with the problem²⁷. The first sign of the Khārijite revolt was the uprising in the Helmand delta and in Zarang in 656²⁸, led by Hasak b. 'Attāb. Four years later al-Ashja'ā (Farwa b. Nawfal) was responsible for the outbreak of further disturbances, which in some sense developed into the Shahīb rising in 663²⁹. The last decades of the VIIth century brought a great increase in the number of Khārijite uprisings. They broke out over part of Iraq, often originating in the Kūfa and Kirmān. Bahrain was also affected by these uprisings³⁰. Some of these movements, like the Khārijites rebellion in Basra led by Qarib and Zāhhāf were basically terrorist and directed against the population, and for this reason the 'āmil of Basra, 'U b a i d a l l ā h b. A b ī B a k r a, tried to use political weapons against them by going among the people with anti-Khārijite agitation. This attempt to use methods of this kind is in itself significant even though it did not yield the required results and the 'āmil of Basra had to call in the army to help³¹. The next Khārijite uprising, led by Mutarrif b. al-Mughīra in 695, was more clearly political in character, for it was directed against the policies of Ḥajjāj and his armies in Iṣfahān³². The Khārijites sent emissaries to Iran in an attempt to shape this local movement into a form which would be useful for them³³.

The dogma of the imamate and the method of electing the imām were central in their teaching. When they opposed the Quraishis' claim to the sole right to secession to Muḥammad, they were not yet operating in the same conditions of bitter struggle which characterized the strife between the Khārijites and the caliphate in later years. The Muḥakkima did not exclude the members of the Quraishī clan from among the possible pretenders to the succession. They deprived them only of priority in the contest for the imamate. In their view, the imām should be a man who lived according to the law of the Prophet and thus could be anyone at all, even a slave or in theory a Christian, or a Quraishī. The classification of this clan with Christians and slaves is the only evidence available of the political struggle carried on by the Khārijites against the leaders of Islam in those years. This was their first heresy. The second was their failure to recognise the court of arbitration in the matter of the imamate³⁴. It is surprising that this was considered an error in religious doctrine. Malaṭī reduces

²⁷ Y a ' q ū b ī, *Ta'rikh*, ed. M. Th. H o u t s m a, Lugduni Batavorum 1883, II, p. 386-387.

²⁸ B a l ā d h u r ī, *K. futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. M. de G o e j e, LB 1863, p. 395; B. S p u l e r, *Iran in früh-islamischer Zeit*, Wiesbaden 1952, p. 21.

²⁹ A s h ' a r ī, p. 129; Y ā q ū t, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, ed. F. W ũ s t e n f e l d, Leipzig 1866-1873, II, p. 325.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

³² S p u l e r, p. 23.

³³ H a m z a a l - I s f a h ā n ī, *Ta'rikh sinī mulūk al-ard wa'l-anbiya*, Beirut 1962, pp. 160-161.

³⁴ S h a h r a s t ā n ī, *Milal*, p. 87; A s h ' a r ī, pp. 103, 127, 128.

their beliefs to the thesis: "There is no law but God" (*lā ḥukm illā'llāh*), and adds that they did not agree to arbitration³⁵. The Muḥakkima were not able to develop their scholarship, for their group did not survive long enough, and moreover, because of constant persecution they did not have suitable conditions for theoretical discussions. The Muḥakkima (the real Muḥakkima), who were led before the appearance of Nāfi' b. Azraq al-Ḥanafī by Yazīd b. Unaisa³⁶, were not able to find any territorial base which would accept them. As nomads, they had only loose links with the countryside, and they terrorized the towns. (They also probably terrorized the countryside). M a l a ṭ ī calls them the "bellicose faction"³⁷. From the beginning, the Khārijite doctrine developed in the context of constant confrontation with both the Muslim and non-Muslim world, and the Muḥakkima may serve as an example of the behaviour of a group which because it feels threatened and deprived of allies shows aggression to everything in its environment. Initially, the Khārijites recognized only one division of mankind according to moral worth, but as time passed they became more severe in their attitude to the outside world. The Muḥakkima regarded their opponents in the same way as non-believers (*kāfir*), while the later Azraqites treated them as pagans (*mushrik*)³⁸ which was a higher degree of censure.

