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THE MURJI'A AND THE THEOLOGICAL

SCHOOL OF ABŪ HANĪFA

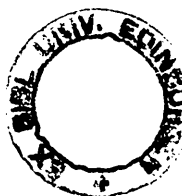
A HISTORICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL STUDY

presented by

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TO MY PARENTS

ABSTRACT

Towards the end of the 7th century A.D., Iraq was in a state of near civil war, caused by social and political malaise. Factional and tribal feuds and fierce antagonism to the Umayyad reign threatened the survival of the dynasty as the unifying force of the empire. Into this situation, al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya (d.c. 100/718), a grandson of 'Alī, introduced a peace formula which was intended to pacify the rival religio-political parties. This idea found adherence especially among religious scholars, who quickly broadened its basis, attracting followers to its pacific message. Despite an unstable record of relations with the court, the movement basically supported with its ideology the legitimacy of the Umayyad reign. The popularity of the movement, especially in some scholarly circles in Kufa, led to the formation of a school of religious thought, which had relied on the basic political and religious attitudes of the early Murji'a, but transformed it into a comprehensive theological system. Although not responsible for the actual forging of Murji'ite attitudes, Abū Ḥanīfa had emerged as the eponymous epitome of the movement and the theological school.

The first chapter, "Irjā', The Development of the Idea", investigates several possibilities as the

source of this notion, among them the alleged Qur'ānic origin, and the Kitāb al-Irjā' attributed to al-Hasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya. The second chapter, "The Formation of the Murji'a as a Religio-Political Movement" surveys the social and the historical background of the Kufan milieu, the formation of the Murji'ite circle and the social elements it was comprised of, and the position of the movement in political and religious affairs in the first two decades of the 8th century A.D. The third and last chapter, "The Transformation of the Murji'a from a Political into a Religiously-Oriented School" studies and analyses what is believed to be genuine Murji'ite treatises of religious thought, in comparison to sources of a contemporary rival school and the heresiographers. Special emphasis was laid in the analysis on the subject of theology as a medium for political views.

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TABLE OF TITLES AND ABBREVIATIONS

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Aghānī s.v. Isfahānī

Akhbār al-Qudāt s.v. Wakī'

al-Akhbār al-Tiwāl s.v. al-Dīnawrī

al-A'lāq al-Nafīsa s.v. Ibn Rusta

al-'Ālim s.v. al-'ālim wa'l muta'allim

'Amr b. 'Ubayd s.v. Van Ess

Anfänge s.v. Van Ess

Ansāb (Ahlwardt) s.v. Balādhurī

Ansāb (MS) s.v. Balādhurī

al-Ansāb s.v. Sam'ānī

Arab Kingdom s.v. Wellhausen

Bidāya (wa-Nihāya) s.v. Ibn Kathīr

Dhikr akhbār Iṣbahān s.v. Iṣbahānī

Early Development (of Islamic Jurisprudence) s.v. Hasan.

Faḍl al-I'tizāl s.v. 'Abd al-Jabbār

Fajr al-Islam s.v. Amīn

al-Farq s.v. Baghdādī (Abū Mansūr)

Fiqh Absat s.v. Fiqh Absat

Fiqh Akbar s.v. Māturīdī

Firaq al-Shī'a s.v. Nawbakhtī

Formative Period s.v. Watt

Free Will s.v. Watt

- GAS (Geschichte des arabischen
Schrifttums) s.v. Sezgin
- Gharīb al-Ḥadīth s.v. Abu 'Ubayd
- "God's Caliph" s.v. Watt
- Herrschenden s.v. Von Kremer
- Hilyat al-Awliyā' s.v. Abu Nu'aym
- al-Īdāh s.v. al-Nīsābūrī
- I'jāz al-Qur'ān s.v. Bālqilānī
- al-'Ilal s.v. Ibn Ḥanbal
- al-Imāma wa'l Siyāsa s.v. Ibn Qutayba
- al-Imām al-Qāsim s.v. Madelung
- 'Iqd s.v. Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi
- al-Iqdām s.v. Shahrastānī
- IS s.v. Ibn Sa'd (Ṭabaqāt)
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- Jalālayn s.v. Suyūṭī
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- Kitāb al-Īmān s.v. Abū 'Ubayd
- Lisān al-'Arab s.v. Ibn Manzūr
- Lisān al-Mizān s.v. Ibn Ḥajar
- Ma'ārif s.v. Ibn Qutayba
- al-Ma'rifa s.v. al-Fasawī
- Ma'rifat al-Qurrā' s.v. al-Dhahābī
- Maqālāt s.v. al-Ash'arī
- MC (Muslim Creed) s.v. Wensinck
- Miftah al-Sa'āda s.v. Tashkōprizade

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MS (Muslim Studies) s.v. Goldziher
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etc.)
"New Sources" s.v. Schacht
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Risāla ilā ʿUthmān al-Battī s.v. Risāla ilā ʿUthmān al-Battī
SE (Syrian Edition) s.v. al-ʿālim waʿl mutaʿallim
Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāgha s.v. Ibn Abīʿl Ḥadīd
Studia Islamica s.v. Madelung ("Early Sunnī Doctrine"
etc.)
Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz s.v. al-Dhahabī
Tahdhib s.v. Ibn Hajar
al-Tanbīh s.v. Masʿūdī
Taʿrīkh Baghdād s.v. al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī
Taʿrīkh al-Islām s.v. al-Dhahabī
Taʿrīkh Wāsīt s.v. Bahshal
Taʿwīl (Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth) s.v. Ibn Qutayba
"Theology and Law" (in Islam) s.v. Schacht

Usd al-Ghāba s.v. Ibn al-Athīr

Vorlesungen s.v. Goldziher

Wafayāt s.v. Ibn Khaḷlikān

... "My friend, for us the alluring times of old
Are like a book that's sealed-up sevenfold
And what you call the Spirit of the Ages
Is but the spirit of learned sages
Whose mirror is a pitiful affair"...

Goethe's Faust, I, "Night".

INTRODUCTION

The field of Muslim theology has been mostly studied so far on the basis of sources dealing merely with doctrinal issues. This statement is particularly valid with regard to subjects connected with the Muslim sects. The single-minded nature of the heresiographic literature is probably the main reason for the neglect of different aspects, other than theological in the study of the development of Muslim religious thought.

This work has chosen to study and reconstruct both the historical and theological development of a trend, which was apparently considered "orthodoxy" in its time, if we may borrow this inappropriate term. The historical aspect, which many scholars neglected or under-rated, was found in the course of research to shed light on the theological evolution of the Murji'ite movement. It also put in perspective its theological principles as a partial reflection of the historical circumstances in which Murji'ite theologians acted.

A methodological difficulty experienced during research was the extreme diffusion of relevant information in a great number of sources. This, in turn, entailed the perilous task of gathering information from sources which differ in period, bias

and style. Therefore, source critique and clarifying remarks were incorporated, to the extent possible, in the appropriate places.

The study concentrates on what it defines as the "mother-movement" of the Murji'a, which seemingly originated from a historical situation which will be discussed in the first chapter. Hence, the term Murji'ites repeatedly used in the thesis, is meant as people who adhered to the group which was formed as a consequence of this situation. This is to distinguish the term as it is employed in this study from the nick-name "Murji'ite" which was ^{applied} ~~labeled~~ by Pro-'Alids, Khawārij and Qadarites on persons who opposed either of them.

The basic assumption of this thesis was not to treat the Murji'a as a heretical sect. Following the study of various sources the conclusion was reached that the best term to define the group in its early stage is "movement". The reason for that will become more evident in the course of reading. For the moment, it can be reasoned with its vagueness as regards size. This term also conveys some kind of framework and ideological direction, which were certainly true for the early Murji'a.

Another term which may require explanation is "school", the appellative used to define the Murji'a in its later "theological stage". Up to now, it has been considered that the Mu'tazila was the first

theological school in Islam. The reason for that, it is assumed, is that the criteria on a basis of which an ideological circle is called a school (i.e. the availability of writings of the founders which attest the ideological activity of the circle) cannot be applied to the early Murji'ite circle. For this reason only the later Hanafite form of theological circle was considered a school. However, since early Murji'ite treatises have meanwhile seen light, and the theological activity of the leading Murji'ite scholars as reflected by these treatises, and by rival sources do bear all the signs of a school, including the possession of a theological system, it was considered appropriate to regard them as a school.

Another term to be qualified is "Shī'ite". Although it connotes a meaning which is not chronologically appropriate, it was merely used as synonymous to "Pro-'Alid".

The chronological realm of the work spans from the end of the 7th century A.D. into the second half of the 8th century.

The direction of this study had been inspired by an article by Joseph Schacht, "New Sources for the History of Muhammadan Theology", in which he called for a ~~search of~~ ^{search of} ~~discover~~ new materials and to draw new information from existing sources in order to fill the gaps of our knowledge of unknown aspects of Muslim theology.

All the Murji'ite treatises mentioned in his article are, to the best of my knowledge, used for the first time in the form of a comparative study between themselves and rival sources which deal with Murji'ite theology.

CHAPTER I

IRJĀ' : THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA

The discussion on the origin of the notion of Irjā' will follow in chronological order. This implies that the Qur'ānic context will be considered first despite the fact that the suggestion of this source as the origin was voiced no earlier than the 9th or the 10th century.

1) The Alleged Qur'ānic Origin

The word "Irjā'" in its form as Nomen Verbi (maṣḍar) does not occur in the Qur'ān. However, other forms do occur there as derivations of the roots R-J-W and R-J-',⁽¹⁾

From among all these some occidental scholars point out the form appearing in Sura IX (al-Tawba), verse 106 as the one which provided the ideological background to the theological principle which is associated with the theological school of Abū Hanīfa.⁽²⁾

(1) For the full list see Flügel's Concordance, s.v.

(2) See for example Wensinck's article "Murdji'a", E.I.¹ III, p.734; Seale, p.87; Formative Period, p.123; "Kitāb al-Irjā'", p.28.

In that section of Sūra IX the Prophet referred to a group from the Anṣār which apparently absconded during the expedition of Tabūk.⁽³⁾ He distinguished among the shirkers three different categories of sin and motive: "Those who rebelled out of hypocrisy - would be punished twice"⁽⁴⁾; "Those who admitted their faults would be forgiven"⁽⁵⁾ and others, whose status was not defined, "murjawna li-'amr allāh imma yu'adhdhibuhum wa-imma yatūbu 'alayhim".⁽⁶⁾

Undoubtedly, the form "murjawna" is the Nomen Patientis (Ism al-Maf'ūl) of the root R-J-W in the IVth stem.⁽⁷⁾ From free interpretation of the verse it is possible to understand that the third group mentioned by the Prophet had not been given an immediate judgement by Allāh, i.e., they were postponed to await Allāh's decree. This is also the conclusion of a number of the commentators.⁽⁸⁾

(3) Cf. Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī, Vol. XIV, p.464 (Ed. M. Shākir).

(4) Ibid., verse 101.

(5) Ibid., verse 102.

(6) Ibid., verse 106.

(7) Variants in text are to be discussed later.

(8) Ibid.; cf. also: al-Zamakhsharī's Kashshāf, ii, p.263; Baydāwī, ii, p.463; al-Qurtubī, viii, p.252; Jalālayn, i, p.104. They all remarked: "and hence, the murji'a".

Despite this, there arises a grammatical difficulty in trying to translate the form "murjawna" with more accuracy.

It seems that some lexicographers suggested a definite distinction between the roots R-J-W and R-J-',⁽⁹⁾ owing to the fact that all the forms which derive from the root R-J-W have the meaning of "to hope" in the Ist stem, or "to cause hope" in the IVth stem. This, in clear contrast to all the forms which derive from the root R-J-', which is used only in the IVth stem; the latter have the meaning of "to postpone" or "to suspend".⁽¹⁰⁾

(9) Cf. al-Firūzābādī's al-Qāmūs, s.v. He explicitly distinguished between the roots, and added that the grammatical derivation of the term "Murji'a" is from the root R-J-'. Cf. also: Lane, s.v., pp.1033 and 1049.

(10) Ibid. See also al-Rāzī's statement, arguing with the heresiographers who claimed that the Murji'ites derived their name from their motto - "narjū an yakūn(a) mu'min(an) (with regard to the grave sinner); refuting this, he said that "murji'a" stems from arja'a "min bāb af'ala". Whereas "wa-narjū huwa min rajā... min bāb fa'ala". "To follow the former", he ruled, "is ignorance of the language". Al-Zayyina, p.262.

This suggestion seems to be corroborated by two traditions ascribed to Ibn 'Abbās (d.68/687), which are seemingly derived from his tafsīr, out of which excerpts were preserved in Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī.

The first tradition is quoted by Ṭabarī in the commentary to Sūra XXXIII (al-Ahzāb) verse 51, dealing with the attitude of the Prophet to his wives. It runs as follows: (11)

TURJĪ (sic) MAN TASHĀ'U MINHUNNA,
"UMMAHĀT AL-MU'MINĪN", WA-TU'WĪ ILAYKA
MAN TASHĀ'U - "ya'nī nisā' al-nabiyy;
wa-ya'nī bi'l irjā' yaqūl : man shi'ta
khalayta sabīlahu minhunna; wa-ya'nī
yaqūl : man aḥbabta amsakta minhunna". (12)

Ibn 'Abbās gave the meaning of the form "turjī" (or turji') (13) through the Nomen Verbi "irjā'" contrasted

(11) The Qur'ānic quotation in block letters; Ibn 'Abbās' commentary in quote marks.

(12) Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī, (Cairo edition, 1301), Vol. XXII, p.16.

(13) The form "arjā'" is mentioned in the same entry of the root R-J-' in Lane's dictionary, as a secondary differentiation expressing the same meaning. Etymologically, as well as in meaning,

to "īwā'"; i.e., "to put off" or "to let off" contrasted with its antonym "to retain", "to give shelter". It is true that by putting the form in its *Nomen Verbi* the meaning of "irjā'" can be equivocally interpreted, since it is common to "arja'a" (to postpone) and to "arjā" (to give hope). However, contrasted with its antonym, the meaning of the form "turjī" is clear, and can be safely understood to indicate the meaning of "to put off", as it was later classified by al-Firūzābādī as deriving from the root R-J-'.

The other tradition is concerned with Sūra IX, verse 106 itself, where Ibn 'Abbās was explaining the afore-mentioned form "murjawna".⁽¹⁴⁾ The commentary runs as follows: "lamma nazalat hādhihi'l āya" (i.e., verse 103, in which it is told that Allāh told the Prophet to collect money from those people who were in a position of "murjawna" for charity, and by that to help them to atone their sin) - "āhadha rasūl Allāh min amwālihim wa-taṣaddaqa bihā 'anhum. Wa-baqiya al-thālātha wa-lam yūthiqū" (despite the opportunity they were given to chasten themselves, they could not yet be confident [as to their fate] - "wa-lam yudhkarū

the form derives from R-J-' even when the hamza is omitted in the accidance. See also al-Dānī, p.119, where the alternative reading "turji'" appears.

(14) See Tabarī, Tafsīr (M. Shākir edition), Vol.xiv, p.464.

bi'shay' wa-lam yanzil 'udhruhum. Wa-dāqat 'alayhim
al-ard bi-mā rahubat; fa-ja'ala al-nās yaqūlūna :
halakū ! idh lam yanzil lahum 'udhr. Wa-ja'ala
ākharūna yaqulūna : 'asā Allāh an yaghfir(a) lahum".

The explanation of Ibn 'Abbās seems to be stressing the element of hope in the anticipation of the three for Allāh's decision, particularly after they had been given hope of pardon through charity. Hence, it is suggested that the literary meaning of the form "murjawna" corresponds with "hope", and that the verse should be interpreted as follows:

"AND OTHERS WERE IN A STATE IN WHICH
THEY COULD^{wait with} HOPE TO ~~SEE~~ WHETHER ALLĀH
WILL PUNISH THEM OR WHETHER HE WILL
FORGIVE THEM."

Aside from the fact that these two early extracts of exegesis show a distinction in etymology as well as in meaning between the two roots, the second excerpt supports the suggestion that the form "murjawna" connotes "hope" and does not derive from the root R-J-'.

The lack of distinction and the confusion between the two roots, and hence, the identification of the form "murjawna" in Sūra IX verse 106 with the Murji'a, were the result of the religious prejudice of the commentators, and following them, some of the

lexicographers.⁽¹⁵⁾ The source of confusion may have arisen from the heretical opinions ascribed to the Murji'ites, depicting them as the people who said with reference to the grave sinner "narjū an yakūn(a) mu'min(an)", thus corrupting the lexical and literary distinction between the roots and drawing the lexicographers into error.

1.a) The Version of the Qurra' - Textual Variants

The allegations that have been aimed at the commentators and some of the lexicographers regarding the mis-identification of the ^{etymological} ~~lingual~~ origin of Irjā' cannot apply to qirā'āt (reading variants) which are attributed to Qur'an reciters who lived much earlier than the commentators, and were contemporaries of the early Murji'ites.

Some of the qurrā' did suggest the reading "murja'ūna" (which would make it possible to be categorised as a derivation of R-J-'), among them two of the seven authorities of the authorised readings, 'Abdallāh b. 'Āmir (d. 118/736) and Ibn Kathīr (d. 126/744).⁽¹⁶⁾ However, it is very unlikely to bear any theological significance; and, moreover, no mention is

(15) Cf. Ibn al-Sikkīt, i, p.146; Lisan, entry R-J-A.

(16) Al-Dānī, p.119.

made of the Murji'a there. It is more probable that such reading merely reflected the local dialect or school of qirā'āt of the qāri'. (17)

A different reading, which supports the view suggested in the former section regarding the meaning of the form "murjawna", is attributed to the grammarian al-Mubarrad (d.282/895), who construed it in the sense of "hope". (18)

Into consideration should be taken the possibility that the form "murjawna" is the consequent of Tarkhīm (softening) (19) of the reading. However, it is no more than a mere conjecture, which no commentator or qirā'a seems to voice.

As we shall see later, the evidence which relates to Irjā' in its historical context indicates that its meaning as a political attitude has etymological and literal links which could derive only from the meaning implied by the root R-J-'.

(17) Cf. GAS, i, p.4.

(18) Quoted from al-Qurtubī's Tafsīr, viii, p.252.

(19) Cf. Wright, ii, p.88.

2) Possible Historical Roots

The attitude which may have later been developed to Irjā' is mentioned for the first time with regard to the formation of political groups as a consequence of the fitna of 656. This attitude originated among leading Ṣahābis like Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar, Ka'b b. Mālik, Maslama b. Mukhlid, Fadāla b. 'Ubayd, Ka'b b. 'Ajra, Zayd b. Thābit, Usāma b. Zayd and Qudāma b. Mad'ūn. They were said to have been approached by both Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān who led the party which was seeking vengeance for the death of 'Uthmān, and by 'Alī b. Abī Tālib. Despite the appeals, the Ṣahābis refused to take sides and remained neutral. (20) Despite the impression conveyed by the sources, the abstention from joining one of the camps does not seem as the result of an organised amalgamation.

Other reports suggest even more explicit evidence that the fitna which followed the assassination of 'Uthmān in 656 gave birth to the group which propagated the notion of Irjā'. One report by Muqaddasī states

(20) See: Iqd, v, pp.80-81; Usd al-Ghāba, ii, p.292; al-Imāma wa'l Siyāsa, i, p.53; al-Akhbār al-Tiwāl, (Cairo edition), pp.142-43; Abū'l Fidā', i, p.171; Muqaddima, p.214; Cf. also Formative Period, pp.72ff.

that the origins of the schism in the Muslim community derived from the Shī'a, the Khawārij, the Murji'a and the Mu'tazila who branched off the body of the Umma following the murder of 'Uthmān.⁽²¹⁾ The other source is the Mu'tazilite heresiographer al-Nāshi' (al-Akbar) (d.293/906). He maintained that the great fitna split the community into seven factions, one of which he called "Murji'a". Those Murji'ites, he claimed, left the ~~the~~ rewarding for good deeds and punishing for sins to Allāh, and refused to declare who was kāfir and to shed blood of fellow-Muslims.⁽²²⁾

Ahmad Amīn quoted Ibn 'Asākir as stating that the Murji'ites were a group of warriors (shukkāk) who fought in the maghāzi. He reported that they complained to the people of Medina that before they had left for the wars the community was united, and in their absence the unity had faded. Their solution to the rift in the Umma was not to disavow or curse 'Uthmān or 'Alī, but to postpone their judgement to Allāh.⁽²³⁾

(21) Muqaddasī, p.38.

(22) Al-Nāshi' al-Akbar, pp.19-20.

(23) Fajr al-Islām, p.279. Professor Watt suggested in this connection that the term "shukkāk" should be interpreted as "doubters" despite the text, which seems to link it with the Maghāzī. The "doubt", according to him, was in the choice between the 'Alids and the party led by Mu'āwiya.

All the reports quoted above point at the great fitna as the political trauma which instigated the disintegration of the relative political unity of the Umma. However, the statements of al-Muqaddasī and of al-Nāshī' al-Akbar bear the hallmark of the Murji'ite image as seen by the heresiographers, projected back two centuries or more.

It does seem plausible as a historic situation, that at a time of political schism a third neutral block would emerge, and would either take a non-aligning, passive stand, or adopt a pacifying active role. The available information is not helpful in determining the precise position of the Ṣahābis. At any rate, the reports which speak of a Murji'ite group seem to be most likely premature for the period and quite spurious.

One conclusion can be safely drawn. As we shall see later, the fitna indeed constituted the central historical event, to which the Murji'ites would look back in order to define their stand in their attempt to reconcile the rival factions.

Although the form of neutrality which later characterised an element of the Murji'ite ideology was to be of an entirely different nature, it is not completely unlikely that the principle of pacific abstention from the rivalry did derive its existence from the stand of the Ṣahābis after the fitna. At some stage the term "Irjā'" may have emerged before the

beginning of the last decade of the 7th century. Otherwise it is impossible to understand the statement in Naqā'id which reports that 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr was assisted by Murji'ites when Mecca was besieged by the Syrian troops of 'Abd al-Mālik. (24)

At any rate, no matter how historically early it may be, the notion of Irjā', or a similar idea with the same implication, was still amorphous in its practical application at that time, and did not assume the form ^{it was to take after} the appearance of Kitāb al-Irjā' of al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya.

3) Kitāb al-Irjā': The Nascent Idea

The appearance of Kitāb al-Irjā', an epistle ascribed to al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, is pointed out by a number of sources as the event which brought the notion of Irjā' into wide-spread circulation.

Al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya (d.c. 99-101/717-720) (25) was a grandson of 'Alī b. Abī Tālib, but unlike Ḥasan and Ḥusayn his father was not a son of Fātima, but an off-spring of the woman from Banū Ḥanīfa whom 'Alī took as a second wife.

(24) Naqā'id, i, p.118.

(25) See IS, v, p.241; Nasab Quraysh, p.75.

The Kitāb is rather more in the form of a Risāla. According to Ibrāhīm b. 'Uyayna (d. 199/814)⁽²⁶⁾, al-Ḥasan asked a mawlā of his, 'Abd al-Wahīd b. al-Aymān, to circulate the Risāla by reading it publicly in various centres of the Empire.⁽²⁷⁾

The Risāla ^{was} preserved and quoted in Kitāb al-Īmān by Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Yahya b. Abī 'Umar al-'ADANĪ (d. 243/856)⁽²⁸⁾, and ~~was~~ later been quoted by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī⁽²⁹⁾. Ya'qūb b. Shayba (d. 262/875) preserved it in his Musnad 'Alī, fragments of which are to be found in Musnad al-Kabīr al-Mu'allal⁽³⁰⁾, from which al-Dhahabī seems to have derived the version which is quoted in Ta'rīkh al-Islām.⁽³¹⁾

An edition of the Risāla⁽³²⁾ and an article thereon ^{have been} written by J. van Ess.⁽³³⁾

(26) Mīzān al-I'tidāl, No. 164.

(27) Shahrastānī, i, p.228 (Cairo Edition).

(28) See GAS, i, p.111.

(29) See Tahdhib, ii, pp.320ff.

(30) Cf. GAS, i, p.144.

(31) Ibid., iii, pp.358ff.