When the Azāriqa split away, their first leader was Nāfi' b. Azraq al-Ḥanafī, who died c. 684, but A s h ' a r ī, B a g h d ā d ī and M a l a ṭ ī mention other figures who preceded him: A s h ' a r ī—Yazīd b. Unaisa; B a g h d ā d ī—'Abdallāh b. Waḍīn. M a l a ṭ ī links the Azraqites together in one sub-group with the 'Amriyya, founded by 'Amr b. Qanāt al-Khārijī³⁹. As the reasons for the break-up, he gives differences of opinion on the question of permissibility of spilling Muslim blood, robbing Muslim property and also the custom of taking Muslim children into slavery⁴⁰. After Azraq, of whom I b n R u s h t added that he left no descendants, the leadership was taken over by 'Ubaidallāh b. al-Māḥwaz (Māḥwar) al-Khārijī, who was killed at Ahwāz in battle with the Umayyad general al-Muhallab. Al-Muhallab had been specially brought from as far away as Khurāsān to fight against the Khārijites⁴¹. His full name was Muhallab b. Abī Ṣufra. In about 684 the Khārijites overran Khūzistān and the Baṣra region. At that time one of the outstanding Khārijites was Qaṭarī b. al-Fujā'a al-Māzinī. He inherited his name F u j ā ' a from his mother who came from the Tamīm tribe⁴². Q a ṭ a r ī took over the leadership from 'Ubai-

³⁵ M a l a ṭ ī, p. 38.

³⁶ A s h ' a r ī, p. 103.

³⁷ M a l a ṭ ī, p. 38.

³⁸ B a g h d ā d ī, pp. 47–48.

³⁹ A s h ' a r ī, p. 81; M a l a ṭ ī, p. 41; a l - M u b a r r a d, II, p. 171; Y ā q ū t, II, p. 623, III, p. 110.

⁴⁰ M a l a ṭ ī, p. 41.

⁴¹ I b n R u s t a h, *K. al-a'alāq an-nafisa*, ed. M. Goeje, Leiden 1850, P, 217; a l - M u b a r r a d, II, p. 192–240.

⁴² M a s ' ū d ī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, V, p. 314; I b n Q u t a i b a, *K. al-ma'ārif*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, Göttingen 1850, p. 210; a l - M u b a r r a d, II, p. 202 ff.

dallāh⁴³. Before he joined the Khārijites, Qaṭarī had been one of the greatest Arab leader during the march through Iran. He had taken part in the Sīstān campaign in 662⁴⁴. In his youth he had served under ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān b. Samura, and later under Muhallab b. Abī Ṣufra al-Azdī. In his description of the conquest of Sīstān, Balādhurī mentions Qaṭarī as a member of the group of high command (*ashraf*). It appears that he was then of equal rank to Muhallab with whom he is mentioned on the same footing⁴⁵. In Sīstān he also apparently became friendly with the local inhabitants and formed close relationships with them. The *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* says directly: *bā mardumān-i Sīstān urā dusti-o-ṣuḥbat būda būd*⁴⁶. Only a few individuals had accepted Islam in Sīstān in that period. And so with whom did he become friendly, and with whom did he make contacts? The easy with which Qaṭarī formed “friendships” in Sīstān is surprising in view of what we know of him. Ibn an-Nadīm mentions him as an orator, which does not tell us much about his character, but Ash‘arī heard unfavourable reports about him and refers to him as vulgar. Thus these friendships were evidently not ordinary social contacts. For the anonymous *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* notes that when Qaṭarī rebelled in Iraq and was forced to fight “he fought greatly and later sent men to Sīstān who described in detail the course (of the uprising) which he had made in Islam. Both the lords and ordinary people joined him”⁴⁷. It is true that Qaṭarī’s rebellion broke out 27 years after the capitulation of Sīstān but it would be premature to speak of serious success in the spread of Islam in these territories at this time, and the fact that many people joined him, if we are thinking of Iranians, indicates that it was not concern for Islam which motivated them. Therefore these remarks about Islam must be treated as an embellishment made by the chronicler, or we must accept that they referred to the Arabs.