(32) The version of Ibn Abī 'Umar al-'Adanī.

(33) See "Kitāb al-Irgā' des Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya", Arabica, xxiii(1974), pp.20-52.

As suggested by J. van Ess, the Risāla is the earliest known document that speaks of the notion of Irjā'.⁽³⁴⁾ The connection between al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya and the Risāla is corroborated by biographical information provided in numerous works.⁽³⁵⁾ Supporting the respective versions of the Risāla in Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb and Ta'rīkh al-Islām are reports ascribed to contemporaries of al-Ḥasan. These statements by Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī (the Baṣran jurist, d.131/748) and Zādhān (a Kufan scholar, d. 82/701) seem to confirm al-Ḥasan's authorship of the Risāla.⁽³⁶⁾

The Risāla is most likely authentic, and this

(34) Ibid., p.20.

(35) See: IS, v, p.241; Ibn al-Murtadā's Kitāb al-Munya, pp.17, 25; al-Bustī did not mention the Risāla or the notion of Irjā', but he reported that al-Ḥasan was a staunch supporter of Abū Bakr and 'Umar. As we shall see later that was a way to identify a person with Irjā'. Mashāhīr 'Ulamā' al-Amsār, p.62. In Fadl al-I'tizāl al-Ḥasan is referred to as the founding master of Irjā'. Ibid., p.266. Cf. also al-Nawawī's Tahdhīb al-Asmā', i/1, p.160.

(36) See: Ta'rīkh al-Islām, iii, p.358; Tahdhīb, ii, p.320.

question has been thoroughly discussed by J. van Ess in the article mentioned. (37)

4) The Meaning of Irjā' in the Risāla

The Risāla can be divided into two main sections. The introduction is characterised by features characteristic of a salvation story. Al-Hasan here reviewed the emergence of Islām, the moral values it introduced and the Jāhilite age it superseded. This part of the Risāla is very long and it seems as if al-Hasan prolonged it deliberately. By emphasizing his pious beliefs and values he was probably trying to safeguard himself from accusations of infidelity. Knowing the factions he was attacking, he was not needlessly apprehensive; an accusation of infidelity could have been the least he would be charged with.

Only after he completed this preamble, which was meant to convey that his attitude stemmed from piety and concern for the preservation of the unity of the Umma, did he turn to his chief message:

"As Allāh had destined for this
community, a discord (fitna) has

(37) See "Kitāb al-Irjā'", pp. 38, 40-46.

broken out⁽³⁸⁾ with regard to which we proclaim ourselves [if asked our position]: we belong to the group whose master is Allāh, whose religious custom is Islām, (al-islām dīnunā) whose guide is the Qur'ān, whose Prophet is Muḥammad."⁽³⁹⁾

Then al-Ḥasan turned to illustrate this stand in terms of political loyalty. According to him, all the features which characterised the group he described were to be found in the community during the reign of Abū Bakr and 'Umar. Therefore, he continued,

"from among our leaders (a'immatunā) we are pleased (in agreement) with Abū Bakr and 'Umar; we shall be content if they [their status or authority] are obeyed, and we shall dislike it if they [their status or authority] are renounced. We shall

(38) On prophecies of the fitna in the Qur'ān and mainly in the Ḥadīth see "Kitāb al-Irjā'", pp.27f.

(39) Ibid., pp.23, 5ff.

consider anyone who opposes us
enemies to them." (40)

The rest of his proclamation runs as follows:

"wa-nurjī minhum ahl al-furqa al-ūlā,
wa-nujāhid fī Abī Bakr wa-'Umar bi'l-
wilāya. wa-inna Abā Bakr wa-'Umar -
lam taqtatil fīhimā al-umma, wa-tashukk
fī amrihimā. wa-innamā al-irjā' fīman
'āba al-rijāl wa-lam nashhudhu". (41)

J. van Ess asserts that the term "Irjā'" occurring
in the Risāla is etymologically linked with Sūra
xxxiii, (al-Ahzāb), verse 51. (42) Therefore, he
concludes that the form "Irjā'" stems from arjā and

(40) It is interesting to note that the last sentence
used the terminology of 'Alī's supporters before
the battle with Mu'āwiya. Cf. Tabarī, i, p.3350.

(41) Al-Dhahabī's version: "fīman ghāba 'an al-rijāl
wa-lam yashhudūhu".

(42) "Turjī man tashā'u minhunna, wa-tu'wī ilayka man
tashā'u". The verse deals with the relationship
of the Prophet with his wives. See also
Supra, pp.8-9.

not from arja'a, and that the latter form is a secondary differentiation of the infinitive.⁽⁴³⁾

This assumption is not sufficiently proven.⁽⁴⁴⁾

However, van Ess thinks that the meaning of Irjā' in the Risāla is not really associated with the contextual meaning of Sūra xxxiii, verse 51, as it is linked with the form "murjawna" in Sūra ix, verse 106.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Van

Ess suggests that the difference between "to give hope" (as in arjā) and "to postpone" (as in arja'a) is minimal, and therefore they can be regarded as expressing the same meaning.⁽⁴⁶⁾ This argument cannot

be acceptable for two reasons. Etymologically, these two forms seem to derive from disparate roots which possess different meanings. If some link does exist between the forms arjā and arja'a, it is when the former is a secondary differentiation of the latter, and when they both represent the same meaning.⁽⁴⁷⁾

Secondly, the meaning of the infinitive "to postpone" gives no indication whatsoever as to the status of

(43) Cf. "Kitāb al-Irjā'", p.28.

(44) Cf. Lane, s.v. R-J-', in which the opposite is stated.

(45) "Kitāb al-Irjā'", loc. cit. See also Supra, section 1), pp.1-6.

(46) "Kitāb al-Irjā'", p.29.

(47) Cf. Lane, s.v.

the "postponed"; no sense of either optimism or pessimism can be connoted with it, since one would not know what to expect when judgement is suspended. On the other hand, with the infinitive "to give hope" the contrast is clear. Hence, the two forms do not possess an interchangeable meaning in the context of the Risāla. The context in which the term "Irjā'" was used in the Risāla supports this claim; al-Ḥasan did not intend to give hope, but to postpone judgement as to those who were responsible for causing the disunion in the Umma.

The conclusion of this discussion is that the term "Irjā'" in the Risāla stems from the form arja'a, and that the form "wa-nurjī" (minhum etc., as suggested by van Ess) should be read wa-nurji' etc. However, two other possible readings and interpretations of this form should be mentioned.

The first suggested reading is "wa-nurjī", while the form represents the IVth stem, future tense, of the form "rajiya", which in the 1st stem means "to remain silent" or "to become silent".⁽⁴⁸⁾ The proposed form in the IVth stem is merely theoretical. However, considering the fact that dictionaries like Lisān did not even record the form "rajiya" in the 1st stem, whereas in al-Firūzābādī's al-Qāmūs not only

(48) Al-Qāmūs, s.v.; Al-Mu'jam al-Wasīt, s.v.

was the 1st stem preserved but also the VIIIth, it can be argued, however faintly, that the IVth stem of "rajiya" may have just as well gone astray or forgotten. If this is accepted, even if only conjecturally, Irjā' in the context of the Risāla could be interpreted as an appeal for quietism, a principle which is implied by al-Hasan. (49)

Another suggested reading stems as well from "rajiya", in the IVth stem, future tense - "wa-nurjī". However, it would be understood in accordance with the principle of "Salb" ("Negativeness"), according to which the IVth stem expresses the opposite meaning of the 1st stem. (50) Hence, the meaning of "wa-nurjī" could either mean "we shall not remain silent", or rather "we shall silence [them]". In this spirit, the continuation of the sentence - "wa-nujāhid" etc., may be understood to hint at jihād, thus suggesting that al-Hasan considered those who kindled the disunion as heretics, against whom jihād is a mandatory act. If this is acceptable, the sentence "wa-innamā al-irjā'" etc. could be interpreted as follows:
...Hence, silencing [them] is the action we take with regard to those who were faulty, those men who are

(49) In this case, the verb will be intransitive and denominative. Cf. Wright, ii, p.34/D.

(50) Cf. Ibid., p.36/A. For example: 'ajama (Ist) - "to be obscure". vs. a'jama (IVth) - "to

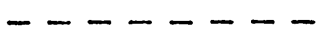
gone now ("innamā al-irjā' fī man ghāba [‘an](51)
al-rijāl wa-lam nashhudhu").

In conclusion of the ^{etymological} discussion, it seems that from among all the possibilities mentioned, the form "nurji'" (or "nurjī" derivation R-J-'), meaning "to postpone" [judgement] is the most plausible. The other forms, although theoretically possible, do not convey the same explicit and unequivocal meaning as the first form. Therefore, the meaning of the term "Irjā'" in the Risāla should be understood as "postponement of judgement towards former generations of whom we do not know all the particulars".

Grammatically, it seems that the term is analogous etymologically and in its basic meaning to the form "turjī" in Sūra xxxiii, verse 51, although the issues are, obviously, different.

5) The Historical Circumstances

Al-Hasan's fame and reputation must be primarily due to his being an off-spring of Ahl-al-Bayt, namely a grandson of 'Alī. He was a son of a woman who belonged to the Qurayshite gentry, Jamāl bint Qays



clarify by inserting diacritical signs".

(51) Like in Ta'rīkh al-Islām.

b. Muḥammad b. al-Muṭṭalib b. 'Abd Manāf b. Qusayy. Apart from his social status he was well-known as a reliable rāwiya. 'Amr b. Dīnār (d. 126/743) and especially al-Zuhrī (d. 125/742) relied on him as a transmitter of ahādīth, and the latter, it is reported, felt extremely attached to him, considering him an adopted son.⁽⁵²⁾ His authority is acknowledged by the fact that opinions of his regarding some of his contemporaries were preserved.⁽⁵³⁾ He was considered witty and learned⁽⁵⁴⁾ and was renowned for his prominence in Ikhtilāf.⁽⁵⁵⁾ He was preferred to his brother Abū Hāshim⁽⁵⁶⁾ probably for the interest shown by the latter in ahādīth of the Saba'iyya.⁽⁵⁷⁾

(52) Tahdhīb, ii, p.320; quoted from Anfänge, p.10.

(53) Cf. Tahdhīb, iv, pp.228f.

(54) See IS, v, p.241.

(55) Bustī, p.62; Ma'rifa, i, p.543; al-Zuhrī in Ta'rīkh al-Islām, iii, p.357; Madelung understands "Ikhtilāf" in the context of the rivalry between the factions. al-Imām al-Qāsim, p.241; Van Ess adds that it can be understood too as legal disagreement among the fuqahā'. Anfänge, p.11.

(56) IS, ibid.

(57) Al-Ma'rifa, ii, p.742. (The term "Saba'iyya" will be discussed later).

However, it appears that al-Ḥasan's views as reflected in the Risāla and the biographical data were influenced, or rather instigated by the exploits of his father, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya. It is widely known that al-Mukhtār b. 'Ubayd al-Thaqafī, the initiator of the revolt of 686-87 in Kufa, proclaimed himself to be acting on behalf of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya.⁽⁵⁸⁾ The latter lived in retirement in Medina; by that time he probably was a political recluse, and seemed to have no real connections with al-Mukhtār and the riot he raised. Only towards the end of the revolt, apparently in the year 67/687, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya asked al-Mukhtār for help, namely to set him free from the hands of 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr, under whom he was imprisoned for refusing to swear allegiance to the Zubayrid rule in the Hijaz.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Al-Mukhtār did help him, but he was killed shortly afterwards, when the revolt was suppressed in 687.

Like his brother Abū Ḥāshim, al-Ḥasan made contact with the Kaysāniyya.⁽⁶⁰⁾ On the authority of 'Awāna⁽⁶¹⁾ it is reported that, after the death of

(58) See Tabarī, ii, p.509.

(59) See: al-Akḥbār al-Tiwāl (Cairo edition), p.269.

(60) Cf. Anfänge, p.3, note 3.

(61) The blind historian and genealogist of Kufa (d.147/764) in Ta'rīkh al-Islām, iii, p.359.

al-Mukhtār, al-Ḥasan went to Kufa and allied himself there with a group of people from the sect of the Khashabiyya⁽⁶²⁾ who chose him as their leader. Al-Ḥasan had apparently intended to join al-Mukhtār, but arrived at Kufa only after the latter had died. At that time he was supporting the movement of al-Mukhtār more actively than his father or other members of the family. However, a short time after his arrival at Kufa, al-Ḥasan was captured by a man called Muslim b. al-Astar, who was one of the supporters of the Zubayrids in Iraq. Al-Ḥasan was taken to the Ḥijaz, sentenced to imprisonment by 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr, but succeeded in escaping, finding refuge with his father in Minna.⁽⁶³⁾

The circumstances which may have given birth to the Risāla are rather obscure, and the scanty information which is available leaves room mostly for speculation. As we shall see later, the Risāla implied an unequivocal pro-Umayyad attitude, a curious stand to adopt for a member of the most notable 'Alid family at that time. It is true, of course, that both al-

(62) Seemingly one of sub-sects which hived off^{from} the Kaysāniyya after the death of al-Mukhtār.

Cf. Ma'ārif, p.622; H. Ritter, "Kaysāniyya", in EI¹.

(63) Murūj, v, p.176.

Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya and his father were in serious disagreement with the Zubayrids. However, at first glance the distance between anti-Zubayrid feelings and pro-Umayyad stance seems great indeed.

Van Ess maintains that even when al-Ḥasan joined the movement of al-Mukhtār he did not identify with the mystical ideology of the Kufans. The discord between him and the Iraqis became even more noticeable due to his criticism of the Kufans' belief regarding demons and chiliasm.⁽⁶⁴⁾ This disillusionment may have convinced al-Ḥasan to change his mind.

Al-Ḥasan expressed his ideas in a circle of Kufans, out of which six people joined him. Among them was the influential Kufan historian Abū al-Ṣa'qab Jaḥdab b. Jar'ab al-Taymī.⁽⁶⁵⁾ The discussions he held in Kufa were mainly concerned with the dominant question of the time, i.e., the attitude towards 'Uthmān. Al-Ḥasan's rejection of the mystical beliefs of the Kufans, let alone his previous intentions of joining the movement of al-Mukhtār, indicate that he was thinking in political terms. The realisation of the disintegrating movement of al-Mukhtār in Iraq, on one hand, and the fall of the Zubayrid rule in Mecca, which may have been hateful, but kept the Umayyads

(64) Cf. Anfänge, p.5; al-Imām al-Qāsim, p.229.

(65) Anfänge, *ibid.*

away, may have induced al-Hasan to come to terms with the latter.

'Abd al-Mālik himself was interested too in the relaxation of the religious and the political tensions. Into consideration should be taken the possibility that al-Hasan timed the release of the Risāla for public reading in accordance with the Bay'a his father gave 'Abd al-Mālik in 693, presumably to demonstrate a unified family stance which would blight the hopes of the Kufan rebels. However, it seems to be rather unlikely for two reasons. Firstly, as with his joining the followers of al-Mukhtār, he did not hesitate to take an independent line despite his father or the rest of the family. Secondly, Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyya was known to have been critical of al-Hasan's attitudes in the Risāla.

On the other hand, it is equally possible that the initiative to produce the Risāla was a result of pressure exerted by the Umayyads on al-Hasan. After the suppression of the revolt of al-Mukhtār and the crushing of the Zubayrid rule in the Hijaz, the Umayyads understood that the most formidable danger to their reign was the factional feud between the pro-'Alid groups and the Khawārij, and their uniform, though not unified, efforts to bring the Umayyads down. As they had realised in the revolt of al-Mukhtār, Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyya was the most important figure in Banū Hāshim, and although politically

inactive, his reputation and authority could be used as an aegis for certain groups who were conspiring against the Umayyads, claiming to act for the cause of 'Alī or his successors. Aware of the potential danger he posed and of the temporary links he maintained with al-Mukhtār, the Umayyads could easily coerce Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya to withdraw his patronage, which he denied at any rate, ^{from} any group attempting to rebel on behalf of the 'Alid cause.

However, the Umayyads were equally conscious of the religious and social status of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya in the Ḥijaz. This could have out-weighed any other consideration, and provided the Umayyads with a good reason not to challenge his prestige, and by that to provoke the Ḥijaz, which was traditionally hostile to the Umayyads. Hence, the choice of al-Ḥasan as the prospective propagator of such ideas was quite natural. He was less powerful than his father, and therefore more exposed to pressure. Yet, he was a close-enough-relation, and the best known and appreciated of Muḥammad's sons. The Umayyads may have thought that every statement he would make could stigmatise his father as pro-Umayyad in the eyes of the pro-'Alid elements in Iraq, thus neutralising him as a source of agitation.⁽⁶⁶⁾ The Umayyads must have

(66) Where it was previously suggested that al-Ḥasan

been aware of al-Ḥasan's previous connections with the adherents of al-Mukhtār, in what they could only regard as subversive activities. The prospect of his life being threatened by the Umayyads because of his past may have convinced him to accept their demand.

J. van Ess suggests financial reasons aside from political ones for the abstaining attitude implied by the Risāla. As long as the 'Alids did not have a powerful political organisation (Shī'a), they were in constant shortage of finance despite the substantial subsidies they were granted from the Dīwān of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Quoting G. Puin's dissertation⁽⁶⁸⁾ he states that the 'Alids were registered in the Dīwān of Medina as recipients of money.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Despite

timed the publishing abroad of the Risāla to be accompanied by the Bay'a of his father to 'Abd al-Mālik, it would imply that its release took place in 693. However, if the theory that the Risāla was the idea of the Umayyads, it would have been conceived in 692, when the Umayyads were not yet sure of the position of Muḥammad b. al-Hanafiyya.

(67) See Anfänge, pp.6ff.

(68) Der Dīwān von 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, Bonn, 1970.

(69) Ibid., p.113.

the fact that they were not first in the order of recipients they received an equal sum. However, from a certain ḥadīth we learn that the off-spring of 'Abbās, Ja'far, 'Aqīl and 'Alī were deprived of Ṣadaqa due, probably, to their monopoly on the Rifāda and the Siqāya during the Ḥajj. (70) It was during the time of al-Ḥasan that the question arose regarding the financial grant to which the "close relatives" of the Prophet were entitled. Precisely on this matter we find one of the few references al-Ḥasan made with regard to Qur'ān exegesis. It comments on verse 41

(70) Musnad Ibn Hanbal, iv, p.367; quoted from Anfänge, p.7. The financial difficulties in the 'Alid family were cunningly exploited by the Umayyads. They bribed notable members of the family like Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, 'Alī's sons; Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya himself received generous support from 'Abd al-Mālīk in 698, and the Bay'a he gave him five years earlier may have partly been taken with the hope of receiving financial assistance from the Umayyads. Zayn al-'Ābidīn received money from al-Mukhtār, and was pleased when 'Abd al-Mālīk let him keep it. Van Ess comments that it is not surprising that the revolts of the 'Alids until the second half of the second century were neither initiated nor

in Sūra viii (al-anfāl), which deals with the allocation of the spoils. The verse rules that a fifth of the will be shared between Allāh (i.e., the Ka'ba), the Prophet, "the close relations" (dhū al-qurbā) and the needy. After the death of the Prophet it became unclear who qualified to belong to the category of the "close relations". The various opinions were gathered by al-Ṭabarī⁽⁷¹⁾. Among the various views, Banū Hāshim were included in the category of dhū al-qurbā by Mujāhid (d. 104/722) and Zayn al-'Ābidīn⁽⁷²⁾. Al-Ḥasan was ready to share the allocation with the reigning Caliph,⁽⁷³⁾ but another report casts a serious doubt whether the deal was executed at all. Such doubt is projected by Ibn 'Asākir, who reports that the 'Alids had not received their share since the reign of Mu'āwiya, and had to wait for the settlement of their plight until the accession to power of

supported by the head of the family; only the junior off-spring could afford to act independently. Ibid.

(71) Tafsīr, (M. Shakir edition), xiii, pp. 548ff., No. 16093.

(72) Ibid., p.553, No. 16110.

(73) Ibid., Nos. 16093 and 16121.

'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz. (74)

Complex as they may be, the historical factors discussed here, or perhaps only part of them, gave birth to the Risāla and the novel ideas it introduced.

6) The Political and Theological Significance of the Risāla.

The Risāla of al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya introduced an undoubtedly new principle to the terminology of his time, although the basic stance may have been taken before, as was suggested in section 2. However, the political implications of the idea of Irjā' were quite different from the neutral stand taken by the afore-mentioned group of Ṣahābis after the fitna.

In order to understand the political logic and the scope of the Risāla, it is necessary to determine first against whom it was aimed.

Al-Ḥasan launched his chief attack at a group he named "Saba'iyya". (75) Al-Farazdaq, commenting on

(74) In C.H. Becker, "Studien zur Omajjaden Geschichte", ZA, xv(1900), p.29, n.3.

(75) Sic. in "Kitāb al-Irjā'". Al-Dhahabī read "Shī'a". However, when al-Ḥasan mentioned the term it meant "party" which did not necessarily connote with "shī'at 'Alī".

the Kufans who participated in the rising of Ibn al-Ashd̄th regarded it as a continuation of their support of al-Mukhtār, and therefore labelled them "Saba'ites".⁽⁷⁶⁾ Israel Friedlander maintained that the Saba'iyya was a sect which adopted messianic ideas that persisted among the Jews of Yemen and the Falashas of Ethiopia.⁽⁷⁷⁾ Al-Ash'arī claimed that the Saba'ites were supporters of 'Abdallāh b. Saba', and classified them as the fourteenth sect of the extreme Shī'a (al-ghulāt).⁽⁷⁸⁾ This corresponds with Ibn Qutayba's definition of Saba'ī as an extreme Shī'ite, referring to al-Mughīra b. Sa'īd.⁽⁷⁹⁾ It may

(76) Quoted from Arab Kingdom, p.241, N.1.

(77) See: I. Friedlander, "'Abdallāh b. Saba', der Begründer der Sī'a und sein jüdischer Ursprung", ZA, xxxiii(1909), pp.296-327; xxxiv(1910), pp.1-46.

(78) Maqālāt, p.15. On the identity between Saba'iyya and the extreme Shī'a c.f. Vorlesungen, chapter iii, n.30, p.323.

(79) 'Uyūn al-Akhhbār, i, p.149' Ma'ārif, p.622.
An unpublished Edinburgh University Ph.D. thesis by Muhammad O. Ṣāliḥ, "Mahdism in Islam up to 260/874, and its relations to Zoroastrian, Jewish and Christian Messianism", Edinburgh 1976, refers to the problem of the identity of the

be possible that the term "Saba'iyya" was used by al-Hasan as a nick-name for the movement of al-Mukhtār in the proverbial context, according to which the tribe of Saba' became a symbol for dispersion and disintegration.⁽⁸⁰⁾ In that case, this is a

Saba'iyya. Sālih tends to identify the Saba'iyya with the Yamaniyya - the federation of the southern tribes. The reference to the Shī'a in his view, was metaphorical, and stemmed from the traditional adherence of the South to charismatic leaders. The personal link between 'Alī, who captured and converted Southern Arabia to Islam, and the later doctrine of Mahdism may have created the basis for the alignment between "'Alism" and the South, thus minting the term "Saba'ī" as interchangeable between Shī'ite and Southern. See: Sālih, pp.60ff. Cf. also al-Tanbīh, (Leiden 1894), p.274. This explanation seems to be somewhat inappropriate in the context of the Risāla. Al-Hasan could not have possibly attacked the federation of the Southern tribes as a whole, since he was hoping to receive support from people who were either tribesmen or Mawālī of this group. See Infra, Chapter II, section 1.

(80) Yāqūt, iii, p.27; quoted from Formative Period, p.60. Cf. also, "Kitāb al-Irjā'", op.cit.

language of derision aimed at the movement which broke up into numerous factions after the death of al-Mukhtār. It is also possible that the name was used as an analogy; as 'Abdallāh b. Saba' had made 'Alī a deity in his life, so did al-Mukhtār to Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, attributing to him the virtues of a divine maḥdī.

Although it is difficult to determine the precise origin of the term, the impression is gained that at the time of al-Ḥasan Saba'iyya was understood in a broader sense than the later definitions of the heresiographers. For al-Ḥasan, the appellative Saba'iyya probably meant the supporters of the 'Alīd cause who rejected Abū Bakr and 'Umar.⁽⁸¹⁾ A clear indication that al-Ḥasan was thinking of the Kaysāniyya in the Risāla emerges from his accusation that they strived for "dawla" (transition). This

(81) A narrative by Abū Mikhnaḥ points out that the Shī'ites of Kufa were called "Rāfiḍa" when they condemned Zayd b. 'Alī after the latter refused to reject the status of Abū Bakr and 'Umar. Ṭabarī, ii, p.1699. This claim is echoed too by 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, who stated that the followers of 'Abdallāh b. Saba' were the first Rāfiḍites. al-Farq, p.21. The same group was later called by the heresiographers "Kaysāniyya". Cf. for example: Maqalāt, p.23f; al-Farq, pp.22-25.

claim is corroborated by Ibn Sa'd, and shows perhaps the first instance where the term was employed with regard to the kufan supporters of the 'Alids, and before the 'Abbāsīd use of the term. (82)

The accusations he was hurling at them were very serious indeed. He accused them of speaking ill of the Umayyads and of Allāh; he mentioned that they hoped for dawla (transition) which was to take place before the day of resurrection, (83) and, worst of all, they forged the Qur'ān and created doubts about its authenticity.

As van Ess suggests, since the Risāla can be reasonably safely identified as one of the earliest

(82) IS, quoting Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, v, p.71.

(83) It seems that al-Ḥasan deliberately mixed here political and religious terminology. It is as if he meant "divinely initiated transition" hinting really at the political transition envisaged by those Saba'ites. The insinuation of sin was made in connection with what can be understood as their violation of the principle that Allāh determines when the day of resurrection should come. The implication is that political opposition is equal to an offence against Allāh.

authentic theological texts after the Qur'ān, al-Ḥasan's use of religiously grounded arguments is significant. Particularly salient is his attempt to authenticate his argument regarding the origin of Irjā'. The reference he made was a Qur'ānic verse⁽⁸⁴⁾ which seemed appropriate to al-Ḥasan. The analogy, in which Moses is said to have answered Pharaoh that "All knowledge about former generations lies with Allāh", lacks sophistication, and the reasoning behind it is far from being elaborated. However, the example is illuminating on the styles and methods of reasoning which were employed in this nascent stage of Islamic theology. No less noteworthy are the religiously-flavoured accusations aimed by al-Ḥasan at the Saba'iyya. Discrediting one's fidelity and charges of forgery of the Qur'ān can be taken for a religio-political jargon that had rarely been used before. However, all these theologically-based arguments are to be understood in an entirely different context. That is to say that the Risāla represents an early document, if not the earliest of Islamic theological treatises, in which the pattern of expressing political views reasoned by theological arguments may have been coined.

The significance of the Risāla, and furthermore,

(84) Sūra xx (Tāha), verses 51-52.

the significance of the principle of Irjā' were chiefly political at that stage. Al-Ḥasan's declaration of enmity to a group whose goal was to bring transition was politically motivated. Although he seems to interpret their aim as sinful in religious terms, his solution, let alone his motives, was purely political. Al-Ḥasan understood that if his appeal to suspend judgement with regard to 'Uthmān and 'Alī and to leave it to Allāh was to be accepted, the main point of dispute between the pro-'Alid groups and the Khawārij would be eliminated. Consequently, his aim of pacifying the rival factions and the prevention of the out-burst of a large-scale civil war could be achieved.

Even if the connotation of quietism is absent from the term "Irjā'", the appeasing nature of the Risāla cannot go unnoticed. Al-Ḥasan intended to convey this element by advocating the necessity of obeying the law and the sovereign.⁽⁸⁵⁾ Since he probably realised the difficulty of persuading the people he addressed to abandon their religio-political affiliation, he thought that a personal endorsement of the legitimacy of the Umayyads, coming from a prominent figure like the son of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, could help to achieve it. In order to authenticate

(85) See: "Kitāb al-Irjā'", p.24, clause 9.

his call to acknowledge the Umayyads, he embellished it with yet another Qur'ānic quotation which was to demonstrate the sense of historical continuity implicit in their reign (86): THE UNBREAKABLE BOND "that had hitherto been fostered by the ancestors is maintained by their followers".(87)

7) Conclusion

The notion of Irjā' may be the revival of the neutral stand taken by 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar and other Ṣahābis after the waq'at al-Jamal and Ṣiffīn. Even if this is historically true, Irjā' in the form introduced by al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya was quite different in nature than the abstaining, and apparently passive, stance of the Ṣahābis. Al-Ḥasan himself made no mention as to an alleged reliance on such ideas. At any rate, most sources referred to him as the first advocate of Irjā', and he does indeed seem to be the earliest propagator of the notion in this form.(88)

The genesis of the principle should be sought in

(86) Qur'ānic verse in block letters; quotation from the Risāla in quote marks.

(87) Op. cit. p.21, 4-5; Sūra ii (al-baqara) verse 256 (AL-'URWA AL-WUTHQĀ LĀ 'INFISĀM(A) LAHĀ, "bihā sabiqā al-awwalūna wa-bihā adraka al-ākharūna").

(88) Cf. Ansāb, (MS.) p.517.

a political situation. Despite the relative obscurity surrounding the circumstances which prompted al-Ḥasan to release such a treatise for public reading, it is quite clear that it was done with the aim of pacifying the rival factions in Iraq. The essence of the Risāla is a formula of reconciliation between the Khawārij, who acknowledged the status of Abū Bakr and 'Umar but rejected 'Uthmān and 'Alī, and the pro-'Alid block which refused to recognise the legitimacy of the first three Caliphs, and would adhere to 'Alī exclusively.⁽⁸⁹⁾ The solution envisaged by al-Ḥasan proposed a compromise, according to which Abū Bakr and 'Umar would be acknowledged as legitimate Caliphs, whereas judgement upon 'Uthmān and 'Alī would be postponed.

The alleged Qur'ānic source of Sūra ix (al-Tawba) verse 106 is not acceptable for several reasons. There is a serious doubt as to the relevance of the form "murjawna" to the form from which the meaning "to postpone" derives. Even if the alternative reading, i.e., "murja'una" is adopted, and it is assumed for the sake of the argument that the spiritual origin of Irjā' should be sought there, neither the contextual meaning of the form, nor the Qur'ānic reference to this verse recur in either the Risāla of

(89) Cf. Ta'riḫ al-Islām, iii, p.358.

al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya or in the sources of the Murji'a of Abū Ḥanīfa's time.⁽⁹⁰⁾ It would be quite inconceivable to assume that both al-Ḥasan and Abū Ḥanīfa did not know the verse, and as it appears both men gave their own disparate Qur'ānic references to justify their respective points of view.

So much for the possibility that the Murji'ites derived the spiritual link from that verse. Although neither the commentators nor the lexicographers specify it, they may have indicated the possibility that the actual theological principle was coined at the time depicted by the Qur'ānic situation. This seems even more remote than the former theory, for the reason that no theological principle develops in vacuum. It is generally true in the history of Islamic thought, and in this case all the more so, that the origin of the notion was political. In clear contrast, the Qur'ānic usage does not bear any political significance, let alone a theological one. This, for the simple reason that at the time of the Prophet there existed no theology. In other words, the stage of spiritual development of the ideas Muḥammad had only started to conceive could not have attained such standards of sophistication as to

(90) Cf. al-'Ālim wa'l Muta'allim, pp.22, 22ff.

introduce theological, or rather, religio-political principles like Irjā'. If we accept the authenticity of the Qur'ān, we can conclude that the verse was used by the Prophet for an educational purpose. That is, in case of shirking from the battlefield Allāh punished the hypocrites, forgave those who repented and to others, whose fate was temporarily suspended, (or at least that was the way the Prophet presented the situation to the Umma), he gave another opportunity to atone their sin through charity. In this verse, as in the rest of the "revelation", the personal hallmark of the Prophet is dominant; and since his activity, statements and his influence on the formation of the Umma are historically pertinent only to his period, interpretations of the kind construed from verse 106 in Sūra ix are inappropriate.

CHAPTER II

THE FORMATION OF THE MURJI'A AS A
RELIGIO-POLITICAL MOVEMENT

Among all the other centres of the Empire, al-Hasan's appeal drew the most attention and echoed most resoundingly in Kufa. Not surprisingly, it could be hardly accepted in the Hijaz, al-Hasan's homeland. The anti-Umayyad feelings among the leading Qurayshite families, and the grudge they were bearing against the Syrian troops for their conduct in the siege of Mecca, would have doomed the reception of the Risāla.

However, at that time, it seems that Kufa was a particularly fertile land for such ideas; the emergence of al-Mukhtār, or rather his defeat, resulted in the hostile reaction of conservative circles against the 'Alids, and against those elements who made use of the 'Alid claims to the caliphate as an excuse to rebel, and as a means to power. Following the rising of al-Mukhtār, it was to 'Abdallāh Ibn al-Zubayr that the rebellious Kufans applied, seeking an alliance with him. Unconvinced that the Kufans genuinely wanted him as their caliph, Ibn al-Zubayr was reluctant to respond.

In any case, once 'Abd al-Mālīk crushed the Zubayrids in the Hijaz, Kufa was coerced, if only temporarily, into accepting Umayyad supremacy. Thus, the tendency to revolt had somewhat subsided there, or

at least remained latent. Into this political atmosphere the Risāla of al-Ḥasan was introduced. (1)

Judging^{by} the political message of the Risāla, that is, its acknowledgement of a legitimately ruling Umayyad kingship, it was unlikely to evoke a favourable response among the pro-ʿAlid elements in Kufa, which included most of the Kufan tribes and the Ashrāf. (2) They, evidently, could not identify with such a stance.

The contents and style of the Risāla determined its audience; the pious tone of the preamble, the theological reasoning al-Ḥasan was trying to exercise in explaining his views regarding the Quranic origin of the principle he had introduced, and the contents

- (1) Although we know that the Risāla had been publicly read in several towns, it seems that it was primarily aimed at Kufa. At that time it was the most antagonistic city and the one which al-Ḥasan knew at first hand, from the time he was involved with the Khashabiyya.
- (2) The majority of the tribes in Kufa were of Southern ancestry, and traditionally associated with the pro-ʿAlid cause. A map of the tribes and their respective territories in Kufa illustrates the superiority of the Southern tribes in terms of population and territorial control. See: Louis Massignon, "Explication", p.36.

of the religiously-grounded attack he launched at those he named "Saba'iyya". All these were presented in a manner which formed a common denominator of piety to be recognised by potential adherents.

Therefore, it is not surprising to find that his appeal struck roots in pious circles, which are said to be the ones from which the afore-mentioned anti-'Alid feelings originated.⁽³⁾ The people whom we can identify as belonging to these circles were largely religious scholars, a social element which by vocation or spiritual inclination enjoyed some prestige and relative political immunity; hence, they could dissociate themselves from the framework of tribal values and sectarian loyalties, regardless^{of} whether they were Arabs or Mawāli.⁽⁴⁾

Apart from scholars, we find sympathisers from a non-scholarly background, Arabs and Mawāli alike.

Before delving into the actual investigation of the formation of the Murji'a, mention should be made

(3) See: van Ess, "Kitab al-Irjā'", p.47, quoting al-Shammahi's K. al-Siyar, p.89.

(4) As will be shown later, the number of scholars of non-Arab origin was considerable.

of the social and political scene in Kufa towards the beginning of the 8th century.

1) Social and Historical Background of Kufa towards the Beginning of the 8th Century.

Towards the end of the 7th century the social structure of Kufa can be observed to consist of the following groups:

1. The Mawālī: probably constituted more than half of the population.⁽⁵⁾ They were mostly of Iranian origin, and themselves sub-divided into two groups: the Dihqāns (land-owners) and "demos".
2. The Arab "demos": these were the tribesmen and warriors who settled in Kufa. The Christian tribes of Najrān, Taghlib, Nimr and Iyād are to be included in this group.
3. The Arab "aristocracy": included Saḥāba, Ashrāf, tribal chiefs, veterans of the conquests, and new-comers from the Hijaz who had migrated during the reign of 'Uthmān.⁽⁶⁾

(5) Cf. Tabarī, II, p.1072.

(6) See: Massignon (trans.), pp.4, 20; Ibn al-Faqīh, pp.170-173; IS,vi,p.43. It is interesting to note that during the reign of 'Uthmān there had

4. The Dhimmis.

It was basically the tribal element which determined the military character of the region. Inter-tribal disputes on questions of territorial jurisdiction and the passage of tribesmen through territories claimed by others were the cause of many bloody clashes.⁽⁷⁾ The Ashrāf and other notables acted as agitators of tribal tension, serving the tribal or religio-political interests of the various pro-'Alid and Khārijite factions.⁽⁸⁾

Until the arrival of al-Ḥajjāj, the regime in Iraq was based on a tribal organisation. The pre-Islamic clan was the nucleus of the ruling system. Due to the change imposed on Kufa by the Umayyads,

been considerable migration of Qurayshite notables to Iraq. With his permission, they were allowed to purchase land, a policy that 'Umar had forbidden, fearing to ignite a civil war. At the same time, 'Uthmān tried to impose law and order on others in Kufa, who were also trying to gain parcels of land for themselves, despite the law. This may have further complicated the complex issue of the roots of antagonism of the Kufan tribes to 'Uthmān, and possibly to his successors, the Umayyads. (Cf. Ṭabari, i, pp.2850ff. Ibid., pp.3025ff.

(7) See for example Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāgha, iii, p.239.

(8) Cf. Fajr al-Islām, i, p.229.

i.e., the creation of a central government and the establishment of a garrison stronghold, the governors found it necessary and expedient to exercise their powers through the Ashrāf of the tribes.

This state of affairs changed only with the appointment of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf to the post of governor, which was accompanied by the introduction of Syrian troops into Iraq. This step undermined the status of the tribal notables, especially the most powerful of them, 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Ash'ath. (9)

However, the Kufan power elite was not the only sector to be irritated by the policies pursued by al-Ḥajjāj. The other sector, the Qur'rā' as they are called by the sources, meaning Qur'ān reciters, or rather, the pious in general, played an important role on the Kufan scene. (10)

(9) The political transition which followed the arrival of al-Ḥajjāj is more broadly discussed in Martin Hinds' article "Kufan Political Alignments" etc., p.347.

(10) What seemed to many oriental and occidental scholars as the primary meaning of the word Qur'rā', was traced by M.A. Shaban to an earlier meaning of the term. His theory suggests that the term stems from ahl al-qurā, the people of the agricultural hinterland of Medina, wādī al-qurā.



The function of Qur'ān recitation was established by 'Umar b. al-Khattāb who appointed a qāri' to recite Sūrat al-Anfāl at the battles of Yarmūk, the Bridges and Qadisiyya. (11) 'Umar appears to have wanted to encourage the learning of Qur'ān and to this end gave

These people were loyal to Abu Bakr during the Ridda wars, participated later in the conquests in Iraq, and settled there after Qadisiyya. In Iraq they served as trustees (umanā'), and were in charge of the transfer of tax revenues from the local dihqāns to the treasury, as well as assessment and supervision of the whole operation of poll-tax collection. ^{Shaban, pp. 23; 50 ff} With even more profuse evidence, G.H.A. Juynboll elaborated on this matter providing us with illuminating information on the meaning of the term in the first three decades since the Hijra. (See "The Qurra' in Early Islamic History", in JESHO 16(1973), pp. 113-129, and "The Qur'ān Reciter on the Battlefield and Concomitant Issues", in ZDMG 125(1975), pp. 11-27.) No matter how acceptable these theories are, they fail to apply to the context in discussion. (Juynboll admits that from round about 30 A.H., qurra' were understood as people who memorised or had knowledge of the Qur'ān. Another meaning for

fixed annual salaries to those who mastered it. (12)

But the attitude of the authorities to subsidised learning changed when the Umayyads took power. Mu'āwīya considered them to be parasites, greedy and ungrateful. (13) This may be among the causes of the traditional animosity between the pious and the Umayyads, which find most explicit expression in the rising of 701.

The last decade of the 7th century was troublesome for the Umayyads. After they had crushed the Zubayrids in the Ḥijaz, there erupted a Berber revolt in North Africa, which was not overcome until 75/695. This victory marks a turning point, showing that the initiative was gradually passing to the Umayyads. Only then could al-Ḥajjāj start concentrating on the province to which he was assigned, and in a series of raids he sought to root out the Khawārij strongholds in Iraq and Khorasan. By the end of 698, the Khawārij seem to have started losing ground. (14) Although

the word qāri' is zāhid, (ascetic).

(11) Tabari, i, pp.2095, 2182, 2294f, 2749; quoted from Hinds, Ibid., p.358.

(12) Hilyat al-Awliyā', ii, p.94.

(13) Tabari, i, p.2913.

(14) The climax of these campaigns came in the Khārijite revolt of Muṭarrif b.al-Mughīra b.al-Shu'ba in 79/698, in which a large number of qurrā' took part. See: Ansāb, (MS), pp.28-30.

part of the army was still engaged in war in Khorasan, chasing the remains of the Khārijite factions, al-Ḥajjāj felt strong enough to embark on his next project.

The social discontent among the Mawālī of Kufa, which persisted even after the suppression of the revolt of al-Mukhtār in 687, was a constant source of political instability. The Mawālī, newly converted Muslims, were striving to gain for themselves the same political and social rights as were enjoyed by the Arabs. These included exemption from the jizya and the right to state pensions, which would have entailed a serious loss to state revenues had they been granted. In response to their demands, al-Ḥajjāj ruled that the Mawālī would even have to pay kharāj, (land-tax), a levy that Muslims were exempt from. This measure seems to have been the last straw, and apparently was responsible for the mounting social and political tension which was to erupt into insurrection when the opportunity came. (15)

Since Muslim historical and biographical works are chiefly of a non-social character, the Murji'a finds mention mainly in connection with revolts, which constitute the focal points in Umayyad history. It is,

(15) Cf. Ansāb, (Ahlwardt), pp.280ff; Ṭabarī, ii, pp.1122f; 1435.

however, from works of this character, that one must attempt to reconstruct the historical course of the formative period of the Murji'a as a religio-political movement.

2) 693-701 - The Formative Period

2.a) The Prominent Figures

From various accounts it is possible to form a list of the first adherents of the movement. Their names, social background, and to the extent it has been possible to determine^{it} their scholarly background, afford clues to the development of the movement.

1. al-Hasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya. d.c.100/718. Arab, Medinese scholar, a student of Ibn 'Abbās. (16)
2. Sa'īd b. Jubayr. d. 95/713. A Kufan mawlā. Muḥaddith. Transmitted ahādīth and the tafsīr from Ibn 'Abbās, and served as secretary to 'Abdallāh b. Mas'ūd. (17)

(16) Ta'rīkh al-Islām, iii, p.359; Tahdhīb, ii, p.320.

(17) IS, vi, p.79; Wafayāt, i, p.256; Mubarrad, ii, p.96; Ma'rifat al-Qurrā', i, p.56; 'Uyūn al-Akḥbār, ii, p.209 and i, p.62; al-Ma'rifa wa'l Ta'rīkh,

3. Ṭalq b. Ḥabīb. d.c. 90-96/708-714. Basran, perhaps of Arab origin. (18)
4. Sālīm al-Aftas. d.c. 132. An Arab from Mawsil; muhaddith; according to Abū Yūsuf, one of Abū Ḥanīfa's teachers. (19)
5. Hammād b. Abī Sulaymān. d. 120/737. a Kufan Arab; was linked with the circle of muhaddithūn of Sa'īd b. Jubayr and Mis'ar b. Kidām. He was a muftī in Kufa, known for his knowledge of fiqh, and as Abū Ḥanīfa's most influential master. (20)
6. 'Amr b. Murra. d. 117/735. A Kufan mawlā; he was a most prominent muhaddith and qūri' in Kufa. (21)

ii, pp.16, 793; Ta'rīkh Wāsīt, i, p.101; 'Iqd, iv, p.167; I'jāz al-Qur'ān, p.445; Nagel in his "Untersuchungen" suggested that Sa'īd had leanings to the Shī'ites, pp.59-61. It does not seem to be corroborated anywhere in the texts.

- (18) Tabarī, ii, p.1262; al-Ma'rifa, ii, p.793; Ta'rīkh al-Islām, iv, p.130; al-Dhahabī's Kāshif, ii, p.46; IS, vii, p.165; Tahdhīb, v, p.31; van Ess' K. al-Irjā', p.49.
- (19) al-Ma'rifa, ii, p.793; Tahdhīb, iii, p.442.
- (20) Tahdhīb, iii, pp.16-17; Ma'ārif, p.625; Shahrastānī, i, p.194; al-'Ilal, i, p.270; al-A'lāq al-Nafīsa, p.220; Abu Zur'a, p.137a.
- (21) Tadhkirat al-Huffāz, i, pp.121-122; Tahdhīb, viii,

7. Abu Mu'āwiya al-Darīr. A Kufan mawla. d. 113/731. (22)
8. Ibn Habīb al-'Anazī. A Baṣran mawlā. He was one of the Murji'ite leaders in Baṣra. (23)
9. Dharr b. 'Abdallāh al-Hamdānī. d. 82/701. A Kufan mawlā. (24)
10. Ibrāhīm b. Yazīd al-Taymī. d. 92/711. A Kufan Arab. (25)
11. 'Amr b. Qays al-Ma'sir. d.c. 120/737. A Kufan mawlā of Kinda. His father was possibly one of the first Murji'ites in Kufa. (26)

p.102; Mizān al-I'tidāl, iii, p.163; Ma'ārif, p.625; al-Ma'rifa, ii, p.569; al-A'lāq al-Nafīsa, p.220.

(22) IS, vi, p.273; Tahdhīb, ix, p.137.

(23) Bidāya, ix, p.101.

(24) IS, vi, p.205; Tahdhīb, iii, p.218; Ma'ārif, p.625; Tabarī, ii, p.2530; Shahrastānī, i, p.194, Ta'rīkh al-Islām, iii, p.247; Abu Zur'a, p.137a; see also: al-Imām al-Qāsim, p.232; Brentjes, p.46.

(25) Tahdhīb, i, p.176; Ma'ārif, p.625; Tadhkirat al-Huffāz, i, p.73; al-Idāh, pp.44-45; al-A'lāq al-Nafīsa, p.220; al-Ma'rifa, ii, p.779; Mizān, i, p.426.

(26) IS, vi, p.236; Ma'ārif, p.625; Nawbakhtī, p.7, al-A'lāq al-Nafīsa, p.220; Tahdhīb, vii, p.49.

12. Mūsā b. Abī Kathīr. d. 120/737. A Kufan mawlā. (27)
13. Jābir b. Zayd, d.93/711. A Kufan Arab. (Azd); muhaddith; 'Amr b. Dīnār read to him the Risāla of al-Ḥasan, and he agreed with its contents. (28)
14. 'Awn b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Utba. d.110/718. A Kufan Arab. A nephew of the Ṣahābi 'Abdallāh b. Mas'ūd. (29)
15. Jawāb b. 'Ubaydallāh al-Taymī. d.120/737. A Kufan Arab. (30)
16. 'Uthmān b. Ghiyāth. d.c.120/737. a Kufan Arab; muhaddith who transmitted from 'Ikrima and ibn 'Abbās. (31)
17. Qays al-Ma'sir. From Daylam. He was a mawlā of 'Alī b. Abi Tālib. The first mawlā to join the Murji'a; (as did his son, mentioned above No.11). (32)

- (27) IS, vi, p.236; Tahdhīb, x, p.367.
- (28) al-Ma'rifa, ii, p.13; Tahdhīb, ii, p.38.
- (29) Tahdhīb, viii, pp.171ff; Aghānī, (Būlāq), viii, p.92; ix, pp.139-140, (Cairo Ed.); Ma'ārif, p.625; Muslim Studies, ii, pp.91-92; "K. al-Irjā'", p.50; al-Imām al-Qāsim, p.232.
- (30) al-Ma'rifa, ii, p.779; Mīzān al-I'tidāl, i, p.426; Tahdhīb, ii, p.121.
- (31) al-'Ilal, i, p.288; Tahdhīb, vii, p.147.
- (32) Tahdhīb, vii, p.49; al-Ansāb (Margoliouth Ed.) p.502b.