Eloquent testimony to the fact that Sīstān aided this rebellion is provided by the striking of coins of the Arabian-Pahlavi type with the name of Qaṭarī in 694. These were minted in the Sīstān capital of Zarang⁴⁸. The emission of these coins would not have been possible without suitable financial support from Qaṭarī’s Sīstān supporters, nor without the agreement of the Arab authorities who supervised the activities of the mints. In this context it thus seems that there was no mass support

⁴³ Ibn al-Kathīr, IX, pp. 30–31.

⁴⁴ M. S. Shaban, *The ‘Abbāsid Revolution*, Cambridge 1970, p. 28.

⁴⁵ Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 396.

⁴⁶ *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, p. 110.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 110. Al-Mubarrad (II, p. 213) states that 70 000 Zoroastrians (majūs) joined the Khārijites, but from the context it appears that this took place before the uprising spread to the eastern regions of Iran.

⁴⁸ E. C. Bosworth, *Sistan under the Arabs*, Rome 1963, p. 52. Coins were struck for Qaṭarī in the mints at Ardashīr—Khurra, Bishapur, Darābjird, Zarang. Cf. G. C. Miles, *Some New Light on the History of Kirman*, in: *The World of Islam. Studies in Honour of Phillip J. Hitti*, London 1960, p. 92. According to A. D. Mortmann (Zur Pehlevi — Münzkunde, ZDMG, 1879 XXXIII, pp. 87–89), the Arabian—Pahlavi coins were struck at Darabgird, in Kirmān and Zarang.

for Qaṭarī from the Sīstān non-Muslims, but rather aid from the local Muslims, of whom the majority were Arabs sent to Sīstān by the caliphate.

We know of earlier examples of participation by Iranians in uprisings led by Arabs. 500 Iranians, probably from the auxiliary detachments of the garrison, took part in the Mukhtār uprising in Kūfa (686–688); this town housed one of the largest Arab garrisons. Later, in 700, the massive uprising led by ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān resulted in the death of 130 000 conspirators, according to Ṭabarī, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. al-Ash‘ath rose against Ḥajjāj and his new fiscal policy. He gained the support of the mawālī, who joined in the revolt. The mawālī insurgents were led by Fīrūz Ḥusain, a great feudal lord who had already converted to Islam. Fīrūz was taken prisoner by the Arabs during the battle for Sīstān, and later in Iraq was still a rich man. The mawālī and dhimmī took the lead in ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān’s rebellion, perhaps because of their higher social standing: they were probably the richest of the Persian rebels. The predominant group among these people were those who had gone over to the Arab side as early as 638 together with their commander at that time, Sijāh al-Uswārī, but who had not in consequence accepted Islam. For transferring their allegiance to the Arabs they had gained some privileges in the capitulation agreement. But in the opinion of the authorities they had broken the condition of obedience to the caliphate by joining in ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān’s rebellion, and Ḥajjāj therefore withdrew these privileges⁴⁹. If they had been Muslims, the law allowing withdrawal of privileges could not have been applied to them, and therefore we may conclude that they had the status of dhimmī. According to the author of the *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, another of the insurgents, ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Amir al-Mujashī, was one of the local notables, an Arab who had fled from the governor of Sīstān, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān. This involved an internal Arab dispute. The financial aid⁵⁰ which Qaṭarī received from Sīstān may therefore have come from the Arab opposition, which was strong. This is indicated by the fact that when Bū Barda‘a, the lieutenant governor of Sīstān, asked his superior, the governor of Khurāsān for aid in 690, he wrote that there were many Khārijites in Sīstān⁵¹. From the context in which this information appears, we may conclude that he was thinking of the Arabs. Mass support for the rising would have led to disturbances in Sīstān itself—to war and an anti-Arab uprising—but we hear nothing of such things. Moreover, if Qaṭarī had had the support of the masses in Sīstān he would have taken refuge