It is reasonable to believe that these men and presumably others, formed the core of the Murji'ite movement during its embryonic stage, i.e., round about 693-701.

They are all referred to as Murji'ites by the sources, and can with certainty be dated to that period, so that there can be very little doubt about chronology. Also, one can assume that the number of adherents must have been substantially greater, for people of no social position or religious distinction would not be mentioned by the sources. (33)

2.b) The Social Position.

Among the Murji'ites mentioned in the former section, the number of Mawālī is quite noticeable. However, it would be quite wrong to make inferences from this about the bulk of the Mawālī who, in fact, did not respond to the appeal of al-Hasan.

It is true, however, that the Mawālī, regardless of their tribal or religious affiliation, were second-

(33) That the movement did include many others is to be deduced from accounts of the rising of ibn al-Ash'ath in 701, in connection with which a large number of anonymous Murji'ites are mentioned.

class Muslims at that time. Therefore, the social motivation to acquire equality with the Arabs would influence the attitudes of both Murji'ite and non-Murji'ite Mawālī alike. But it was mostly religious conviction and not entirely social aspirations that attracted some of the Mawālī to Irjā', for otherwise we could expect to find a mass movement among this class towards the doctrine, which in fact is not the case.

Which is not to say that social motivation played no part among those Mawālī who did support Irjā'; this, presumably, would have been a strong influence.

The difference between them and the rest of the Mawālī was in the means by which they sought to achieve an improvement in their status and in this they were probably influenced by their personal background, being men of a pronounced religious bent. The Mawālī who joined the Murji'ite circle hoped that their adherence to the pacifying call of al-Hasan would help to bring about a cessation in the hostilities between the rival factions in Kufa, and provide themselves with a better chance of achieving social equality. Also of influence in their decision to join the Murji'a would be their apparent disillusionment with the 'Alid factions, which were traditionally supported by Mawālī. Another possible motive could have been a shift in the self-view of the Mawālī scholars regarding their social

identity, seeing themselves not as non-Arab subjects but as fully participating members of the Muslim community. From being second-class citizens, they could thus assimilate with the Arab element on the basis of their religiousness.

Although many Murji'ites were of non-Arab descent, it does not imply that the movement was a Mawālī initiative. As was shown in the former section, Murji'ites were of both Arab and non-Arab origin; the idea itself was launched by an Arab, and one who had been personally let down by the Mawālī of Kufa, as indeed had his father too.

2.c) Relations with the Umayyads - 693-701.

The principle of Irjā' in the form introduced by al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya attracted its first adherents around 693. Its pro-Umayyad inclination and the grave predestinarian tone in which it avowed the Umayyad claim to divinely approved kingship, elicited favourable response from the government.

For the Umayyads it must have been a tremendous moral and political support, if we remember that at this very time they were engaged in bloody wars against Khārijite rebels and ~~other~~ contenders for the throne.

'Abd al-Mālik was, naturally, favourable to these ideas, being especially encouraged by al-Ḥasan's approval of the identity between the regime and the

divine law. This very point evoked the criticism of the Qadariyya, which was banned by the Caliph, whereas Murji'ite propaganda was not discouraged. (34)

The newly-appointed governor of Iraq, al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, gave his personal support to the idea and its adherents. He expressed it by appointing the Kufan Murji'ite Sa'īd b. Jubayr as his personal secretary. This seems even more exceptional, bearing in mind that Sa'īd, who was a black mawlā, was given a position normally reserved for Arabs. (35)

However, the political concord between the Murji'a and al-Ḥajjāj did not last long. As soon as the Khārijite threat had subsided, al-Ḥajjāj began to carry out the policies he had in mind for the province. These implied a significant social and political transition. Troubled by the pressure which was being exerted by the Mawālī, he contemplated their mass-expulsion back to their villages. That was not actually carried out till after the rising of 701,

(34) As a matter of fact, apart from the pro-'Alids, the Risāla was generally not rejected, and was naturally welcomed by supporters of the Umayyads. Interesting and noteworthy was the reaction of the generally pro-Umayyad muhaddith, al-Zuhri (d.742). He regarded Irjā' as an innovation (bid'a). See van Ess, "K.al-Irjā'", p.49, quoting Ājurri's K.al-Sharī'a, p.143, Cairo 1369/1950.

(35) See: Perier, pp.165, 317ff; IS, vi, pp.184ff.

when he found the appropriate opportunity to do it on a large scale.⁽³⁶⁾ For that time, this policy seemed to him the only proper way to thwart the anti-Umayyad activities of the 'Alid groups, who relied mostly on Mawālī support.

He harassed fanatically many leading religious and political figures, coercing them to curse Allāh as a proof of their loyalty to 'Abd al-Mālik,⁽³⁷⁾ thus antagonising the non-militant pious.

The already mounting social and political pressures were escalating towards an explosion.

2.d) 701 - The First Ideological Cleavage.

Although the rising of Ibn al-Ash'ath was neither launched, nor given its tone by the Mawālī,⁽³⁸⁾ they certainly took advantage of its eruption as a vehicle

(36) See: 'Iqd, ii, p.93 (Būlāq Ed., 1302); Mubarrad, ii, pp.96-97; Balādhurī's account suggests, however, that al-Hajjāj had already practised this measure before 701, while trying to crush the earlier revolt of Ibn Jārūd. At that time he expelled an unspecified number of Mawālī from Basra. Ansāb (Ahlwardt), pp.280ff.

(37) See Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, i, p.365.

(38) As correctly suggested by Wellhausen; Cf. Arab Kingdom, p.245.

to express their discontent. (39)

The course of events and the harsh attitudes of al-Hajjāj towards the Mawālī, had probably disillusioned a large number of the non-militant Murji'ites of this class. Their unequivocal quietism, which in fact meant mute endorsement of the Umayyads and their policies, was beginning to reveal some cracks. Hence, the Murji'a, which partly relied on Mawālī adherence, could hardly avoid taking sides when the rising came.

However, since the Murji'a still adhered as a body to the principles of loyalty to the reigning Caliph and to abhorrence of mutiny against authority, the growing protest was propagated under the aegis of the qurrā'. This group included religious figures who confessed to be Murji'ites, but contained many more who were not known to have any political sympathies.

The reason for that is obvious. The Murji'a was a mosaic of various personalities not all of whom were

(39) For detailed accounts of the rising, see:

Tabarī, ii, pp.1071ff; Ibid., pp.1122ff; Ansāb, (Ahlwardt), pp.308-310; 318-319; 336f.; 353-359; Ma'ārif, p.334; al-Tūsī's Ikhtiyār, p.101; al-Mas'ūdī's Tanbīh, p.314; Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, i, pp.364ff.; Ta'rīkh al-Islām, iii, pp.227-233; Arab Kingdom, pp.245ff.

Mawālī; some of them still maintained that the principle of quietism was sacred, regardless of the circumstances. Therefore, a collective attitude would have been impossible.

The cleavage did not present itself so long as a decision whether to revolt or abstain did not have to be taken. Thus, incapable of taking a firm, unified stand, the initiative was taken by the qurrā'.

They were known to have publicly opposed the plan of al-Ḥajjāj to expel the Mawālī of Baṣra back to their villages, and bluntly regarded him as a Kāfir.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Some of the qurrā' were so strongly opposed to al-Ḥajjāj that they participated in the Khārijite revolt (sic!) of Muṭarrif b. al-Mughīra in 698.⁽⁴¹⁾

The last piece of information, although in character with the previous history of some Qur'ān reciters,⁽⁴²⁾ calls for extreme caution. The group was of a vague and amorphous character, harbouring, it would seem, a variety of political attitudes. This

(40) Cf. Ansāb, (Ahlwardt), p.336

(41) Ansāb, (MS.), pp.28-30.

(42) Qurrā' fought alongside the Khawārij ~~at~~ Ṣiffīn.
Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāgha, iv, p.204.

is vividly illustrated by al-Dhahabi's report that, before the rising of Ibn al-Ash'ath, the qurrā' of Kufa conferred and declared their neutrality.⁽⁴³⁾ But, since the context of the report was the biography of al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya, the group named qurrā' was more likely to have been Kufan Murji'ites. In any case, despite the explicit language used in the passage, it by no means reflects an absolute historic truth regarding the stance of the qurrā' of Kufa in this matter. Khalīfa b. Khayyāt bears out this claim by providing a fairly long list of Kufan qurrā' who participated in the rising.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Despite the conflicting evidence about the intentions of the qurrā', the common interest between them and the Murji'ites was clear. It led to the formation of a coalition between those Murji'ites who chose to fight and qurrā' who sided neither with the Khārijites nor with the pro-'Alids.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Despite their common

(43) Ta'rīkh al-Islām, iii, p.358.

(44) See: Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, i, p.371.

(45) As with the qurrā' who are said to have joined Khārijites, the phenomenon of qurrā' who sided with 'Alī ~~at~~ Siffīn may indicate that qurrā' of similar leanings were still active in the period under discussion. Cf. Lamens, "Mu'awiya I", p.117.

interest, it should be emphasized that it did not identify the groups with each other. In fact, as far as principles were concerned, the action envisaged was leading both the militant Murji'ites and the qurrā' away from Murji'ite ideas. Hence, the cleavage within the Murji'a was ineluctable.

The sources seem to epitomise the ideological split in the Murji'a in the case of the scholar 'Awn b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Utba b. Mas'ūd (d.c. 718-728), a Kufan Murji'ite, and a nephew of the ṣahābī 'Abdallāh b. Mas'ūd. He is said to have renounced his links with the Murji'ites, ironically claiming that Murji'ites have deviated from cardinal principles in allowing that the blood of believers may be shed, and that believers may belong to the unjust. The position is, maintained 'Awn in a poem, that believers' blood should be spared, and that the unjust (ahl al-jawr)⁽⁴⁶⁾ are not believers.⁽⁴⁷⁾ 'Awn wrote these lines in order to support the rising of Ibn al-Ash'ath against al-Ḥajjāj. The irony was aimed at both factions of the Murji'a: those who allowed fighting against al-Ḥajjāj without renouncing him as a kāfir; and those Murji'ites who considered the governor a mu'min

(46) Goldziher quotes a variant - "āl al-jawr", which he thought might relate it to the Umayyad family. Muslim Studies, II, p.91, N.7.

(47) Aghāni (Būlāq), viii, p.92.

and therefore refused to rebel. 'Awn thought that a man like al-Ḥajjāj could not qualify at all to be a mu'min. This, to his mind, justified the rebellion, but not under the aegis of the Murji'a. (48)

Although 'Awn represents the more extreme form of the ideological rift in the Murji'a, that is in the form of a complete renunciation of the group, there is no doubt that such a rift did take place, though less pronounced, which was expressed in a mere avoidance of active participation in the rising.

A more surprising example of the cleavage was to be seen in al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya himself. As far as we know, al-Ḥasan was under pressure from his family, particularly his father, to renounce Kitāb al-Irjā' which he had written. For them it was intolerable that 'Alī should be ill-spoken of by one of his grandsons. As long as al-Ḥasan could exert influence on the movement to confirm to the principles of his Risāla, he fought his father's opposition. But the substantial

(48) See Aghānī, Ibid. Tahdhīb, viii, pp.171ff; Jāhiz's Bayān (Būlāq Ed.), i, p.126; also Muslim Studies, ii, p.91; al-Imām al-Qāsim, p.232; Brentjes, p.47; "K. al-Irjā'", p.50.

(49) See for example: Tahdhīb, ii, p.320; Ta'rīkh al-Islām, iii, p.358.

participation of Murji'ites in the rising of Ibn al-Ash'ath altered the situation. Al-Ḥasan could not have possibly supported them without putting his and his family's very safety at risk. Therefore, he could see no other alternative but to renounce his support of the Kufan Murji'ites and sever his connections with them. (50)

3) The Rising of 'Abd al-Rahmān b. al-Ash'ath and its Aftermath

3.a) The Murji'ites and the Qurra' in the Rising.

A number of prominent Murji'ite figures are reported by the sources to have taken part in the rising. They were:

Qays al-Ma'sir⁽⁵¹⁾

Sa'īd b. Jubayr (d. 95/713)⁽⁵²⁾

Ṭalq b. Ḥabīb (d. c. 90-96/708-714)⁽⁵³⁾

Ibrāhīm b. Yazīd al-Taymī (d. 92/711)⁽⁵⁴⁾

(50) IS, v, p.241; al-Imām al-Qāsim, p.232; Anfänge, p.6.

(51) Sam'āni, (Margoliouth Ed.)p.502b.

(52) See supra, p.55, No.2; Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, i, p.372.

(53) See supra, p.56, No.3.

(54) See supra, p.57, No.10.

Dharr b. 'Abdallāh al-Hamdānī (d.82/701). (55)

As with the list of early Murji'ites, there is reason to believe that the number of their participants was larger, and that only leading figures were reported. This assumption may be corroborated by the confusion of the terms qurrā' and Murji'ites, as suggested before with reference to the report of al-Dhahabī in *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*. (56) Hence, the figure of five hundred qurrā', quoted by Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, would have included a considerable number of Murji'ites. (57)

With the qurrā' the Murji'ites formed not only a religiously-motivated support-group for the rebels, but also an active fighting corps, led by the scholar Jabala b. Zajar. (58)

Together with the Southern tribes (al-Yamaniyya) and the Mawālī, they formed the block which swore

(55) See supra, p.57, No. 9.

(56) Ibid., iii, p.358.

(57) Cf. Ta'rīkh Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, i, p.373; see also Ta'rīkh al-Islām, iii, p.229.

(58) Ansāb, (Ahlwardt), p.336. (His father fought in Ṣiffīn alongside 'Alī). See also Jamharat Ansāb, p.409; Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, i, p.365; Tabarī, ii, p.1086; Ma'ārif, p.334.

allegiance to Ibn al-Ash'ath. (59)

3.b) Relations with the Umayyads 701-714.

The anti-Umayyad stand the Murji'ites took in the revolt of Ibn al-Ash'ath could only sow discord between them and the authorities. It happened to be also a personal rebuff to the governor of Iraq, al-Hajjāj b. Yūsuf, who was obviously disappointed with this Murji'ite change of heart. His blighted expectations of the Murji'a, let alone their breach of loyalty, led him to mount an unprecedented campaign of persecution on the Murji'ites and the qurrā'.

Pursued by al-Hajjāj, Sa'īd b. Jubayr and Talq b. Ḥabīb fled to Mecca, a long established bulwark of anti-Umayyad scholarly and political circles. 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, who was at the time the governor of the Hijaz, granted them refuge and freedom of movement. But in 93/712 al-Hajjāj succeeded in persuading Caliph al-Walīd I to replace 'Umar with

(59) Cf. Tabarī, ii, pp.1071ff; al-Tanbīh, (Leiden 1893) p.314. It is interesting to note that a brother of Ibn al-Ash'ath, Qays b. Muḥammad b. al-Ash'ath was himself a Qur'ān reciter, and took part in the fighting too. See Khizānat al-Adab, iv, pp.489-490.

Khālid al-Qaṣrī in the post of governor. The new governor was instructed to turn in "the hypocrites and rebels" (ahl al-nifāq wa'l shiqāq); Sa'īd b. Jubayr, Ṭalq b. Habīb, Mujāhid, 'Amr b. Dīnār and 'Atā' b. Rabbāh were arrested, but the Meccans, 'Amr and 'Atā' were released later. (60)

(60) Ṭabarī, ii, p.1262; Ibn Sa'd's version suggests that ten Murji'ites were involved, Ibid., vi, p.184. Ibn Hajar's account claims that Mujāhid was released too, Tahdhīb, v, p.32.

The Meccans were not mentioned in the lists of Murji'ites; still, it would be reasonable to assume that they were sympathetic to the idea of providing shelter and company to the Iraqi Murji'ites.

The Murji'ite affiliation of 'Amr b. Dīnār is borne out later by Abū Hanīfa himself. The latter is reported to have encouraged Kufans to go and listen to the muhaddith Sufyan b. 'Uyayna, since he transmitted aḥadīth from 'Amr b. Dīnār, who was held by Abū Hanīfa as an authority. See: Wafayāt, ii, p.393.

All five belonged to the circle of disciples of Ibn 'Abbās. (Sa'īd b. Jubayr, apart from transmitting aḥadīth, is said to have been responsible for the transmission of the tafsīr

Another Murji'ite, Ibrāhīm al-Taymī (d. 92/711), was jailed until his death.⁽⁶¹⁾ The qurrā', like 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Abi Laylā, al-Shabī, and Muṭarrif b. 'Abdallāh b. al-Shikhkhīr, were also terrorised by al-Hajjāj.⁽⁶²⁾ Al-Sha'bī and Muṭarrif were coerced to confess their alleged kufr in order to prove they were loyal to the Caliph more than to Allāh.⁽⁶³⁾

Thus, in clear contrast to the first steps of the movement, the rebellious Murji'ites found themselves in a position in which they were pursued and terrorised until the death of al-Hajjāj in 714.

of Ibn 'Abbās. See: Abū Zur'a, p.137b; Cf. also al-Ma'rifa, ii, p.16). The emergence of Irjā' from this circle may be linked with the stand taken by Ibn 'Abbās and Muhammad b. al-Hanafīyya when they abstained from swearing allegiance to Ibn al-Zubayr, arguing that they would commit themselves only to the final victor; al-Akhnār al-Tiwāl, p.264.

(61) Tahdhīb, i, p.176; Tadhkirat al-Huffāz, i, p.73; al-Idāh, pp.44-45.

(62) al-Tūsī's Ikhtiyār, p.101.

(63) 'Iqd, v, pp.54-55.

3.c) The Roots of the Murji'a in Kufa.

The most significant outcome of the rising for the Murji'a was its acquisition of a rebellious, militant reputation. This is how the sources reflected it by focusing attention only on those Murji'ites who did take part in the rising. Those who refrained from doing so were totally ignored. We learn of the existence of such a group from the very nature of the crisis which took place in the movement on the question of participation in the revolt. The cleavage split the movement into two factions - militants and quietists. Those who chose to remain loyal to the Umayyads would emerge unharmed from the rising and the persecutions which followed. But, being only too familiar with the reputation Murji'ism had just acquired, they could not return to the political scene instantly, advocating their ideas in public.

However, the atmosphere in Kufa was favourable for the establishment of the Murji'a on a more popular basis. Some Kufans who felt shattered by the humiliating defeat, terrorised by the Syrian troops, (64)

(64) An anecdote mentioned by Ibn Sa'd tells that Sa'īd b. Jubayr and Ma'bad al-Juhānī were discussing an affair linked with 'Alī; the fact that Sa'īd was afraid of uttering 'Alī's name illustrates the

and tired of the futile internal feuds between the various sectarian groups, chose to affiliate to the Murji'a.

Another reinforcement came from those religious circles which were not associated with the Murji'a before the rising. Many religious scholars had come to realise during the rising that some kind of political framework was essential in order to secure the bulwark of piety, morality and religious practices if threatened by the authorities. The Murji'a, as they knew it during the rising, was an active, religiously-motivated group which suited this purpose.

Among the more prominent figures who joined the Murji'ites, were the Kufan judge Muhārib b. Dithār (d. 116/734), who was to become the leading figure in what Ibn Sa'd called "al-Murji'a al-Ūlā"⁽⁶⁵⁾, the ascetic scholar Mis'ar b. Kidām (d. 155/773),⁽⁶⁶⁾

atmosphere of political terror imposed by al-Hajjāj. See: Ibid., iii, p.15.

(65) Akhbār al-Qudāt, iii, pp.28ff.; Tahdhīb, x, pp.49-50; IS, vi, p.214; al-Ma'rifa, ii, pp.674-675; Aghānī (Bulāq Ed.), vii, p.11; Shahrastānī, i, p.194.

(66) IS, vi, pp.253-54; Ma'ārif, p.625; Tadhkirat al-Huffāz, i, p.188; al-Qiftī's Anbā' al-Ruwāt, ii, p.198; Ansāb (MS.) p.810; Ibn Rusta, p.220.

the faqīh, Hammād b. Abī Sulaymān (d. 120/737),⁽⁶⁷⁾ and the Qāss 'Umar b. Dharr (d. 153/770).⁽⁶⁸⁾

Reinforced by such leading figures of the Kufan religious circles, the Murji'a was now more emphatically motivated by a religious cause. Enjoying the prestige of "just rebels", and using the martyr image following the persecution of al-Hajjāj, it could attract more adherents.

Both the term "Murji'at al-Kufa", used by al-Sam'āni,⁽⁶⁹⁾ and Tashkōpr^ūzāde's statement that "most Kufans were, at the time, either Shī'ite or Murji'ite",⁽⁷⁰⁾ indicate that the Murji'ite community in Kufa was noticeably growing into a sizeable movement.

Unfortunately, the sources are unhelpful in allowing us to determine the pattern of affiliation to the movement. Despite the lack of information, it would not be unreasonable to assume that it was not on a tribal, or a clan basis. The list of Murji'ites and the ideological motivation which seems to have propelled the movement provide the evidence to support

(67) Tahdhīb, iii, pp.16-17; Ma'ārif, p.625; al-'Ilal, i, p.270; Abū Zur'a, p.137a; Ibn Rusta, Ibid.

(68) IS, vi, p.252; Shahrastānī, i, p.194.

(69) al-Ansāb, (Margoliouth Ed.), p.408b.

(70) Miftāh al-Sa'āda, (Hyderabad Ed.), ii, p.24.

this assumption.

A striking aspect of the establishment of the Murji'a in Kufa is, paradoxically, that their increasing popularity arose from the participation of its members in the rising of 701 against the Umayyads. Many Mawālī who joined them did so only after they observed the Murji'ites in action. On the other hand, the Murji'a that re-emerged from the rising was to be a movement of those who refused to rebel, and was to be without the leading rebels, who were either executed, jailed, or in exile. Consequently, the post-701 Murji'a, which was basically moderate in its tendencies, owes its success to the radical dissidents who left it in favour of militancy. The outcome of this was, at least in the first years after the rising, that the Murji'a was turned into a somewhat radical movement, due to the inevitable influence exerted by the Mawālī element. This radicalism was to be transformed later, as we shall see, into anti-Shī'ism; but for the moment the moderates were bound to comply with the tendency if they wanted to maintain unity in the movement.

Despite the addition of new followers, the social balance of the Murji'a did not change; only the dimensions grew. From a political point of view, there had also been no alteration; the movement continued to harbour both militants and political quietists. That principal dichotomy was to erupt

again in the rising of Yazīd b. Muhallab.

3.c₁) The Murji'a in Basra.

At the same time there was to be found a concentration of Murji'ites in Basra. The most prominent among the early members of the group here was Hassan b. Bilāl b. al-Hārīth al-Muzanī (d.c.100/718), who was probably the first to have spread the idea in Basra.⁽⁷¹⁾ Another leading Basran Murji'ite was Talq b. Habīb, of whom mention has already been made.⁽⁷²⁾ The Mu'tazilite al-Qādi 'Abd al-Jabbār reported that Basra was an active Murji'ite centre, which Wāsil b. 'Atā' considered necessary to direct arguments againstⁱⁿ various sessions of polemic.⁽⁷³⁾

However, the Murji'ites of Basra did not have the same significance as the Kufan community. This can be attributed to the generally pacific nature of

(71) Ma'ārif, p.298. His father was the renowned Tābi' Bilāl b.al-Hārīth, an authority in aḥādīth. Cf. al-Khitat, iv, p.172; Bukhārī's al-Tarīkh al-Kabīr, ii, pp.29-30.

(72) Supra, p.56, No.3.

(73) Cf. 'Abd al-Jabbār's al-Majmū' fī'l Muhīt bi'l Taklīf, i. p.443. The significance of this information is lent emphasis by the fact that

the Baṣran Murji'ites and seems to provide further support for the assumption that it was their militancy that brought the Kufan Murji'ites to prominence.

4) Religious and Political Attitudes of the Murji'a al-Ūlā (74)

The short but eventful history of the Murji'a calls for a re-examination of its religious and political attitudes. The changes in numbers and character of its adherents were principally liable to cause a shift from the traditional views as propounded by al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya. The period in

Wāsil compiled a book called Asnāf al-Murji'a, mentioned in Ibn al-Nadīm's Fihrist, (Cairo Ed.), p.551.

(74) The term "al-Murji'a al-Ūlā" is quoted from Ibn Sa'd's K. al-Ṭabaqāt. It was most likely meant as a political term denoting a phase in the political development of the movement. It was inserted in the biography of Muḥārīb b. Dithār, who is described as follows: "wa-kāna min-al murji'a al-ūlā, 'ladhīna yurji'ūna 'Alī(yan) wa-'Uthmān, wa-lā yashhadūna bi-īmān wa-lā kufr". (He belonged to the first Murji'a who postponed 'Alī and 'Uthmān and did not bear witness to [their] faith or disbelief.)

question would be around 705-720. At that time, al-Ḥasan was still alive; but, as already mentioned, he had renounced his links with the Kufan Murji'ites and lived as a political recluse in the Ḥijaz.

Relevant sources of information concerning Murji'ite attitudes at this time are scanty.

There are two poems by figures known as leading Murji'ites. The first, by the Kufan judge Muḥārib b. Dithār (d. 116/734), reads like an extract from a polemical discussion (possibly with the Kaysanite poet al-Sayyid al-~~Ḥ~~^Himyarī) and it defends Irjā', saying:

... "There is a reproach of folly against me
Because I postponed [my judgement] upon
Abū Ḥasan [‘Alī]
My postponement with regard to Abu Ḥasan
is right...

... I would not know about deeds of former
men [generations]
Who were gone before me, and I am ignorant
about them..." (75)

The second poem is by the poet Thābit Quṭna (d. 110/

(75) See: Aghānī, (Būlāq Ed.) vii, p.11; Akhbār al-Qudāt, iii, p.29.

728), a mawlā of the Azd, and once in charge of a region in Khorasan under the governorship of Yazīd b. al-Muhallab. (76)

The important verses run as follows: (free translation)

- ...We postpone matters of uncertainty ...
All those who profess to be Muslims, all belong to Islām.
- ...No sinner is a mushrik as long as he confesses the unity of Allāh.
- ...Bloodshed of fellow-Muslims is allowed only for self-defence.
- ...Fear of Allah will be rewarded on the day of judgement.
- ...Allāh's decree (qadā') is irrevocable, and his decree is always right.
- ...The Khawārij are wrong even if they are pious and humble.
- ... 'Alī and 'Uthmān were servants of Allāh, and did not sin in shirk.
- ...There was a strife between them, but Allāh will decree judging their merits.

(76) Cf. Aghānī, (Cairo Ed.), xiv, pp.263-271; al-Sāmīrrā'ī, p.14.

...Allāh knows what they bring Him on the day of judgement. (77)

The poem of Muḥārib b. Dithār is generally straightforward, manifesting the basic, traditional notion of Irjā' as put forth by al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya. Irjā', hence, meant postponement of judgement upon 'Alī, placing him in the fourth place among the righteous Caliphs, and holding Abū Bakr and 'Umar as the ideal Caliphs. The interesting deviation from the Risāla of al-Ḥasan was the omission of 'Uthmān from the application of Irjā'. This can be interpreted in two ways. It is either that only 'Alī was mentioned because he constituted a more immediate problem, thus reflecting Muḥārib's attitude to the pro-'Alids. Another explanation may be that 'Uthmān was innocent as far as Muḥārib was concerned; if so, that was his way of endorsing the legitimacy of the Umayyads, and an emphasis of his enmity to the pro-'Alids. (78)

(77) Aghānī, *ibid.*, pp.269-270; Cf. Van Vloten's article "Irdjā'", ZDMG, XLV, (1891), pp.161ff.

(78) The relationship between the rival factions in Kufa will be discussed in the following section.

This view, i.e., the emphasis of Irjā' merely with regard to 'Alī, seems to be more of a personal opinion, and apparently did not reflect the general approach among Murji'ites. This observation is corroborated by the poem of Thābit Qutna. For one thing, the circumstances which gave birth to this poem were different from those underlying Muḥārib's. As has formerly been mentioned, Muḥārib b. Dithār was involved in polemics with supporters of the 'Alid cause.⁽⁷⁹⁾ In the course of the discussion he may have been pushed to an extreme position, which produced an extreme point of view; that is, applying Irjā' only with regard to 'Alī.

Thābit Qutna, on the other hand, is said to have written his poem in the wake of a discussion he witnessed in Khorasan between Murji'ites and Khārijites, after which he sided with the former.⁽⁸⁰⁾ In his case, he probably did not feel any need to deviate from the traditionally held view of Irjā', which included 'Uthmān.

A more problematic question is the date of his poem. Unlike Muḥārib b. Dithār's, the poem by Thābit Qutna contains a statement introducing novel ideas in the development of the Murji'ite notion, at least

(79) Cf. Aghānī, (Būlāq Ed.), vii, p.11.

(80) Aghānī, (Cairo Ed.), xiv, p.269.

as we know it from the Risāla of al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya. This idea was expressed in the verse:

... "I do not believe that any sin is equal
to shirk
as long as you confess the unity of the
eternal one". (81)

The import of this statement is moral and religious. No extract of the Risāla of al-Ḥasan seems to hint at such a maxim, neither do we find it in the poem of Muḥārīb b. Dithār. (82)

(81) See: Aghānī, loc. cit.

(82) The criticism of 'Awn b. 'Abdallāh in his poem, aimed at his fellow-Murji'ites, did contain his opinion that "the unjust are no believers" (supra, p.67). However, his statement was essentially political despite the pious colouring. Therefore, it cannot be identified with the nature of the statement found in the poem of Thābit Qutna, which laid the moral criterion for membership in the community. It should not be denied that a political stand was meant by Thābit. However, its scope is different. The wording is also another indication. Whereas the term

A reference to such ideas was associated with later development of Murji'ite religious thought, embodied by Abū Hanīfa and his circle. However, certain biographical information concerning Thābit Qutna may support the assumption that the poem dates from an earlier period than that of the theological activity of Abū Hanīfa.

When Yazīd b. Muhallab arrived at Basra to lead a revolt there in 720, he was joined by a group of Murji'ites led by a man called Abū Ru'ba. Towards the end of the revolt Abū Ru'ba retreated, leaving Yazīd b. Muhallab, Thābit Qutna and the Murji'ites to face the Syrian troops. Hence, it follows that in 720, Thābit was already a Murji'ite.⁽⁸³⁾ If true, this piece of information could bear out the assumption that the poem represents a stage of Murji'ite thought prior to 720.⁽⁸⁴⁾

"unjust" in the poem of 'Awn was probably meant as a political term, the relationship between sin and belief is a broader moral and religious issue, and was used by Thābit to coin a maxim of religious standard.

(83) Duhā al-Islam, iii, p.326.

(84) Thābit Qutna died in 728. At that time Abū Hanīfa, who is said to have been born in 699, could only have begun exerting significant influence on the Murji'ite circle in Kufa.

The maxim "sin does not imply shirk as long as the unity of Allāh is professed", is clearly a speculative interpretation which derived its logic from al-Ḥasan's refusal to inveigh against 'Uthmān and 'Alī or consider them sinners. However, the context of the Irjā' as suggested by al-Ḥasan was political, and was aired in order to propagate a political message. As was shown earlier, the interpretation of Thābit was broader, and included a general moral maxim.

Such speculative interpretation would certainly be a new trend in Murji'ite thought. A guess could be hazarded that the poem may have been written during the reign of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, reflecting the weight of the religious scholars who had only recently become Murji'ites and influenced the movement with their propensities, and the tolerant political atmosphere which encouraged spiritual activity that was channelled into religious speculation.⁽⁸⁵⁾

Another two points are noteworthy in the

(85) Further evidence supporting the assumption that religious attitudes and practices, traditionally attributed to the period of Abū Ḥanīfa's activity, originated in fact from the earlier Murji'ite circle is to be discussed in the following chapter.

Murji'ite manifesto of Thābit Qutna. One is a firm adherence to the principle that Allāh's determination of events is irrevocable; the other is an explicit denunciation of the Khārijites, who are "following an erroneous teaching even if they practise piety".⁽⁸⁶⁾

The first remark was aimed against the Qadarites. As an integral part of Irjā', that was a novel element. Al-Ḥasan b. Muhammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya was an ardent anti-Qadarite;⁽⁸⁷⁾ however, he made no explicit

(86) Aghānī (Cairo Ed.), xiv, p.270.

(87) We learn about the strong anti-Qadarite views of al-Ḥasan from a refutation of the Zaydite Imām al-Ḥādī b. Ḥaqq Yahya b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 298/911), a grandson of the famous al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm (d. 246/860) who caused the Zaydiyya to adopt Mu'tazilite views (Cf. al-Imām al-Qāsim, p.163). The refutation, "Kitāb al-Radd wa'l Ihtijāj 'alā 'l-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya fī'l Jabar wa-Ithbāt al-Ḥaqq wa-Naqd Qawlihi", is edited in Rasā'il al-'Adl wa'l Tawhīd, (Ed. Muhammad I'māra), 2 Vols., Cairo 1971; vol. ii, pp.122-298. The first chapter of J. van Ess' Anfänge Muslimischer Theologie, which was due to be published in Beirut, 1974, partly deals with the anti-Qadarite attitude of al-Ḥasan.

reference to them in the Risāla. (88)

Both poems, that of Muhārib b. Dithār and that of Thābit Quṭna, represent a personal point of view of the movement, its principles and its opponents.

The fact that Muhārib merely mentioned 'Alī as an applicable object for Irjā', and the context of the circumstances under which his poem was written, may provide another clue as to the date of its writing. It suggests that the poem may have been written in a period when pro-'Alid activity was still a concern, both for the Murji'a and the state, possibly before 715. It was only later that pro-'Alid activity receded into passive anticipation of Raj'a. When Thābit Quṭna wrote his poem, supporters of 'Alī were not referred to in the same manner as in Muhārib's poem. It is true, of course, that Thābit Quṭna was viewing the strife between the Murji'a and its rivals in Khorasan, where the active opponents were chiefly Khārijites and Qadarites. But it would be unreasonable to assume that had the pro-'Alids posed a major threat to the Murji'a, he would have overlooked it.

(88) Quoting Ibn Batta (Ibāna, p.32, Ed., Laoust), J. van Ess suggested that when al-Ḥasan addressed the Kufans with Kitab al-Irjā', he did not regard the Qadarites and the militant Khārijites as Muslims. See: Anfänge, p.12.

All in all, the ideological value of the poems cannot be fully understood in themselves; they are significant only in as far as they are interpreted as statements which reveal the attitudes and relationships between the Murji'ites and their ideological rivals.

5) Relations Between the Murji'a and Their Rival Religio-Political Factions (c.705/720)

5.a) The Murji'a and the Shī'a

As has been concluded earlier, by the beginning of the second decade of the eighth century, the Murji'a was gaining enough ground to be considered a major force in Kufa, thus rivalling the traditional Shī'ite supremacy there. (89)

The supporters of the 'Alid cause, bitter and in disarray from its failure in the revolt of al-Mukhtār, and left in confusion by the death of Muḥammad b. al-Hanafiyya, were hostile and antagonistic to the Umayyads as ever. But their hostility was aimed as vehemently at the Murji'ites.

The Shī'ites considered the Murji'a positive

(89) Cf. Sam'āni's term "Murji'at al-Kufa" etc., supra, p.76, and Miftāh al-Sa'āda, (Hyderabad Ed.), ii, p.24.

supporters of the Umayyads, for their neutral stand on the question of Ṣiffīn⁽⁹⁰⁾; but, moreover, they were profoundly hostile towards the Murji'ites for what they thought was Murji'ite animosity towards 'Alī.

The Murji'ite point of view as expressed by the poem of Muḥārīb b. Dithnār rejected the Shī'ite insinuation, and claimed that their attitude to 'Alī was rather more objectivity than hostility.⁽⁹¹⁾

The Shī'ite reply came in a poem by the Kaysanite poet al-Sayyid al-Khimyarī (d. 105/723). The poem was an attempt to refute the Murji'ite idea, appealing to the Murji'ites:

"My friends, do not commit Irjā'
And know that the right guidance
is not what you believe..."
"...Should it be 'Alī, the Imām of the
right way
(Imām al-Hudā) that be postponed? ..."⁽⁹²⁾

The Shī'ite effort to combat the Murji'ite attitude

(90) al-Razī's al-Zayyina, iii, p.256.

(91) Aghānī, (Būlāq Ed.), vii, p.11.

(92) Ibid., p.16.

was concentrated on emphasising the sanctity of 'Alī and his successors. (93)

Another incident was the discussion held by the Murji'ite Khārija b. Mus'ab with Shī'ites in Khorasan. He is said to have argued against them, saying that he possessed a hadīth which said that 'Alī burnt those who fought for his sake. (94) In some cases, the appellative Murji'ite may have been used as a nick-name for a man who hated 'Alī, but had no other connection with the movement, as in the case of Khālid b. Salama. (95)

(93) The controversy between the Shī'a and the Murji'a seems to have been carried well into the ninth century. The Shī'ite scholar al-Fadl b. Shādhān al-Nīsābūrī (d.260/874), has recorded what seems to be the core of the problem by quoting an alleged polemical discussion between Murji'ites and Shī'ites. The Shī'ites complained, asking why they were excluded from the "Jamā'a", and the Murji'ites retorted: "because you rejected Abū Bakr and 'Umar". (al-Idāh, p.93).

(94) Mizān, al-I'tidāl, (Cairo Ed., 1325), i, p.315; quoted from al-Imām al-Qāsim, p.234, note 4.

(95) Ibid., 234. See also: Vorlesungen, chap.III, note 30, pp.323-324. A.S. Tritton states that when a man is called a Murji' who hated 'Alī, it

Some biographical accounts tend to centre the rivalry between the Murji'a and the Shī'a in the scholarly circles of the respective parties. Its epitome on the Shī'ite side was the Kufan jurist Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī (d. 96/714). He is reported in several sources to have derogatively remarked on the Murji'ites for "being even worse than Christians or Jews, and more dangerous than the Azāriqa", and to have expelled Murji'ites who came to listen to him in the Mosque.⁽⁹⁶⁾ The Murji'ite Sa'īd b. Jubayr is known to have opposed legal decisions of Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī⁽⁹⁷⁾ although it does not necessarily

probably means no more than he refused to exalt him above Abū Bakr. Muslim Theology, p.43.

(96) See: IS, vi, pp.191-192; al-Ma'rifa, ii, pp.605-606; al-'Ilal, i, pp.36, 92; the Shī'ite sympathies of Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī are deduced from a statement quoted by IS, vi, p.204, in which Ibrāhīm is reported to have said that he liked 'Alī better than 'Uthmān, although he would not condemn 'Uthmān. However, it seems that his pro-'Alid inclination took only a moderate form, that is, without attributing to 'Alī any supernatural powers. See Formative Period, p.122.

(97) 'Iqd, ii, pp.232, 237.

follow that his opposition had any political or religious grounds.

The general impression is that it was primarily the Shī'ite attitude which heated the rivalry with the Murji'a. Their hostility was not merely aimed at the Murji'ites for the view taken by the latter on 'Alī, but also for their tolerance of the Umayyads, regarded as infidel by the pro-'Alids.

5.b) The Murji'a and the Khawārij.

The violent opposition of the Khawārij to the Umayyads, and the extreme attitudes of the Azāriqa, who would label anyone who would not join them as infidel, were bound to make them a very formidable foe to the Murji'a. The military quietism exercised by the latter was in complete opposition to the Khārijite attitude, which banned anybody abstaining from fighting the Umayyads.

However, the Khawārij were more of a danger in Khorasan than in Kufa. That was where Thābit Qutna had witnessed a polemical discussion between them and a group of Murji'ites, after which he decided to join the Murji'ites. (98)

The clear reference Thābit made in his poem to

(98) Aghānī, (Cairo Ed.), xiv, p.269.

the Khawārij defined quite emphatically the irreconcilable discrepancies between the two movements. Thābit probably had a good reason for that, ostensibly due to the strengthening of the Khawārij in Khorasan.

Another reference to the Khawārij is found in connection with the Murji'ite Ibrāhīm b. Yazīd al-Taymī (d.c.100/718). He is reported to have attempted to convert the Khawārij to Murji'ism.⁽⁹⁹⁾ Whether it was due to al-Taymī that a man called Abū 'Athim al-Laythī left the Khawārij in order to join the Murji'ites is unknown.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

5.c) The Murji'a and the Qadariyya.

Information on the relationship between the Murji'a and the Qadariyya is scanty. However, the existing evidence shows that the Murji'a retained the same attitude that al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya had adopted against them. That was only natural, considering the fact that the Murji'ites, who on

(99) IS, vi, p.195. The Murji'ite Talq b. Ḥabīb (d.c.708/714) is said, too, to have tried to persuade people to become Murji'ite. See: IS, vii, p.65; Tahdhīb, v, p.31.

(100) Al-Laythī commemorated his change of heart in a poem. See: al-Sabā'i, Bayūmi, Tahdhīb al-Kāmil fi'l Lughā wa'l Adab, i, p.122. (Cairo 1341/1923).

principle acknowledged the legitimacy of the Umayyad rule, would be logically bound to approve of the latter's claim to rule by divine decree. This stood in total contradiction to the view held by the Qadariyya. The essence of the Qadarite point of view was that good and evil are at man's disposal. The implication of that was that the Umayyads claim to rule by divine decree was not valid.

A reference to the Qadariyya was made by Sa'īd b. Jubayr, who is said to have come out against them.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ Another reference had already been mentioned: the verse from the poem by Thābit Qutna, stating that any divine decision was irrevocable, and that everything decreed by Allāh is right.⁽¹⁰²⁾ The significance of his reference to the Qadariyya is to be understood in the same way as his allusion to the Khawārij. The Qadarites, even more than the Khawārij, were growing in strength. Further events like the epistle 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz was to address them with and, later, the execution of one of their most prominent figures, Ghaylān al-Dimashqī (died towards the end of the reign of Hisham, c.740-45), attest their increasing influence.

(101) Dhikr Akhbār Isbahān, i, p.321.

(102) Aghānī, (Cairo Ed.), xiv, p.270.

The accusations made by the Shī'a and the Khawārij that the Murji'ites were supporters of the Umayyads were not altogether true. For most of the period in discussion, that is, until 714 (the year al-Hajjāj died), Murji'ites would have been on guard against the authorities, despite the fact that the persecutions which followed the rising of 701 would have left the movement practically free of leading militants. Yet, with the vengeful al-Hajjāj, regarded as a kāfir, still in power, the Murji'ites were unlikely to give the Umayyads too much sympathy.

On the other hand, disillusioned with their rebellious experience, Murji'ites turned back to their traditional principles of Irjā', for the sake of preserving the unity of the community.

Despite the fact that the re-affirmation of their original views was not meant to be a conscious overture to co-operation with the Umayyads, their rivals considered them political stooges. This is not surprising, bearing in mind that the essence of the Murji'ite position was antagonism towards 'Alī and condemnation of the Khawārij. Hence, they were wrongly understood to be ^{strongly} pro-Umayyad.

The Shī'ite and Khārijite harassment of the Murji'a was gradually radicalising the Murji'ites against them, pushing them towards the Umayyads. In other words, despite the innate pro-Umayyad leaning of the traditional Irjā', the drift of the Murji'ites

towards the Umayyads would not have come so early, had they not been driven to it by their religio-political rivals.

6) The Triumph of Early Murji'ism - The Reign of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz.

With the accession of caliph Sulaymān to the throne, a change occurred in the attitude of the court towards the pious. Despite his womanising and the libertine style of life he was leading,⁽¹⁰³⁾ he had leanings towards the religious circles. It was a fact that he flirted with the Iraqi opposition to al-Hajjāj, which was always made in the name of Allāh. He even propitiated the Shī'ites by giving the governorship of Medina to a grandson of a participant in the rising against 'Uthmān. But the most significant was his lending an ear to the court theologian, Rajā' b. Haywa.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

It is difficult to determine the motives which drove Sulaymān to differ from his predecessors. However, by interpretation and reconstruction, some historical evidence may provide the answer.

(103) Cf. Aghānī (Būlāq Ed.) iv, pp.59ff.; quoted from Arab Kingdom, p.263.

(104) Ibid., pp.263ff.

On a visit, possibly on Hajj to Mecca, Sulaymān was faced with harsh criticism of his father from the Meccan scholar Ṭā'ūs. (105) Being an astute politician, Sulaymān may have understood that these remarks were only the tip of an iceberg of alarming malaise among the pious. His openness towards this circle, and probably the influence of Rajā' b. Ḥaywa, convinced him to release the political prisoners jailed by al-Ḥajjāj. (106) This step must be taken as a genuine attempt to pacify the rebellious factions and the pious. In a gesture towards the Mawālī, he is said to have expressed admiration for them, admitting that the Arabs were always in need of the Persians' skill in administration. (107)

The creation of this tolerant atmosphere was only a prelude to the reign of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, who was about to bring an even closer relationship between the court and the pious.

The role of Rajā' in the court was instrumental in ensuring that the course of events was thus. His position as confidant of Sulaymān (108) determined the affair of succession. In what can be described as a

(105) al-Muwafaqqiyāt, p.82.

(106) Mubarrad, ii, p.97.

(107) al-Muwafaqqiyāt, p.186.

(108) IS, v. pp.247-250.

"white coup", Rajā' was responsible for the appointment of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz as the next Caliph, bringing him from a colateral branch which had been supplanted by 'Abd al-Malik.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ The picking of 'Umar must have been Rajā''s pre-meditated and well-calculated choice: a man who was like-minded in his approach to religion and religious affairs, and who was likely to leave himself installed in his position.⁽¹¹⁰⁾

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(109) Cf. Tabarī, ii, pp.1341-45; al-'Uyūn wa'l Hadā'iq, pp.36-39.

(110) The career of Rajā' b. Haywa (d.112/730) is an edifying indication of the increasing interest in religious policies of the Umayyads on one hand, and of the increasing influence of the pious, and the way the Umayyads responded to it, on the other. He started as chancellor of the treasury (Bayt al-Māl) under 'Abd al-Malik ('Iqd, iv, p.399). Later, he was promoted to the post of the Caliph's adviser. (Ibn 'Asākir, x, p.126). But his significance and influence in religious affairs showed only when he was sent by 'Abd al-Malik to Kufa, in order to assist the new governor, Bishr b. Marwān, to improve the religious image of the court after the abortive rising of Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubayr in 689. (Ibid.) Cf. also Hans Gotschalk's illuminating

For the Murji'ites there could not have been a better choice of Caliph. His affection for the pious in general, (111) and the support he had given Murji'ite fugitives who had escaped the wrath of al-Hajjāj after the rising of Ibn al-Ash'ath, assured them of a sympathetic attitude from the court.

The zenith of the relationship between the Murji'ites and 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz was, undoubtedly, his audience with three Murji'ites who travelled to Damascus in order to discuss Irjā' with the Caliph. These were 'Awn b. 'Abdallāh (d.c.110-120/718-28), who had changed his mind and re-joined the Murji'ites; Abu'l Sabbāh Mūsā b. Abī Kathīr (d.c.120/737), and 'Umar b. Hamza. (112)

It is not surprising to find that 'Umar was amenable to the endeavour of the three to convert him to their ideas. His attitude to their message was

article, "Rajā' ibn Haywa und Der Theologische Einfluss am Hofe Der Marwāniden von Damaskus", in Festschrift Für Wilhelm Eilers, Wiesbaden 1967, pp.328-340.

(111) See: Ma'rifa, ii, p.336; IS, v, p.302; Arab Kingdom, pp.267-68.

(112) IS, vi, p.218. The first two are well-known ahādīth transmitters. Particularly 'Awn is often relied upon by Muslim and other canonical

favourable too, and their claim that the Caliph did not dispute them is to be credited.⁽¹¹³⁾ However, later reports which indicate that 'Umar had leanings towards the Murji'a⁽¹¹⁴⁾ seem to be slightly exaggerated. Even a report like the one in IS, v, p.291, which states that 'Umar refused to comment on 'Alī, 'Uthmān and the incidents of Waq'at al-Jamal and Siffīn, just as the Murji'ites did, does not mean that the three were successful in drawing 'Umar to Irjā'. Since 'Umar was trying to re-unite the divided community, that is, to reconcile the differences between the political factions, the Murji'ite formula must have appealed to him. However, he would have alienated the pro-'Alid and Khārijite groups had he publicly expressed his sympathies for the Murji'ites. This, for the simple reason that the Murji'ites, no matter how deep their religious motivation or concern for the unity of the Umma was, were still a politically interested party, even if they had no aspirations for power.

authorities. Cf. Tahdhīb, viii, pp.171-73.