⁴⁹ *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, p. 115; Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, pp. 373–374; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh ar-rusul wa’l-mulūk*, ed. M. de Goeje, Leiden 1879–1901, II, pp. 1015, 1120–1123; E. C. Bosworth, *Sistan under the Arabs*, pp. 17, 60; al-Mubarrad (II, pp. 212–213), calls him Fīrūz Ḥusain.

⁵⁰ There were similar reasons for Mutarīf b. Mughīra’s uprising in Iraq. Cf. Ṭabarī, II, pp. 908–1003; Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh*, II, p. 348; W. F. Tucker, *Rebels and gnostics: al-Mughīra, Ibn Sa‘īd and the Mughīriyya*, “Arabica” 1975 XXII, pp. 33–47.

⁵¹ *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, p. 113. Al-Mubarrad writes that Qaṭarī helped the dihqān, who were decidedly hostile to ‘Umar, and hence to the policy of the caliphate in the first years after the conquest of Iran (II, p. 236).

there rather than in Kirmān, a province with which he had not previously maintained close contacts. If we accept that it was only a handful of local Arabs and converts who supported Qaṭarī in Sīstān, then it is easier to understand why he moved to Kirmān. The decisive factor here was the character of the terrain. In Kirmān, the mountains provided suitable conditions for carrying on a guerilla war, which would not have been possible in the flat steppe of Sīstān. When his forces were crushed by Muhallab in Iraq, he first took refuge with his remaining troops in Fārs. Only a handful of his men — about 600 — remained in Iraq under the leadership of Shabīb b. Yazīd, the same commander who was operating until 696 in the Kūfa area, often with success in battle against Ḥajjāj's forces⁵². Qaṭarī remained in Fārs for 19 years and later retreated farther East. Qaṭarī's Azraqites settled in Kirmān in the Jiruft district. This is the version given by B a g h d ā d ī, although Kirmānī claims that they operated only in a narrow strip between Sīrgān and Masir⁵³.

After a few years in Kirmān, they split into three groups. About 10000 remained with Qaṭarī — that is, almost half — while 7000 followed 'Abd Rabbihi al-Kabīr and a third group of about 4000 supported 'Abd Rabbihi aṣ-Ṣaghīr. This information comes from Baghdādī, and it is true that he speaks of "people" who joined one or other of the groups, leaving us uncertain as to what is meant by this term — soliders, believers or sympathizers? However, judging from the long-term war waged between the caliphate and Qaṭarī's Azraqites, there must have been a number of soldiers among them. Qaṭarī and his supporters went to the North, to Ṭabaristān⁵⁴. His stay in this region led the Ispahbad to complain to the Arab authorities, and these complaints suggest that there were Arabs among his Khārijites forces. We know that there were mawālī among his followers, both local Iranians and immigrants from elsewhere⁵⁵. The Arab Khārijites almost certainly had their families with them,

⁵² K e r m ā n ī, *Tārīkh-e Kermān*, ed. B ā s t ā n ī P ā r i z ī, Tehrān 1342, p. 35; Y a ' q ū b ī, *Tārīkh*, II, pp. 316–317.