'Umar b. Hamza was a great-grandson of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. See: al-Bustī, No. 1080; Mīzān, ii, p.255, (Cairo 1325), quoted from al-Imām al-Qāsim, p.234. See also: Brentjes, p.47.

(113) See IS, Ibid.

(114) For example, al-Muwaffāciyāt, p.516; al-Inṣāf, p.69.

Therefore, the Murji'a could have been used only subtly as an instrument in the attempt to appease Iraq. It was of mutual benefit both for the Murji'a and 'Umar. Only when 'Umar took power did the struggle in Kufa subside as a result of official policies pursued by him to pacify the Shī'ites,⁽¹¹⁵⁾ the Khārijites,⁽¹¹⁶⁾ and the Mawāli.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ This produced at last a cessation of the hostilities and a satisfactory solution for the under-privileged.

Only then could the Murji'ites give once again public expression to the principle inherent in their

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- (115) 'Umar abrogated the public cursing of 'Alī which was introduced by al-Hajjāj, gave the descendants of 'Alī their long-demanded inheritance of the oasis of Fadak, al-Imām al-Qāsim, p.234, and paid the first instalment of the money which was allocated to relations of the Prophet, and of which Banū Hāshim were officially deprived since the reign of Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān, see:
C.H. Becker, "Studien", ZA, xv (1900), p.29, note 3.
- (116) 'Umar adopted a lenient attitude towards them, and was even conducting correspondence with them; Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam, Sīrat 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, p.75; IS, v, p.264; Ibn al-Jawzī, p.31.
- (117) See: Arab Kingdom, pp.267-311.

ideology, i.e., support for the present reign. They could stand for their principles without fear of being branded as traitors, and escape harassment by the Shī'a and the Khawārij, while gaining further political and religious influence.

Their roots in Kufa were firm, and 'Umar could use them to exert influence and gain popular support for the state, using their religious prestige in pious and Mawālī circles.

Although 'Umar could not explicitly advocate Murji'ite ideas which looked down on 'Alī and denounced the Khawārij, in order to appease these two factions, he was bound to use the common ground on which he and the Murji'ites stood with regard to the Qadariyya.

'Umar was more concerned with the Qadarite threat; the Shī'a and the Khawārij were now subdued but the Qadarites were still, it would seem, an active threat. The Shī'ite and Khārijite claim to the Caliphate was essentially based on a political protest which contended that the succession of 'Uthmān by the Umayyads was illegal. However, their moral weight could not much damage the prestige and the constitution of the Umayyad regime. In clear contrast, the Qadariyya was posing an ideological challenge which endangered the *raison d'etre* of the dynasty. Their belief that good and evil are at man's disposal stood in clear contradiction to the Umayyad philosophy, that

claimed that they reigned by divine decree. In other words, no matter if the Umayyad rule was good or evil (and the implication was that it was certainly evil, as far as the Qadarites were concerned), it was man-made and was imposed through sheer human power.

The views and response of 'Umar to the Qadariyya have reached us in an epistle which he wrote to them.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ Naturally, his stand against them is uncompromising, although he did not resort to fighting them physically.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

The view may be taken that the stand of the Murji'a towards the doctrine of Qadar was the cornerstone of the political understanding between the Murji'ites and the court.

Whatever the reasons, it seems that during the reign of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz the Murji'ites were elevated to a prestigious and influential position, and enjoyed a religio-political freedom they had never known before. The absence of threat from other factions

(118) See: J. van Ess' article "Umar II and his Epistle Against the Qadariyya", in 'Abr Nahrain, xii, (1971-72) pp.19-26. The Risāla is quoted in Hilyat al-Awliyā', v, pp.346ff.

(119) Cf. 'Amr b. 'Ubaid, p.37; Ibn al-Jawzī, pp.36-38.

seems to have persuaded the elite of the Murji'a to immerse themselves in religious activity, which was to change the nature of the movement within the following decade.

7) The Murji'ite Part in the Rising of Yazīd b. Muhallab (720)

The rising of Yazīd b. Muhallab is of interest to the discussion by the fact that a group of Murji'ites were involved in it.

The background to the rising was the grudge borne by the family of al-Ḥajjāj against Yazīd b. Muhallab who, as a governor in Iraq under Caliph Sulaymān, had harassed the family of his predecessor. Yazīd b. Muhallab had been imprisoned since the early days of the reign of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz on charge of improper use of Kharāj. With the accession of the new Caliph, Yazīd II (who was married to a niece of al-Ḥajjāj), Yazīd hoped to be released despite that. But when these hopes faded, he escaped from jail to Baṣra, a stronghold of the Muhalliba, and his clan Azd 'Umān, and raised a riot. (120)

(120) Further details on the rising are to be found in Tabarī, ii, pp.1397ff.; al-Tanbīh, pp.320-22; al-'Uyūn wa'l Hadā'iq, pp.64ff.; Ibn al-Athīr's

The sources report that among the factions that participated in significant numbers was a group of Murji'ites led by the Basran (Murji'ite) Abū Ru'ba. (121) In the course of the rising, a Syrian army commanded by Maslama b. 'Abd al-Nālik, arrived in Basra. Yazīd let them cross the Euphrates, planning to attack their camp at night. At that point, the two leaders (Abū Ru'ba and Samayda), who apparently controlled a large number of warriors, raised their objection against attacking fellow-Muslims in cold blood and at night. Yazīd, who could not attack without their men, conceded, and consequently lost the battle and later was killed.

The question arises why did Murji'ites participate in a rising which carried nothing but signs of tribal vengefulness. Even more curious is the report that the Khārijites were concerned with bloodshed of fellow-Muslims, an appellation which they never

al-Kāmil, v, p.80; Arab Kingdom, pp.312ff.; and H. Mason's article "The Role of the Muhallabid Family in Marw's Anti-Umayyad Power Struggle", ARABICA, xiv, (1967), pp.191-207, especially pp.203ff.

(121) Tabarī, ii, pp.1399ff. Alongside the Murji'ites there was a Khārijite group led by a man called Samayda.

honoured the Umayyads with. A possible explanation is that the people described as Murji'ites were either Mawālī, or else, allies of the Azd, who were bound to respond to the call of their masters or friends, respectively. This leads to a curious contradiction. On one hand, despite their being Murji'ites, they seemed to be more bound to their tribal affiliation rather than to the principle of military quietism. On the other hand, when the moment had come to fight, they refused, demanding that the Syrians must be given first a Qur'ān in order to give them a chance to repent before they were fought. The fact that they possessed enough power to impose their will excludes the possibility that they were coerced to join the rising in the first place. The possibility of bribe, which was common as a method of drafting people by Yazīd, (122) seems unlikely. Another possible explanation is that the so-called Murji'ites were nick-named so for their anti-Shī'ite leanings. But, if true, the report of their vetoing the plan of Yazīd does not make sense.

Aside from discounting altogether the whole affair, the only possibility that can be conceived would be that those Murji'ites were militants who

(122) Mubarrad, i, p.138.

responded to the accession to power of the new Caliph. Apprehensive of his attitudes toward them, bearing in mind his marital links to the family of al-Hajjāj, they decided to join the rising which could have brought him down.

8) Conclusion

The formation and spread of Murji'ism is a consequence of the policies pursued by 'Abd al-Mālik and al-Hajjāj, and of the political situation in Iraq.

The roots of the political chaos in Iraq should be sought in the reign of 'Uthman b. 'Affān. It was in his era that the centralisation policies of 'Umar b. al-Khattāb had come to an end. The latter had kept the political elite and the imperial advisory council in Medina, thus protecting them from the influence of politically unstable elements of the Mawālī. He prevented the Qurayshite gentry from moving there, and prohibited the purchase of the much coveted and fertile estates, knowing that the socio-political effects of such migration would be disastrous. 'Umar also successfully controlled the Zubayrid opposition of Quraysh. However, with the accession to power of 'Uthman all these measures were eased. The prevention of migration and land purchase were lifted, and the Zubayrids received key administrative and military

posts (which later instigated their abortive attempt to retain their status in waq'at al-jamal). All these developments must have antagonised the local elements of Iraq, and contributed in all probability to the economic and political malaise which was later transformed into active protest against the Umayyad and their Arab-oriented ideology. Schematically speaking, this had encouraged tribalism, and the conflicts between the various political parties and the court, as well as their conflicts among themselves, took the direction of a political struggle under religious slogans. In this political atmosphere Murji'ism offered a pacific solution to the schism in the community, which was based on a picture of past events as the key to political compromise. As will be shown in the following chapter, the movement was characterised by adherence to certain genuine religious practices and scholarly tradition. However, they were mere undercurrents, and would not come to their full expression until later in the development of the movement.

Relations between the Murji'ites and the court were unstable, and were subject to ups and downs which were due to the policies pursued by various caliphs and governors, and accordingly due to rebellious steps adopted by militant Murji'ites. However, towards the end of the second decade of the 8th century, Murji'ism seemed to have united all its wings as a loyal party to the Umayyads.

CHAPTER III

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE MURJI'A
FROM A POLITICAL MOVEMENT INTO A
RELIGIOUSLY-ORIENTED SCHOOL

1) The Murji'ite Circle (c. 720-730)

The understanding and co-operation which characterised the relations between Caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz and the Murji'a made the political discrepancies between the Murji'a and its rivals largely irrelevant. This enabled the elite of the movement, which was dominated by religious scholars, to turn to undisturbed religious activities, respective of the vocations of the leading figures.⁽¹⁾ At any rate, the change in direction and emphasis in the thought of the Murji'ite scholars was ominous for the change which was to take place in the character of the circle, the style it was using to express their

(1) The inclination towards non-political religious thought may be found in some of the ideas expressed in the poem of Thābit Qutna and in other examples which will be discussed later. However, it does not seem to have constituted a focal point in the movement.

ideas, and indeed, the views it was to develop. (2)

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(2) This change determined also the historical image of the movement and the method by which it was depicted by later generations. The various discrepant depictions of the Murji'a ^{will} be a later subject of discussion in this chapter. Meanwhile it is important to remark that the transformation from a political movement into a school of religious thought whose eponym, Abū Hanīfa, was later to become ^{the} master of a significant legal school, ^{bring} about a change of emphasis in the sources. From that time onwards the focal point of the information was on doctrinal issues as reflected by the heresiographers and ideological rivals. Biographical information, and only about Abū Hanīfa, is provided only by the Hanafite Manāqib literature. Both groups of sources lack the historical perspective with regard to the movement or school as a social, religious or political unit. However, some historical context is inserted in connection with the personal exploits of Abū Hanīfa. This implies that biographical or general historical background about the movement in this period is even more scanty than is available about their formative period. Therefore, it would be

Towards the beginning of the third decade of the eighth century we find the leading figures of the Murji'ites in a scholarly circle which attended the court hearings and teaching sessions of the qādī of Kufa, Muhārib b. Dithār (d. 116/734).⁽³⁾ Other leading Murji'ites were Mis'ar b. Kidām (d. 155/772), a prominent Muhaddith;⁽⁴⁾ the jurist Hammād b. Abī

appropriate to concentrate our attention on the scholarly circle of the movement as long as data is available about leading figures, and before the sources start referring to abstract ideology and Abū Hanīfa or others as their epitome.

- (3) See IS, VI, p. 214; Tahdhīb, X, pp. 44-50; Akhbār al-Qudāt, III, pp. 28ff; Ma'rifa, II, p. 675.
- (4) IS, VI, pp. 253-54; Ma'ārif, p. 625; Tadhkira, I, pp. 188f; Ma'rifa, II, p. 651. His transmissions from other Murji'ites in Kufa like 'Amr b. Murra and 'Awn b. 'Abdallāh attest that the Murji'ites formed some sort of scholarly circle, although their transmissions were not exclusively among themselves. Cf. Ma'rifa, II, p. 616.

Sulaymān (d. 120/737);⁽⁵⁾ his disciple Abū Hanīfa (d. 150/767)⁽⁶⁾ and less important scholarly figures like the muḥaddith Ayyūb 'Ā'id,⁽⁷⁾ al-Salt b. Bahrām (d. 147/764),⁽⁸⁾ Yāsin b. Mu'ādh al-Zayyāt (d.c. 150) Muftī of Kufa,⁽⁹⁾ and probably other leaders of less explicit distinction. The Murji'ite circle seemingly attracted a number of jurists out of which a local legal school emerged. The circle discussed⁽¹⁰⁾ legal issues, but it is unreasonable to assume that questions of religious application were avoided, bearing in mind

- (5) He was connected in transmission links with the Murji'ites Sa'īd b. Jubayr and Mis'ar b. Kidām. See Tahdhīb, III, pp. 16-17; Ma'ārif, p. 625; Shahrastānī, I, p. 194; al-'Ilal, I, p. 270; Abu Zur'a, p. 137a; al-A'lāq al-Nafīsa, p. 220; Origins, p. 237.
- (6) Al-Makkī, I, p. 38.
- (7) Tahdhīb, I, p. 406, whose traditions were quoted by Bukhārī.
- (8) Lisān al-Mīzān, IV, p. 194.
- (9) Ibid., VI, pp. 238f.
- (10) "Takallama", according to al-Imām al-Qāsim, p. 234.

the religio-political background of these people. (11)

- (11) The designation which was gradually establishing *itself* at that time as the common appellative for jurists was fuqahā'. However, the distinction between "fiqh" (Cf. Bukhārī Ṣaḥīḥ, "adhān" b.42. Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, Sifat al-Munāfiqīn, trad. 40) which derives its specific meaning from the broader meaning of the verb "to understand" or "to comprehend", and between 'ilm as synonymous to religious knowledge, especially in connection with ḥadīth, was not yet fully established. This is corroborated by a statement of Ibn Khaldūn who said that after the period of the Prophet, the qurrā' were called fuqahā' and 'ulamā'. Muqaddima, (Beirut 1900), p. 446, quoted from Early Development, pp. 6, 9, note 27. The first chapter of this work investigates the meaning of the term fiqh and other allied terms. Ibid., pp. 1-11. Hence, we can conclude that the term fiqh did imply at that time issues of religious knowledge. (see: Bukhārī, "'Ilm", pp. 6, 10, 13; Muslim, "Imāra", trad. 175) distinguished from matters of exclusive legal technicalities, or indeed religious law. Cf. also "Theology and Law in Islam", p. 4.

The relationship of the Murji'ite circle with the Umayyads, namely ^{with} Caliph Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik, are quite obscure. At any rate, the sources do not mention encounters between the two sides. (12) The reign of Hishām was characterised by what Francesco Gabrieli called "strict orthodoxy". (13) Hishām, indeed, persecuted adherents of the idea of qadar, and it is even alleged that Ghaylān b. Marwān al-Dimashqī was executed by the Caliph for maintaining Qadarite views. (14) ^{Hishām's} stand on qadar was identical to the Murji'ite view of this doctrine, but on the other hand ^{he} was known to have been a friend of al-Zuhrī (d. 742), who opposed the Murji'ites and regarded irjā' as an innovation (bid'a). (15) Therefore, it is difficult to determine from the various

(12) The alleged support Abū Hanīfa gave Zayd b. 'Alī when the latter rebelled in 740 could be an example of the attitude of the circle towards the Umayyads at a certain time.

(13) "Hishām", EI².

(14) Wafayāt, I, p. 256; Lisān al-Mīzān, IV, p. 424. Ibn Nubāta, p. 292. 'Amr b. 'Ubayd, clause 21.

(15) See EI², *ibid.*

contradictory accounts what was the relationship between the Murji'ite circle and the court at the beginning of Hishām's reign. (16)

It is precisely the paucity of straightforward historical data that implies that the study will have to examine the statements of religious thought which originate from the Murji'ite circles. Alongside an analysis of the theological elements of those treatises, an attempt will be made to try and construe

(16) It should be noted that the term "movement" is replaced in this part of the work by the term "circle". This should not imply that there has been a radical diminution in the popular support of the Murji'a (cf. Schacht "New Sources", p. 38). The term "circle" is trying to convey the change of emphasis reflected by the sources, meaning that from that time onwards the ideological element became the centre of interest in the movement. Since religious thought was a field in which only learned men were active, it is necessary to convey this shift, and to make it clear that as a scholarly group, the size of the active part of the movement was naturally restricted to a leading circle within the movement.

possible clues which may shed more light on the political position of the Murji'a. To this end, three sources of information will be studied in comparison with one another: early Murji'ite treatises; the Kitāb al-Imān of Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/838) which represents an early traditionalist point of view, and finally, the heresiographers. These sections will be followed by a critique of these sources and of the interpretation of the Murji'a by occidental scholars.

2) The Murji'ite Treatises

During the course of the scrutiny attempted on the sources of Murji'ite thought, four treatises were consulted. They are all considered to have originated from the circle of Abū Hanīfa during the period in discussion (around the middle of the 8th century),⁽¹⁷⁾ and to reflect with reasonable certainty the authentic religious thought of the Murji'ite circle. The treatises are:

1. Kitāb al-'Ālim wa'l muta'allim. This is a dialogue between master and disciple. The master

(17) Cf. "New Sources", pp. 31-32, and "Theology and Law", p. 19.

was traditionally considered to have been Abū Ḥanīfa, although it does not determine the actual authorship of the treatise. The disciple is referred to as Abū Muqātil Ḥafṣ b. Salam al-Samarqandī.⁽¹⁸⁾ Joseph Schacht, in his "An Early Murci'ite Treatise : The Kitāb al-'Ālim wa'l muta'allim"⁽¹⁹⁾ contested this notion, claiming, on the basis of comparing a number of manuscripts, that the author was in fact Abū Muṭī' al-Ḥakam b. 'Abdallāh al-Balḥī, a disciple of Abū Ḥanīfa and qādī of Balkh (d.c. 197-199).⁽²⁰⁾ The versions of Kitāb al-'Ālim wa'l muta'allim which were available to this work were the edition of Shaykh Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī based on the manuscript Cairo Majmū'a, 64 (catalogue Cairo VII, 553), Cairo 1368/1949; a Syrian edition prepared by Muḥammad Rawās Qal'a-jī and 'Abd al Wahhāb al-Hindī al-Nad(a)wī which is based on the Egyptian edition of Shaykh al-Kawtharī, on the Hyderabad edition of 1349⁽²¹⁾ and on the version found in the Khizāna al-ahmadīyya in the waqf library in ^{Alppo} Aleppo; manuscript No. 736, Ḥalab, 1972/1392; and a Chester Beatty Library manuscript, No. 4216.

(18) Cf. Oriens, xvii (1964), p. 97, note 1.

(19) Ibid., pp. 96-117.

(20) See his arguments, Ibid., pp.97-100. See also: Syrian Edition, p. 29, n.3.

(21) Based on the manuscript Rampur, I, p. 318, No. 270.

2. The Risāla of Abū Hanīfa to the Baṣran scholar 'Uthmān al-Battī (d. 143/760) ⁽²²⁾ in al-Kawtharī's edition, pp. 33-38. It seems to be an authentic epistle of Abū Hanīfa, an impression shared by Schacht too. ⁽²³⁾ It was primarily transmitted by Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798) through ^a "trustworthy" chain of Hanafite scholars, ⁽²⁴⁾ based on MS. Cairo, Majmū'a 64, fols. 20-23.

3. Al-Fiqh al-Absat. This is a document which contains answers on dogma, and which is ascribed to Abū Hanīfa. The transmitter here is the above-mentioned Abū Mutī' al-Balḥī. ⁽²⁵⁾ The editor of the Cairo edition of these three treatises commented that this document is in fact the "fiqh al-akbar" and only known as "fiqh al-absat". The "fiqh al-akbar" (on which, according to Wensinck, a commentary ^{exists} spuriously

(22) See for example, Ta'rīkh al-Islām, V, p. 277.

(23) See "New Sources", p. 25.

(24) Al-'Ālim, p. 5.

(25) Apparently this is the document mentioned in Martin Schreiner's article "Beiträge zur Geschichte der theologischen Bewegungen in Islam", ZDMG, 52(1898), p. 529, n.5).

ascribed to al-Māturīdī and probably by Abū 'l-Layth al-Samarqandī) was transmitted by Hammād, Abū Hanīfa's son.⁽²⁶⁾ This treatise (al-fiqh al-absaṭ) too, seems to be genuine, an impression which Wensinck gained too. The treatise contains most of the articles found in "Fiqh Akbar I" and therefore Wensinck was inclined to conclude that "Fiqh Akbar I" borrowed the text from al-Fiqh al-Absaṭ.⁽²⁷⁾

4. Although the Fiqh al-Absaṭ is practically identical with "Fiqh Akbar I", the latter ^{will} serve as our fourth source of reference, if only for comparative study of al-Fiqh al-Absaṭ.⁽²⁸⁾

(26) See: al-'ālim, p. 39.

(27) See Muslim Creed, p. 123. The treatise appears in al-Kawtharī's edition of al-'ālim, pp. 39-60, based on Cairo MS. Majmū'a 64, fols. 24ff. All three treatises were first mentioned by F. Kern in his "Murgītische und Antimurgītische Tendenztraditionen in Sujūti's al-la'ālī al-maṣnū'a fī'l ahādīt al maudū'a", ZA, 26 (1912), p. 169, note 1.

(28) See Sharḥ al-fiqh al-Akbar I, with wrongly ascribed commentary to al-Māturīdī, Hyderabad, 1367/1948, pp. 1-28. Also MC, pp. 102ff.

3) Elements of Murji'ite Doctrine as Reflected by
Early Murji'ite Treatises

The Relations between Īmān and 'Amal

The core of Murji'ite religious thought deals with the elements comprising their definition of Īmān.

From various statements found in the early Murji'ite treatises, it becomes clear that the Murji'ite attitude towards the definition of Īmān approached the problem through a discussion about the relationship between 'amal (ritual practice or external works) and Īmān. The reference to 'amal through faith was definitely not accidental, and this attitude was emphatically re-asserted with regard to the position of works and their bearing on one's faith. (29)

(29) In fact, in al-'ālim, this attitude is mentioned even before the Murji'ite definition of Īmān. This ~~may~~ be considered significant in as far as we assume that the author either referred to the subject first in his conversation with Abū Hanīfa, or arranged the questions later according to some order of importance. It is also the case with the Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī. Although this Risāla is clearly not the only letter exchanged by Abū Hanīfa and the Basran scholar (d. 760/143),

The Murji'ite doctrine asserted that the farā'id (duties of worship) are not identical with dīn, and are not implied by its original form. The sharā'i' (which the author identified with farā'id) came into effect only when dīn was acknowledged. (30) Therefore,

it can be clearly considered a key epistle in the correspondence between the two. This is made evident by the presence of most of the important subjects embodied in the Murji'ite thought. Therefore, it is significant again, that the letter was opened in a laboriously elaborated discussion on the relationship between īmān and 'amal.

- (30) This argument was supported by quoting Sūra XIV (Ibrāhīm), verse 32. See al-'ālim, Clause 5 pp. 11-13; SE, pp. 45-51. The same argument was developed more elaborately in the Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī. The reasoning followed their claims that the Prophet persuaded the people to acknowledge the unity and omnipotence of Allāh; everyone who adhered to it was considered "muslim, barī' min al-shirk" (Muslim, who disavowed polytheism). It was only later that the religious duties went hand in hand with īmān (to which effect Sūras LXIV (Taghābin) verse 9; XIII, (al-Ra'd), verse 29 and others

Footnote No. 30 continued.

were quoted). However, omission or neglect of religious duties did not imply neglect of tasdīq Allāh (counting Allāh true). Moreover, there was no dispute on the tasdīq, and people did not prefer one part of it or another, whereas as far as rituals were concerned, there were differences in manners of performance, and certain parts of rituals were preferred or rejected in different places. Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī, p. 35.

The last argument is mentioned to in al-'ālim wa'l muta'allim, *ibid*, supported by the following Qur'ānic verses: V (al-Mā'ida, 48; XXXXII, (al-Shūrā) 14; IV (al-Nisā') 24. The argument that the duties were imposed only after the conception of īmān, seems to insinuate, especially in Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī, that if the opposite view is to be adopted, that is, that if works are part of īmān, the first believers cannot be considered mu'minūn.

'amal is not part of īmān; the mu'minūn perform the duties for the sake of īmān and not vice-versa. (31)

Complementing this attitude is a statement attributed to the Baṣran Murji'ite Talq b. Ḥabīb, in which he takes the view that taqwā (piety) consists of works which are performed out of obedience of Allāh, and in hope of his mercy. Works, therefore, are mere piety. (32)

īmān, according to the Murji'ite view, is consisted of five elements: taṣdīq (counting Allāh true) ma'rifa (knowledge of Allāh), yaqīn (certainty or conviction about Allāh), iqrār (acknowledgement of Allāh), and islām (submission to Allāh). All these are different terms which bear the same meaning - īmān. (33)

(31) Al-'ālim, *ibid.*

(32) See Ibn Abī Shayba (d. 235), K. al-īmān (Ed. Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī), Damascus 1966; p. 33, no. 99.

(33) Al-'ālim, clauses 6 and 9, pp. 13, 14; SE, pp. 51-52, 55-56. The disciple's question whether īmān consists of different parts is impatiently rejected by the master, (see clause 8 in al-'ālim, pp. 13-14; SE, pp. 54-55) and later answered that "these are different names with a single meaning" (fa-hādhihi asmā' mukhtalifa wa-ma'nāhā wāhid), clause 9, *ibid.* This expressed the idea that īmān is a single indivisible entity.

As regards tasdīq, there are three types of people: those who profoundly feel it in their hearts and testify it with their tongues; those who testify in their tongue merely, and those who adhere to it only with their heart.⁽³⁴⁾ The first type are considered mu'minūn in the view of Allāh and mortals; the second group are not mu'minūn in Allāh's view, but considered as such by mortals who do not know what is in their hearts; the third type are mu'minūn as far as Allāh is concerned, but mortals would not know it. This is taqīyya.⁽³⁵⁾

An interesting inference made by the master concluding his rulings on Īmān and its nature asserts that the Īmān of humans is identical to the Īmān of the angels and the Prophets (inḥa Īmānūnā mithl Īmān al-malā'ika), "because we believe in everything they

(34) Clause 6 in al-'ālim, p. 13; SE, pp. 51-52.

Cf. Fiqh Absat, 46.

(35) Clause 7 in al-'ālim, p. 13; SE, pp. 52-53. See also clause 27 al-'ālim, p. 22; SE, pp. 90-93.

Schacht remarks that to the best of his knowledge this must be the earliest usage of the term

taqīyya in its technical sense. See Oriens, p. 107.

believe in"; i.e., the unity of Allāh, his divinity and his omnipotence. Therefore, Īmān is the same, but it is disparate from 'amal (inna al-Īmān ghayr al-'amal).⁽³⁶⁾ As a corollary to the last statement came the maxims that 'amal is the natural consequence of 'ilm (al-'amal taba' li'l-'ilm), and that 'ilm (religious knowledge) with little 'amal is preferable to much 'amal and ignorance.⁽³⁷⁾ The same principle is echoed in Fiqh Absaṭ where it is stated that fiqh in religion is superior to fiqh in Ahkām (legal

(36) Clause 10, al-'ālim, 14; SE, pp. 56-58. Here again, 'amal is excludingly distinguished from Īmān, although the answer did not actually deal with 'amal. This constitutes another indication of the importance attributed by the Murji'ite doctrine to the nature of Īmān as an independent concept from ritual practices. Cf. also Fiqh Absaṭ, p. 46, for the same statement on the identity between the Īmān of angels and human beings.

(37) See clause 1, al-'ālim, pp. 8-9, SE, pp. 29-32, in which Sura XXXIX (al-Zamar) verse 9 is quoted to this effect.

aspects covering ritual and practice). (38)

(38) Fiqh Absat, clause 8, p.40. The principle is even carried^{so far as} to state that mere acknowledgement of Allāh and Īmān is sufficient to become a mu'min even if the corollary duties of Īmān are not acknowledged. Ibid. Cf. also clause 39. Al-'ālim, 29; SE, pp. 119-20, the first sentence of the answer. The same maxim is voiced again in the later treatise known as Fiqh Akbar I, but the wording is slightly different: "al-fiqh fī'l-dīn afdal min al-fiqh fi'l-'ilm wa'l-hudūd". See Sharh al-fiqh al-akbar, clause 6, p. 5. As with the term fiqh discussed before, the term hudūd did not bear at that time the technical sense of penal law which it acquired later, and as Wensinck suggested, it conveyed the general sense of law or ordinances". MC, p. 111. In order to support this claim, Wensinck quoted a number of Qur'ānic verses where the term covers the ordinances of fasting, divorce, and inheritance, as well as the precepts of Allah in a general sense. Ibid., notes 3, 4, 5, 6.

The Relationship between Kufr and Grave Sin (Kabīra)

Extreme caution and complex reasoning characterise the attitude of Murji'ite doctrine to kufr (disbelief). In character with the line of reasoning exercised in the question of the nature and definition of ĩmān, the Murji'ite attitude approached the problem of kufr through a discussion about the relationship between grave sins and disbelief. In this case, too, the two issues were positively intertwined, and were examined in a manner which emphasized the position of grave sins with regard to kufr.

In the first statement made in al-'ālim wa'l muta'allim about this subject, it is made quite clear that the believer who commits a grave sin is not considered "the enemy of Allāh" as long as he professes tawhīd (unity of Allāh).⁽³⁹⁾ Then the elements of which kufr consists are spelt out.

(39) Clause 18, al-'ālim, p. 18.; SE, pp. 75-76.

The wording "'aduw li'llāh" is identical here to "kāfir" as in many Qur'ānic verses, e.g., XXXIII (al-ahzāb), verse 64; IV (al-Nisā') verse 102, and Passim.

These are inkār (denial [of Allāh's Lordship]), juhūd (rejection [of Allāh's Lordship]) and takdhīb (holding [Allāh's Lordship] untrue). However, the text remarks, the believer who omits a duty (musī') should be distinguished from the kāfir who denies it altogether.⁽⁴⁰⁾ This statement is especially interesting since it re-introduces the Murji'ite view on īmān and 'amal through the back door, using the context of the definition of kufr to exemplify the difference between a mu'min who neglects the rituals but does not deny the actual essence of īmān.⁽⁴¹⁾ It is difficult to determine in the light of this statement whether neglect of works was considered by the Murji'ite doctrine as a grave sin. The term musī' is replaced in another statement on the same issue by a title which conveys a more severe meaning - "mu'min mudhnib".⁽⁴²⁾ However, on the same subject of ruling

(40) Clause 22, al-'ālim, p. 19; SE, pp. 80-81.

(41) Cf. also clause 39, al-'ālim, p. 29; SE, pp. 119-120.

(42) Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī, p. 37. A recurrence of the title "mudhnib" refers to the question of whether a person who ^{has} committed a crime like murder can be considered a believer, but there the subject of neglecting works is absent.

See: Fiqh Absat, pp. 55-56.

on crimes like murder, the title fāsiq is used in another statement.⁽⁴³⁾ This inconsistency of wording gives the impression that neglect of works did not constitute a grave sin as far as the Murji'ites were concerned.

The offences which were considered grave sins were named: murder, larceny, highway robbery (qat' al-tariq) adultery, wine-drinking and drunkenness. All these make a person a fāsiq but do not alter his status as a mu'min.⁽⁴⁴⁾ In a section dedicated especially to this question on offences^{it is stated that} the murderer or the person who ill-treats another would be branded a mudhnib (criminal, sinner), but does not deprive him of his īmān, or indeed, his being a mu'min (i.e., member of the community of believers). The ruling is further qualified: "he is neither a kāfir, nor a munāfiq", (the latter title reflects al-Hasan al-Basrī's view of the sinner, and the qualification of the statement could be interpreted as criticism directed at him by the Murji'a).⁽⁴⁵⁾ Only those who

(43) Fiqh Absat, p. 47.

(44) Ibid.

(45) See Bāb al-radd-'alā-man yukaffir bi'l dhanab, Ibid., pp. 55-56.

abandon īmān and 'amal are kuffār, whose fate would be hell.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Therefore, it is not surprising to notice that the author of Fiqh Absat opened the treatise with the plea not to label anyone from the people of the Qibla as a kāfir, and hence, not to deny anybody's īmān, (meaning, that the question of who is mu'min and who is not should be left to Allāh).⁽⁴⁷⁾

On the Meaning of Dīn

The Murji'ite definition of dīn is short and straightforward. For them it is embodied in tawhīd.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Tawhīd was defined by them as the belief in [the unity

(46) Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī, p. 37.

(47) See, Clauses (1) and (2) of Fiqh Absat, p. 40.
Cf. also Clause 1, Sharh al-Fiqh al-akbar, p. 2.
Apart from the religious plane, these statements bear distinct political overtones, which are to be discussed later.

(48) Clause 5, al-'ālim, p. 11; SE, p. 46.

of] Allah and [the mission of] his Prophet. (49)

On Venial and Mortal Sins, Forgiveness and Punishment

As can be expected from what has been said in the chapter about the relationship between grave sin and kufr, no sin apart from shirk (polytheism) is punishable with certainty. Some sins may be, or are forgiven, but we do not know which sins, and whom Allāh forgives. To this effect Sūra IV (al-nisā') verses 31 and 48 were ^{produced} (50) Small sins are more likely to be forgiven than great sins⁽⁵¹⁾ but

(49) See Clause 23, al-'ālim, p. 20; SE, pp. 81-85.

This is corroborated by the argument developed by Abū Hanīfa in his epistle to 'Uthmān al-Battī. According to him, the Prophet converted people to the dīn on the basis of their acceptance of the unity of Allāh and his omnipotence, and their acknowledgement of Allāh's message [as it was revealed to his Prophet.] Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī, p. 35.

(50) Clause 14, al-'ālim, p. 16; SE, pp. 66-68.

(51) Clause 15, al-'ālim, pp. 16-17; SE, pp. 68-70.

the severest punishments are inflicted on kuffār. (52)
As in the discussion on īmān and kufr, the subject of works is inserted again. This time it is in the context of the fate of those who neglect the performance of rituals. For Allāh their status is of "mu'minūn mudhnibūn" who are at his mercy, whether he would punish them or whether he would forgive them. (53)
"I", said the master (Abū Hanīfa), "will hope and fear for him" (the mudhnib). (54)

On Qadar

The Murji'ite doctrine of Qadar took the view that grave predestinarian order determines man's life. The

- (52) Clause 40, al-'ālim, pp. 29-30; SE, pp. 120-122.
Cf. also "man taraka al-īmān wa'l-'amal kāna kāfir(an) min ahl al-nār". Risāla 'Uthmān al-Battī, p. 37.
- (53) Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī, p. 37 and Fiqh Absaṭ, p. 47.
- (54) Ibid., p. 47. This wording (arjū wa-akhāfu 'alayhi) was the source of confusion which made some of the heresiographers conclude that the Murji'a derived its name from this attitude.

principle is worded as follows: "mā aṣābaka lam yakun li-yukhti'ka, wa-mā akhta'aka lam yakun li-yuṣībaka" (what reaches you could not have possibly missed you, and what misses you could not have possibly reached you).⁽⁵⁵⁾

On Nifāq

The meaning of nifāq (and kufr) remained the same as it was in the days of the Prophet. The original nifāq meant denial in the heart of Allāh's unity and omnipotence, and outward acceptance of these attributes with the tongue. Supporting this statement are Sūra LXIII (al-munāfiqūn) verse 1, and Sūra II (al-baqara) verse 14.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Schacht comments on this clause, explaining that the meaning of it was to show that works were not an integral part of the concept of īmān at the time of the Prophet. (That is, īmān in

(55) Clause 4, Fiqh Absat, pp. 40, 42 line 8;

Clause 3, Sharh al-fiqh al-Akbar, p. 3.

(56) Clause 26, al-'ālim, p. 21; SE, pp. 88-90.

contrast to nifāq means both approval in the heart and by the tongue).⁽⁵⁷⁾

On Istithnā'

Istithnā' is a qualification of the statement "anā mu'min" (I am a believer) with the additional "in shā'a Allāh" (if Allāh wills). The Murji'ite view regarding the addition of the qualifying sentence held that it implied doubting (shakk) Allāh. This conclusion is reached by the reasoning exercised by the master who said, quoting a Qur'ānic verse to this effect:⁽⁵⁸⁾ "Allāh and his angels bless the Prophet. O, believers, do you also bless him and pray for peace upon him"; and the master concludes: "if you consider yourself a believer pray for him and if you consider yourself a non-believer - do not pray". This is to

(57) Oriens, p. 110. Cf. MC, p. 45. See also: Fiqh Absat, p. 45, where nifāq is rejected by the master as an intermediate status, implying that munāfiq is still a mu'min.

(58) Sūra XXXIII, (al-ahzab), verse 56.

say, Allah addresses the people as mu'minūn, therefore, qualifying the statement "I am a believer" implies doubt in the confidence Allāh has in his followers. (59)

On Tashbīh (Anthropomorphism)

The attribution of human traits and titles to Allāh is an idea opposed by Murji'ite doctrine. (60) This is the view of ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a. According to this teaching, Allāh is known in terms of His might, wrath, good will, and in terms of His eternity. His existence did not commence by birth (lam yalid wa-lam yūlad). He is unique, omnipotent, capable of hearing, sight and knowledge which mortals cannot achieve. His hand is above the hands of those

(59) See: Fiqh Absat, p. 56, also ibid., p. 45:
(law anna rajul(an) qāla lahu: a-mu'min anta?
qāla: allāh a'lam. qāla: huwa shākk(un) fī
īmānihi).

(60) See Fiqh Absat, p. 56.

He created and He is unlike them [in His form] .(61)

On the Invalidation of Good Deeds

Good deeds are liable for invalidation in three cases: shirk; when a man does a good deed for the sake of Allah (yurīd wajh Allāh) but reminds the recipient of it (to which effect Sūra II (al-baqara) verse 264 was quoted), and when a good deed ^{is} done

(61) Ibid. It seems that those descriptions of the nature of Allāh sought to combat two sources which spread them: (1) the Qur'ānic references to Allāh, which depicted him in anthropomorphic terms (e.g. Sūra XLVIII (al-fath) verse 10; Sūra III (al-'imran) verse 73, and Passim. (2) Christian association of the human element of Jesus, and the alleged beliefs of the Jews that Allāh's hand is fettered, and that Ezra is the son of Allāh (Sūra III (al-'imrān, verse 181; Sūra V (al-ma'ida) verse 64; Sūra IX (al-tawba) verse 30), and that Allāh is in human form. Allāh is self-sufficient (ghanī). Clause 23, al-'ālim, p. 20; SE, pp.29-32. Cf. also: Fiqh Absat, (bāb fi'l īmān) p. 57.

out of hypocrisy. Otherwise, no other wrong-doings invalidate good deeds. (62)

On Ikhtilāf al-Umma and other Concomitant Issues

One of the important elements embodied in Murji'ite thought was their view on the schism in the Muslim community, and the stand they took in connection with it against their religio-political opponents. The political manifestation, interwoven in the religious thought, is unique in comparison to contemporary treatises in the very fact that it was discussed in pronounced and explicit terms. (63)

It is significant to notice that Kitāb al-'ālim wa'l Muta'allim opens the dialogue between the master and the disciple with a question on īmān and 'amal

(62) See: Clause 31, al-'ālim, pp. 25-26; Clause 32, SE, pp. 107-108. Unless "good deeds" are interpreted as taking place between people, they may mean ritual works too. Hence, this clause may be taken as another outlet introducing the Murji'ite view on the relationship between 'amal and īmān.

(63) The significance of the political elements will be discussed later in the chapter.

immediately followed by a question on whether matters which were not ^{raised} by the Companions of the Prophet should not be ventured ~~on~~ by later generations.⁽⁶⁴⁾ The answer makes it quite clear that in the circumstances where shedding blood of believers was made lawful, it was mandatory to know who is right and who is wrong.⁽⁶⁵⁾ Lack of knowledge in this question makes one liable to ignorance, exposes to doubt (shubha) and to indecisiveness on "whom one loves or hates with regard [to his attitude] to Allāh".⁽⁶⁶⁾ Clearly, this is an explicit declaration encouraging ~~them~~ ^{taking of} a political stand, although the situation is tinted and phrased in theological jargon.

In order to understand the Murji'ite ideas about the state of the community and their stand ~~with~~ respect ~~to~~ their rivals, it would be useful to examine the Murji'ite self-view firstly. In his epistle to 'Uthmān al-Battī, Abū Hanīfa refers to al-Battī's question

(64) By that, the disciple obviously meant problems or events which occurred only later, and with which the Companions were not confronted.

(65) Schacht remarks that the same argument occurs in al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's *Risāla* (*Islam*, XXI (1933), p.68).

(66) Al-'alim, Clauses 9-10, p. 23; SE, pp. 32-37.

which probably enquired about the connections between Abū Hanīfa and his circle and what 'Uthmān al-Battī understood as a group of infamous reputation. Abū Hanīfa, aware of the unfavourable connotation, retorted back: "What sin was committed by people who speak for the sake of 'adl (truth), [especially] when this [nick-] name was labelled on them by ahl-al-bida'? Those people [with whom I agree] are ahl-al-'adl wa-ahl al-sunna;⁽⁶⁷⁾ This [nick-]name [Murji'a] was conceived by people who are motivated by mere hatred".⁽⁶⁸⁾

The same usage in the title "ahl al-'adl" recurs in Kitab al-'ālim wa'l muta'allim.⁽⁶⁹⁾ There, ahl al-'adl are noted to excel others in knowledge and concern for the weak state of the umma (shiddat ihtimām bi-fasād al-umma). Having clarified the image the Murji'ites had of themselves, they moved on to describe what was meant by their doctrine of Irjā'. "The origin of irjā' was derived from the angels who said to Allāh: We have no knowledge apart from what You taught us [to which effect Sūra II, (al-baqara) verse 31 was quoted]. Allāh did not even let the Prophet comment on a question if he had no knowledge about it.

(67) Cf. Kern, ZA, p. 169, n.2.

(68) Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī, pp. 37-38.

(69) Clause 17, al-'ālim, p. 18; SE, pp.74-75.

[Supported by Sūra XVII, (al-isrā') verse 35.] Irjā' means postponement of judgement (wuqūf) and taking the view that Allāh a'lam (Allāh is more knowledgeable than mortals) with regard to matters that one does not know, events which occurred before us, or ḥadīth [tale] which one cannot verify by experience or analogy". Then the master sets a fictitious example of irjā', depicting a situation which precisely reflects the situation of the umma after the first Civil War. "Irjā' means also to postpone judgement on sinners. People may be classified into three categories:

1. Prophets and people who were named by them as the people of paradise.
2. Mushrikūn - these are the people of Hell.
3. Mawāḥhidūn, those who profess the unity of Allāh on whom we postpone judgement; we fear and hope for them, for they mixed good deeds with other evil-doings."(70)

(70) Sūra IX, (al-tawba) verse 102. Clause 28, al-'ālim, pp.22-28; SE, pp.93-98. This is the most explicit example of the interchangeable nature of Murji'ite thought between political principles and religious ethics. The latter part introduces again, this time through the political context, the Murji'ite view on the relationship between īmān and 'amal.

Having pointed out the theological background of the attitude of *irjā'* and its implications, it is possible now to refer to its application on the politics of the community. The phrase *ikhtilāf* [al-umma] is used in the treatises to describe the controversy surrounding the Companions of the Prophet (ashāb rasūl Allāh), i.e., 'Uthmān and 'Alī. ^{Towards} this question clauses 5, 6, 7 in Fiqh Absat were directed. The clauses recommend (5) not to disavow any of the Companions of the Prophet; (6) not to adhere to one of them preferring him to another; (7) and to leave the affair of 'Uthmān and 'Alī to Allāh. (71)

The Khawārij are the subject of the other aspect of the Murji'ite statements on matters of political nature. All in all, the Murji'ites took a firm stand against the Khārijite doctrines, even when they avoided flat denial of their īmān. Thus, despite the Khārijite propaganda which maintained that everyone who is guilty of either venial or mortal sin should not be regarded a Muslim (and certainly labelled the Murji'ites with

(71) Fiqh Absat, p. 40. Cf. Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar, p. 5. The same attitude was voiced again in Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī, p. 36, and later in p. 37 ("wa-anā aqūl fīmā madā min ikhtilāf ashāb rasūl allāh fīmā kāna baynahum : allāh a'lam. Ibid., p. 37.

kufr, allowing to shed their blood), the Murji'ites did not accuse the Khārijites of kufr.⁽⁷²⁾ However, in another reference the Khawārij were accused of kufr al-na'ām (they rejected what was bestowed on them by Allāh).⁽⁷³⁾ From other statements it seems that the Murji'ites were not contented with combating the Khārijite doctrines just by showing^a good example which found its expression in their refusal to regard the Khawārij as Kuffār. Clauses (1), (2) and (3) of Fiqh Absat give the essence of the Murji'ite stance. Their pleas not to label anyone of ahl al-Qibla as a kāfir and not to deny anyone's Īmān, constituted a counter-weight to the Khārijite principles. Particularly

(72) See Clause 32, al-'ālim, pp. 26-27; SE, pp. 109-110. Cf. also MC, p. 40f.

(73) Fiqh Absat, p. 45. From the context of the statement, and from a previous refusal of the master in the same conversation (Ibid., p.44) to regard the Khawārij as kuffār, it is understood the kufr al-na'ām does not constitute disbelief. However, this stands in clear contradiction to his statement in the end of Kitab al-'ālim wa'l-muta'allim, where he ruled that whoever is guilty in kufr al-na'ām is a kāfir. Ibid., Clause 45, al-'ālim, p. 32; SE, pp. 131-133.

strongly worded is the third clause in which the famous dictum; wa-in ta'mur bi'l-ma'rūf wa-tanhā 'an al-munkar - enjoin what is just and prohibit what is evil. (Sūra III (Āl-Imrān) verses 100, 106, 110; Sūra VII, (al-a'rāf) verse 156; Sūra IX (al-tawba) verses 72, 113; and Passim). This warning was definitely directed against the Khārijites,⁽⁷⁴⁾ and was associated with unlawful shedding of believers blood, and permitting the impermissible.⁽⁷⁵⁾ It was also insinuated that by violating this principle the Khārijites were disobeying the Qur'ān. The master goes on to say that although he does not regard them as kuffār, they should be fought "in the same way they were fought by just leaders (a'imma min ahl al-khayr) like 'Alī and 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz", but he does not explain precisely how they should be fought.⁽⁷⁶⁾

- (74) Not against the Jabarites as Wensinck claimed, MC, p. 107.
- (75) Fiqh Absat, pp. 40, 44. Cf. Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar, clauses (1), (2), pp. 2-3.
- (76) Ibid., p. 44. Another anti-Khārijite argument can be found in Kitab al-ā'lim wa'l-muta'allim. It claims that barā'a (disavowal) and walāya (adherence) can exist together: when a believer does some good and some evil deeds, one must stand by him in his good deeds. Clause 44, al-a'lim, p.32; SE, pp. 129-131. The

Last, but not least, is the Murji'ite attitude towards the court. In this connection we have two statements. The first of them rules: "Take the side of the truthful party and the current regime and do not side with the unjust."⁽⁷⁷⁾ The second statement deals with the question of prayer behind a just or unjust imām, saying: "Prayer behind either a pious or an adulterer (Caliph) is permitted. You benefit from it [from the fact that there is some kind of leader] and the encumbrance (or the burden of sin) is his lot." (78)

On Wa'īd

The idea of wa'īd is the doctrine which emphasizes the threat that committing a grave sin may doom the

allusion to 'Uthmān and 'Alī is clear, and thus, it rejects the Khārijite claim that sinners (meaning 'Uthmān and 'Alī) are to be disowned.

(77) See Fiqh Absat, p. 48.