⁵³ B a g h d ā d ī, p. 50; I b n a l - A t h ī r, *Al-kāmil fī't-tārīkh*, ed. C. J. T o r n b e r g, Leiden 1851–1876, IV, p. 112; I b n I s f a n d i y ā r, *An Abridged Translation of the History of Tabaristan*, ed. E. G. B r o w n e, London 1905, pp. 101, 104 ff; a l - M u b a r r a d, II, pp. 236, 237. This sect was found in Sīstān, Khurāsān, Kirmān and Kūhistān. Cf. S h a h r a s t ā n ī, *Milal*, p. 92; Ṭ a b a r ī, II, pp. 387 ff., 583, 753–765; B a l ā d h u r ī, *K. al-ashraf wa akhbārihim*, ed. W. A h l w a r t d, Grefwald 1883, IV, pp. 112 ff., 158 ff., V, pp. 252, 332, XI, pp. 110–114, 135; S p u l e r, p. 122.

⁵⁴ G. L e v i D e l l a V i d a, *Qaṭarī b. al-Fudjā'a*, EI 1; Y a ' q ū b ī records that they were acting in Kirmān under the leadership of Azraq, which is a mistake (*Tārīkh*, II, p. 325). Cf. K e r m ā n ī, *Tārīkh-e Kermān*, p. 35. According to the *Mujmal at-tawārīkh wa'l-qīṣṣa*, (ed. M. B a h ā r, Tehrān 1318, p. 303), the Azraqites returned in about 687 from Fārs and Kirmān to Iraq.

⁵⁵ After the collapse of the Khārijites, Muhallab first defeated 'A b d R a b b i h i a ṣ - Ṣ a g h ī r, and next 'A b d R a b b i h i a l - K a b ī r (Y a ' q ū b ī, *Tārīkh*, II, p. 329). A l - M u b a r r a d records only one: 'A b d R a b b i h i (II, pp. 236, 237). We may conclude that he was thinking of 'A b d R a b b i h i a l - K a b ī r since he states that more than half of the azraqites, about 8000, the majority of whom were mawālī and Persians, followed this 'A b d R a b b i h i.

but the mawālī who were recruited locally probably left them at home. In all, Qaṭarī gathered about 10 000 followers about him ; there may have been a higher proportion of mawālī than Arabs among the Khārijites in Kirmān. This might explain why after the break-up of the Khārijites forces in Kirmān, Qaṭarī left the area and the two dissident leaders remained. Probably it was the local people who remained with the latter, while the Arabs supported Qaṭarī. The Kirmān mountains were a good refuge for people who knew them, or who had local guides. This had for many years been a place of refuge for restless elements. Shabīb b. Yazīd ash-Shaibani, for example, who was operating in Iraq in 695–696 when Qaṭarī was already in Persia, took Kūfa twice and when he was forced to withdraw took refuge here, only to emerge from the Kirmān desert after a certain period of time and return to Iraq⁵⁶.

Qaṭarī's forces were attacked by the Arabs in Ṭabaristān and thrown into disarray. Qaṭarī was killed and the rest of his supporters were defeated at Qumis.

We have well-found reasons for believing that there were Iranians in the Azraqite groups, but there are no data at all on their numbers or role in the movement. If the majority of the mawālī were Iranians, then there should somewhere be some mention of this, but even the correspondence between Ḥajjāj and Muḥallab on combatting the Khārijites in Iran gives no information about this⁵⁷. Neither is there any evidence that the Azraqī uprising in Iran took on the character of any Iranian uprising.

There is a great deal of controversy about many problems concerning the Azraqites. They were undoubtedly attacked by orthodoxy, and it was all the more difficult for them to defend themselves in that they had created a closed organization, which isolated itself from its surroundings, and thus behaved in the same way towards both enemies and sympathizers who were prepared to co-operate with them. Sympathizers could only become members of the sect by passing an examination in politics and after the sincerity of their intentions had been checked. Azraqite novices were brought a prisoner and ordered to kill him. If the novice killed the prisoner then it was accepted that he truly desired to join the sect, but if he hesitated to commit the murder, then he was considered a pagan and fraud, for which he was put to death. The Azraqites developed the uncompromising principle—which later spread to other extreme Khārijite factions—that the death penalty should also be applied to the wives and children of their enemies. And according to Azāriqa beliefs, the children of their enemies were destined for eternal damnation in hell. People who recognized the taqiyya both in words and deeds were also removed from the circle

⁵⁶ 'A b d a r - R a ḥ m ā n first withdrew from the Kūfa region to Baṣra, thence to Fārs, next to Kirmān and then on to Sīstān (*Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, p. 116). I ṣ ṭ a k h r ī states that the majority of the inhabitants of the Qafs mountains in Kirmān were Arabs (op. cit., p. 142).

⁵⁷ Ṭ a b a r ī, II, p. 972–976; I b n a l - A t h ī r, IV, p. 348; B a g h d ā d ī, pp. 68–69; I b n a l - K a t h ī r, IX, pp. 12–14, 17–20; B o s w o r t h, p. 47; L a o u s t, p. 40.

of the faithful⁵⁸. In discussion of the succession question, the Azraqites pronounced—still within the Arab context—that ‘Uthmān, Ṭalha az-Zubair, ‘A’isha, ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abbās and their followers were unbelievers and as such were condemned to eternal damnation. We can therefore observe a clear move towards increasing rigour in relation to opponents. For at first, only the Quraishī were condemned and deprived of their privileged position. Later, when discipline was increased and the principle of isolation from their surroundings began to be wholeheartedly enforced, others were also denied equal rights. When one Arab girl in the Azraqite sect wanted to marry a mawālī the group did not consent to the marriage and instead married her to one of her own race, against her will⁵⁹. As isolationists, the Azraqites were opposed to conversion by force⁶⁰, which was not a symptom of tolerance but stemmed from the principle of division of mankind into better and worse. And moreover, for those of their own circle who broke their oath, they had only one punishment—stoning, a punishment which did not figure in the Qur’ān. This punishment was also to be applied, according to Azraqite beliefs, to those who behaved disrespectfully towards respected persons or was affronted the dignity of women etc. Their intolerance was also seen in the punishment laid down for theft: the cutting off of thief’s hands.

B a g h d ā d ī draws attention to the evolution of these doctrinal changes. Initially, the Azraqites were a relatively tolerant sect, above all towards the Muḥakkima from whom they stemmed⁶¹. But soon two groups took shape among them. The first group, which was more conciliatory and tolerant, was led by one of the first Azraqites, Nāfi’ b. Azraq. Azraq probably took over the leadership of the Azraqites after the death of ‘Abdallah b. Waḍīn in 679. His pronouncements about other Khārijites branches were moderate. The extreme wing, which was formed after the disintegration of the Azraqites, was led by ‘Abd Rabbihi al-Kabīr (The Elder) and ‘Abd Rabbihi aṣ-Ṣaghīr (The Younger). The first of these leaders was responsible for the thesis that it was necessary to differentiate two groups of non-Azraqite foreigners and to treat them differently: those who stayed at home during war should be forgiven for the fact that they did not join the Azraqites, but those who fought against the Azraqites should be condemned⁶², which obviously implied the necessity of taking up arms against them.

In this period, at this stage in the development of Khārijism, the Azraqites were receiving help from the local Iranian population which is what kept them in existence, for they were mainly active in Kirmān, far from their home territory. The local

⁵⁸ B a g h d ā d ī, p. 48; A s h ‘ a r ī, pp. 86–87, 88, 89.

⁵⁹ A s h ‘ a r ī, p. 88.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 86, 88–89.

⁶¹ B a g h d ā d ī, p. 48; A s h ‘ a r ī, pp. 86–87. The law that women should during menstruation cease to pray and observe a ritual fast (R. R u b i n a c c i, *Azariḳa*, EI 2) is taken over from other religions. This was preserved in a similar form in late Ismailism. Cf. N ā ṣ i r - i K h u s r a w, *Wajh-i dīn*, Tehrān 1343, p. 249.

⁶² A s h ‘ a r ī, p. 86. A l - M u b a r r a d presents N ā f i ‘ as an extreme Khārijite (II, pp. 180–181).