(78) Ibid., p. 52. The significance of these statements will be discussed later in the chapter.

offender to eternal hell for abandoning the faith.⁽⁷⁹⁾ The Murji'ites employed the term only with relation to kufr or kāfirūn. The reference to Wa'īd was made with regard to the tribe of Thamūd, or rather, their refusal to be guided into Islām.⁽⁸⁰⁾ The context is obviously concerned with Kuffār.⁽⁸¹⁾

- (79) According to the heresiographic sources the discussion about wa'd (promise) and wa'īd (threat) had taken place in the context of the religio-political debate regarding the fate of the grave sinner. The Khawārij took the view that every sin, whether grave or venial, implies kufr which destines the person who was guilty of it to the eternal fire of hell. Therefore, the Khawārij were nicknamed al-Wa'īdiyya. See: Shahrastāni's al-Iqdām, p. 474. Later, the Mu'tazilites claimed that Allah keeps both his promises and threats, and he does not forgive a grave sin unless it was repented for. In the event that repentance (tawba) is accepted, no Muslim is doomed to hell. Ibid., p. 51. Cf. also 'Amr b. 'Ubayd, p. 15.
- (80) The argument is supported by Sūra XLI (fuṣṣilat), verse 17.
- (81) See Fiqh Absat, bāb fī'l īmān, p. 57. Another passage in the same treatise mentions wa'īd. In

Footnote No. 81 continued.

this passage the conversation between the master and the disciple is centred about the motive of one's belief. The disciple asked (perhaps conjecturally) whether volition (*mashī'a*) is not the motive behind one's belief or disbelief, quoting a Qur'ānic verse to support his claim (*Sūra XVIII (al-kahf) verse 29*). The master's answer is "kadhab" (or *kadhaba*) *fī za'mihi*", (although it is not clear whose claim (*za'm*) is it), and remarks that men's belief or disbelief are determined by Allāh; the interpretation of the disciple to the verse "fa-man shā'a fa'l-yu'min wa-man shā'a fa'l yakfur" (*ibid.*) constitutes wa'īd. However, the master continued, he would not be regarded as *kāfir* since he (again the reference does not mention who was meant by "he") merely misinterpreted the verse. See Fiqh Absat, p. 42. The passage may be understood in a manner that such an interpretation of the verse causes its adherents to be threatened with *wa'īd*. This would mean a contradiction of the Murji'ite doctrine that *wa'īd* was exclusively employed with regard to *kuffār*, for the latter passage speaks about *muslimūn*. On the other hand, the statement of the master "*hādha wa'īd*"

Footnote No. 81 continued.

may be taken to mean: adhering to the notion that volition is the driving motive to one's belief is wa'īd; [but this is normally maintained by non-believers who do not acknowledge Allāh's determination as the cause for belief or disbelief. Therefore, since all Muslims are believers in the Murji'ite view, unless they verbally declare otherwise] this is a mere unintended misinterpretation of the verse which does not lead to kufr. (wa-bi-hādha lam yakfur, li'annahū lam yurid al-āya wa-innama akhta'a fī ta'wīlihā). The latter interpretation of the Murji'ite doctrine of wa'īd is also in character with their theory on the relationship between kufr and kabīra. Since only denial of Allāh's unity may lead to disbelief, it is inconceivable that believing in one's volition as the source for belief is as severe a deed as shirk. It is implicit in Murji'ite doctrine that all Muslims are mu'minūn, and hence no other than shirk will doom them to hell. In this sense the doctrine of wa'īd stands as a corollary to the view taken by the Murji'ites on īmān and kufr.

On Increase and Decrease in Īmān

The subject of increase and decrease of Īmān (ziyādat al-Īmān wa'intiqāsihi) is a direct consequence of the Murji'ite doctrine that Īmān is an independent entity and that 'amal has no effect on it. Because if the Murji'ites had accepted that Īmān can increase and decrease, it would have inevitably implied that there are various degrees of Īmān. This would contradict the famous Murji'ite dictum that Īmān is the same in all men and their Īmān is identical to that of the Prophets and the angels.⁽⁸²⁾ However, it is not abundantly clear whether it was part of early Murji'ite thought or whether it was construed only later from Murji'ite principles. The subject does not seem to be mentioned in these terms in the early Murji'ite treatises; however, a certain passage may have indicated, ~~in~~ the same direction. This passage opened the chapter on Īmān in Fiqh Absaṭ, saying: "Where does Īmān dwell?" The master replies: "In the heart, and its branches are all over the body". The disciple asks: "Is it in your finger?" "Yes", replies the master. "And if one finger were amputated, where would Īmān go from it?" "to the heart", came

(82) Cf. Clause 10, al-'ālim, p. 14; SE, pp.56-58.

the answer.⁽⁸³⁾ This extraordinary piece of reasoning, which apparently sought to convey the notion that *īmān* does not decrease, can be found in principle in an anecdote about Abū Hanīfa's conviction of the indivisibility of *īmān*,⁽⁸⁴⁾ quoted by Wensinck. The anecdote reports that Abū Hanīfa was approached by some Khawārij with unsheathed swords. They asked him whether a woman who had committed fornication and had killed the child born from the forbidden union could be called faithful. "Yes", was the answer of Abū Hanīfa, "for I dare not say that a certain part of her tawhīd is lacking on account of her sin. Could you tell whether half of it is missing?" "No." "Or a third?" "No." "Or a fourth?" "No." "Therefore, I cannot deny that this woman is faithful." Hearing that, the Khārijites put down the swords and went away.⁽⁸⁵⁾

Avoiding the question of the authenticity of the actual affair, the reasoning employed is distinctly similar to this in the question about the amputation of the finger. If this is to be accepted, it could mean that at the stage represented by Fiqh Absat the

(83) Fiqh Absat, p. 57.

(84) Cf. Clauses, 8, 9, al-ā'lim, pp. 13-14; SE, pp. 54-56.

(85) MC. p. 140.

Murji'ites were either exploring the first avenues towards this doctrine, or that this thesis was already part of their thought.

- 4) The Murji'ite Doctrine of Īmān as Reflected by their Ideological Opponents in the Kitāb al-Īmān of Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām.

As is appropriately suggested by the title of the article by Wilfred Madelung on Kitāb al-Īmān,⁽⁸⁶⁾ it is concerned with early Sunnī doctrine of Īmān which dates from the beginning of the 9th century. The author, Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām al-Harawī (154/770 - 224/838-39), is the well-known grammarian, lexicographer, theologian and scholar of Qur'ān exegesis and law.⁽⁸⁷⁾

(86) In Studia Islamica, 32 (1970), pp. 233-254.

(87) He is the author of the first grand scale dictionary of the Arabic language. Gharīb al-Muṣannaf, and the author of the dictionaries for difficult and rare expressions on the Qur'ān and the Hadīth (Gharīb al-Qur'ān and Gharīb al-Hadīth) and of Kitāb al-Amthāl, a dictionary of proverbs. For more biographical data see Brockelmann's article in EI¹, s.v., H. Gottschalk's article in EI², s.v., and the latter's article "Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām - Studie zur Geschichte der

The Kitāb al-Īmān was referred to by Ibn Ḥazm as a major source of the Sunnite point of view with regard to Īmān.⁽⁸⁸⁾ The qualities which make this work an interesting medium to study Murji'ite thought are the relatively short time lapse between the time it was written and the period in which Murji'ite principles were formulated, and as correctly suggested by Madelung, the doctrinal stance of the author. Despite Abū 'Ubayd's religious views, which represented Sunnī traditionalism, and despite his being a friend

arabischen Biographie", Der Islam, 23 (1936), pp. 245-289; especially pp. 283ff. In his article in Studia Islamica, Madelung remarks that Gottschalk's transcription of a work title from the Fihrist as Kitāb al-Īmān wa'l-nudhūr (in Der Islam. *ibid.*), should be read "al-aymān". This "book of oaths and vows" is a different work.

- (88) See Kitāb al-Fiṣal fi'l Milal wa'l Ahwā' wa'l Niḥal, (Cairo 1320), III, p. 150; quoted from J.M. Pessagno's article "The Murji'a, Īmān and Abū 'Ubayd", JAOS 95 (1975), p. 383, n.12. The full title of the work is Kitāb al-Īmān wa-ma'-ālimihi wa-sunanihi wa-istikmālihi wa-darajātihi. It was edited by Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī together with another three treatises, and was published in Damascus, 1966.

of Ahmad b. Hanbal, he was considerably less zealous while criticizing other religious circles. (89)

The central theme of the work is focused around his attempts to define *īmān* and its nature; this the author was doing through an exposé of the rival Murji'ite doctrine, and by consistent refutation of their thesis. That the book is, indeed, concerned with the Murji'a is beyond doubt, although their name is not mentioned except in one chapter, (90) where he quotes anti-Murji'ite *ahādīth*. His concern with them is being made even more explicit when he is trying to refute Murji'ite arguments which are to be found in their early treatises discussed here before.

From the polemics it is possible to form a picture which illustrates the Murji'ite thesis on *īmān* as seen by Abū 'Ubayd.

The Elements included in the Murji'ite Doctrine of *īmān*

The first chapter of the work commences with an introduction to the dichotomy in the Muslim community regarding the definition of *īmān*, contrasting the

(89) See: Madelung, Studia Islamica, pp. 234-235.

(90) See Chapter VI, pp. 81-83.

Murji'ite definition with the definition of the traditionist version.⁽⁹¹⁾ Abū 'Ubayd reports that "the other group claims that īmān finds expression merely by [inner belief] in the heart and [external confession] by the tongue; works are mere acts of piety (taqwā), and are not part of īmān."⁽⁹²⁾ Having stated this, Abū 'Ubayd goes on to refute the Murji'ite argument that everyone who was converted to Islām by the Prophet was considered a mu'min on the basis of his acceptance of Allāh's unity and the

- (91) The latter includes faith in the heart and verbal testimony as well as external works ('amal al-jawāriḥ).
- (92) Kitāb al-Īmān, pp. 53-54. Cf. Kitāb al-Īmān by Ibn Abī Shayba, p. 33, No. 99 where a similar statement was attributed to the Baṣran Murji'ite Ṭalq b. Ḥabīb, d.c. 714. If the latter's view is to be regarded^{as} authentic, it may indicate that this doctrinal stance^{originates} from an earlier period than has been thought so far.

To be noted, too, is the style depicting the two opposing trends. Abū 'Ubayd does not adopt a self-righteous view of the traditionist school he belonged to, and simply presents them in the words "fa-qālat ihdāhumā", whereas the Murji'ites ~~were~~^{are} presented by "fa-qālat al-firqa al-ukhrā".
Kitāb al-Īmān, p. 53.

absoluteness of his utterances as revealed to Muhammad. The duties were revealed only later and therefore could not be regarded as an integral part of īmān. (93)

Abū 'Ubayd answers the Murji'ite reasoning, arguing that the duties which were revealed later were added to those which were already in effect. To the implication of the Murji'ite argument that those believers who died before the duties were revealed might be considered kuffār, Abū 'Ubayd answers that to that effect the verse "Allāh will not render your faith fruitless" (Sūra II, (al-Baqara), verse 143) was revealed, thus rejecting the Murji'ite basis to the claim that external works are not part of īmān. (94)

(93) Cf. Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī, p. 35.

(94) See: Kitāb al-Īmān, pp. 54-57. Abū 'Ubayd was trying to refute another instance where īmān was defined by Abū Hanīfa as taṣdīq and iqrār. This is the case where he ordered to release a woman slave on her confession that she was a mu'mina. Ibid., p. 57. Cf. Fiqh Absaṭ, pp. 51-52, and Kitāb al-Īmān by Ibn Abī Shayba, no. 84.

On Istithnā'

The Murji'ites are the people who profess that they are believers without the qualifying sentence "if Allāh wills". This impression is gained from the fact that Abū 'Ubayd mentioned prominent scholars who ruled that the statement "anā mu'min" should not be accompanied by the istithnā' are all identified in the biographical dictionaries as Murji'ites.⁽⁹⁵⁾ As in the previous subject the Murji'ite tendency is contrasted with the traditionists' circle epitomised in this instance by Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778). The latter and his friends, explains Abū 'Ubayd, added the istithnā' fearing indulgence in self-righteousness (tazkiyat al-nufūs), and avoiding to lay claims to perfection in faith. Such testimony of one's faith without istithnā', continues Abu 'Ubayd, merely means

(95) The scholars in question are Ibrāhīm al-Taymī (d. 92/711); Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulamī whose name is not mentioned in the sources surveyed by this work; 'Awn b. 'Abdallāh (d. 110/718); 'Umar b. Dharr (see Wafayāt, III, p. 442; IS, VI, p. 252); al-Ṣalt b. Bahrām (d. 147/764), see Lisān al-Mīzān, III, p. 194; and Mis'ar b. Kidām (d. 155/772); in Kitāb al-Īmān, p. 70.

entrance into the faith but not perfection in it, as far as we are concerned". (96)

On Increase and Decrease in Īmān

Despite the impression gained from the study of the early Murji'ite treatises, on which basis it was assumed that the Murji'ites were only beginning to develop this concept (if at all), Abū 'Ubayd treats this thesis in a manner which conveys the notion that

- (96) Ibid. ^{leads} The same subject, i.e. perfection of faith, Abū 'Ubayd to repudiate the Murji'ite argument which states that men's faith is equal to the faith of angels and prophets. Cf. al-'ālim, Clause 10 and Fiqh Absat, p. 46. The reasoning justifying his counter-attack asks how can anyone dare to compare mortals with angels after having read in the Qur'ān that mortals were threatened and harshly rebuked by Allāh, whereas angels were clearly excluded from such^{an} attitude. To this end he quotes Sūra IV (al-nisa'), verses 29-30; Sūra II, (al-Baqara), verse 271; Sūra LXI (al-ṣaff) verse 2; Sūra LVII (al-hadīd) verse 16. Ibid., pp. 70-71.

it was considered at the time an integral part of Murji'ite thought. In line with his method, Abū 'Ubayd starts the discussion by presenting the traditionist point of view, supported by a ḥadīth and five Qur'ānic passages which speak of an increase of īmān in the mu'minūn. (97) Those who consider īmān as mere acknowledgement of Allāh without external works interpret the verses in various ways: (98)

- (1) The basis of faith is the acknowledgement of the religious duties in general (jūmal al-farā'id), like the prayers, almsgiving and the other duties, and that increase is in effect only beyond the general acknowledgement.
- (2) The basis is the acknowledgement of that which had come from Allāh, and the increase is a capability which derives from the very act of acknowledgement.
- (3) Increase in īmān means increase in conviction (yaqīn).
- (4) īmān does never increase, but people have an

(97) See Ibid., p. 72.

(98) The verses are Sūra III (al-'imrān), verse 173; Sūra LXXIV (al-mudaththir) verse 31; Sūra XLVIII (al-fath), verse 4.

increasing amount of it. (99)

On the Inclusion of External Works in the Definition
of Īmān

It is not surprising to find that Abū 'Ubayd returns once again to the question of inclusion of external works in the definition of Īmān. However,

- (99) Kitāb al-Īmān, p. 73. Abū 'Ubayd rejects these arguments calling them inconsistent, and questions their validity with exegesis approved by similarly inclined scholars and the usage of language. Ibid., pp. 73-74. An interesting and lingually illustrative explanation of Abū 'Ubayd's view on the increase of Īmān can be found in his Gharīb al-Hadīth. He quotes a hadīth attributed to 'Alī saying: "Al-Īmān yabdū lumza fī'l qalb; kullamā izdāda al-Īmān izdādat al-lumza", and explains that lumza means a white dot like the one which can be found on the horse's nose, meaning that as the horse matures, so the white dot increases in size. See Gharīb al-Hadīth, III, p. 460.

unlike in his first chapter⁽¹⁰⁰⁾, where his approach was to examine in general the definition of īmān, his fourth chapter revolves exclusively around the relations between 'amal and īmān. The Murji'ite stand in this matter is described by Abū 'Ubayd as follows: "This party said: If one defines his īmān in accepting what had come from Allāh and professes (his acknowledgement) of this truth (and of Allāh's unity) with the tongue, that is īmān in its perfection. For Allāh called people [who did so] mu'minūn". (101)

(100) See Kitāb al-Īmān, pp. 53-66.

(101) Ibid., p. 75. In an attempt to refute this view, Abū 'Ubayd develops another argument, complementing his previous thesis that the revelation of elements of faith was gradual. He says that people who are at different stages of a certain action, ^{nevertheless} belong to the same category. Thus, a man who ~~has~~ just started the prayer will be described as "muṣallī", ^{like} others who are about to complete their prayer, although the latter are at an advanced stage of the ritual. The same applies to īmān: everyone who ^{has} entered it will be called a mu'min, but he would be inferior in terms of proximity to perfection, being at a more advanced stage of the obligatory duties.

On the Loss of Īmān through Sins

Although the discussion began with quotations attributed to the Prophet, in which the title "mu'min" is denied from adulterers, (102) thieves, etc., Abū 'Ubayd emerges sympathetic with the Murji'ite maxim that sins do not imply loss of Īmān. (103)

The argument proceeds later to claim that the actions of the heart and the tongue should actually be considered 'amal. See Ibid., p. 75ff.

- (102) Cf. the Murji'ite counter-attack on these ahādīth, clause 4, al-'ālim, pp.10-11; SE, pp. 37-45.
- (103) Madelung explains that "these ahādīth were not intended originally to formulate a doctrinal or legal rule. They could be used by the Khārijites [if^{they} genuinely had originated at an early period in Islam] to bolster their thesis that the Muslim sinner loses name and status of a believer. Later they could become a source of embarrassment for the Sunnī supporters of the jamā'a, especially those traditionalists who insisted on the acceptance of ḥadīth at face value". Thus, he quoted Ahmad b. Hanbal saying that he would accept such ahādīth although he

Abū 'Ubayd explains that people have four ways of interpreting these ahādīth, the last of which are the Murji'ites. They can be positively identified by his depiction "those whose external works fall short of adequacy",⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ and according to his account they completely ignored and rejected those ahādīth as contradictory and weak.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Abū 'Ubayd goes on to attack the Khārijite doctrine, rebuking them for

did not know their explanation. However, the latter is known to have said that he would not refuse the death prayer of anyone from ahl al-qibla because of any sin, major or minor except for belonging to the innovators excluded by the Prophet: the Qadarites, the Murji'ites, the Rāfidites and the Jahmites. See, Madelung, Studia Islamica, p. 249.

(104) Kitāb al-Īmān, p. 89.

(105) Ibid. The same arguments with regard to contradictory ahādīth is voiced by the master in Kitāb al-'ālim wa'l muta'allim, clause 4, where the example set was the ḥadīth about zinā' (adultery). Tirmidhī declared the same ḥadīth to be "gharīb" and criticized the isnād. Quoted from Schacht, Oriens, p. 105, n.3.

adhering to the notion that minor sins as well as major sins imply kufr. (106)

Abū 'Ubayd concludes the discussion saying that sins and acts of disobedience do not annul a person's faith; they do not deprive him of his status as a mu'min, and do not imply kufr. They only remove the sincerity and the purity of the faith. (107) Qualifying this statement, he says: "Kufr is the habit of the kuffār and their way of life". (108)

- (106) He argues that murder is not an act of disbelief, otherwise the vengeance could not have been delegated to the murdered man's brother as prescribed by the Qur'an, Sūra XVII (al-Isrā') verse 33. Kitāb al-Īmān, pp. 88-89.
- (107) To this end he quotes Sūra VIII (al-anfāl) verses 2-3, and Sūra XXIII (al-mu'minun) verses 1, 11, where the rules that define Īmān were revealed in which no act of disobedience was mentioned. Ibid., p. 90.
- (108) Ibid., p. 95. More aḥādīth are quoted to say that "no-one who acknowledged the shahāda can either be considered an unbeliever for sin, nor can he be excommunicated from the community for wrong-doing", and that "no sin apart from shirk amounts to kufr apart from idolatry." Ibid., p. 97. The treatise is concluded by

5) Murji'ite Principles as Reflected by the
Heresiographers

The last source from which information regarding Murji'ite theses was elicited, are four works which are concerned with the sects.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ It is self-evident from the nature of this type of literature that the Murji'a (or rather more conspicuously, its off-shoots), were considered and treated there as heretical sects.

Since this study is interested in the historical and ideological evolution of the "mother-movement" of the Murji'a, it seems that the works of the heresiographers would prove a relevant source only in as far as modern critique is concerned; that is, an evaluation of the heresiographical works as a reflection to the ideas and the nature of the Murji'a, and its impact on

stating that grave sin makes one disobedient.

Ibid., p. 100.

- (109) These are Maqālāt al-Isiāmiyyīn by al-Ash'arī (d. 324/935), al-Farq bayn al-Firaq by al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037) and al-Milal wa'l Niḥal by al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153). They are all Ash'arite in inclination. The fourth work is by the Shī'ite heresiographer al-Nawbakhtī.

modern occidental scholarship. All these investigations will be part of the following section. Meanwhile, the available information about the Murji'a (in this context, the "followers of Abū Hanīfa"), will be presented. It would be convenient to present the heresiographers' account separately and not on the basis of subjects.

Al-Ash'ari - The report in Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn is mainly concerned with the definition of īmān adhered to by Abū Hanīfa and his friends.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ According to his account, īmān was the knowledge (Ma'rifa) of Allāh, the acknowledgement of Him (His unity) and his Messenger (Muhammad) accompanied by the acknowledgement in general of the revelation, and without interpretation (tafsīr).⁽¹¹¹⁾ īmān is indivisible according to Abū Hanīfa, who also claimed that it does not decrease or increase, and no-one excels another in īmān. He is also quoted to have advocated the notion that with īmān [no act prohibited] by the din removes one's faith.⁽¹¹²⁾

Al-Baghdādī's account in al-Farq al-Firaq starts

(110) Al-Ash'arī classified them as the "ninth sect of the Murji'a". Maqālāt, I, p. 138.

(111) Ibid. This claim is accompanied by an example. Ibid. pp. 138-139.

(112) Ibid., p. 139.

with his explanation of the significance of the name Murji'a. He claims that their name is due to their regard of external work as secondary in importance to īmān. Irjā', according to al-Baghdādī, is implied in the sense of postponement or suspension (ta'khīr). Then he goes on to quote a ḥadīth attributed to the Prophet, cursing the Murji'a, and explaining that by "Murji'a" he means those who claim that īmān is merely verbal confession and nothing more.⁽¹¹³⁾ The rest of the chapter depicts the five sub-sects which the author considers to belong to the Murji'a. It is interesting to note that Abū Ḥanīfa is not mentioned as a leader of one of these sects,⁽¹¹⁴⁾ but was mentioned by al-Baghdādī as opposing the claims of Ghassān al-Murji' who took the view that īmān increases but does not decrease, saying that this thesis is paramount to Abū Ḥanīfa's view in the matter. It is through al-Baghdādī's correction that we learn of the image he had of Abū Ḥanīfa's views. According to him, Abū Ḥanīfa defined īmān as knowledge (ma'rifa) of Allāh and the verbal acknowledgement of Him and His Prophets, and of whatever had come down from him in general, and

(113) Al-Farq, p. 202

(114) The reason for that will be discussed later on.

without interpretation. Imān neither increases nor decreases, and people do not excel each other in it. (115)

Al-Shahrastānī's chapter about the Murji'ites in his al-Milal wa'l Nihal opens with an attempt to explain the meaning of the word Irjā'. The first is postponement as illustrated by a Qur'ānic verse (116) The other meaning is "to give hope". Al-Shahrastānī goes on explaining that it is appropriate to use the term Murji'a both in the first sense "since they put works after intention and purpose (niya wa-qaṣd)", and in the second sense for they maintained that disobedience with faith does not harm just as obedience with disbelief is not beneficial. The author continues: "It is said that "Irjā'" is applied with regard to suspending the judgement of the grave sinner to the day of judgement (wa-qīla' l-irjā' ta'khīr ḥukm ṣāhib al-kabīra ilā 'l-qiyāma). If the term is to be understood in this sense, the Murji'a and the Khawārij were opposing parties. It is also said that Irjā' meant the relegation of 'Alī from the first to the fourth place [in the order of the righteous Caliphs]. Therefore, the Murji'a and the Shī'a were opposing parties. After this introduction,

(115) Ibid., p. 203.

(116) Cf. Sūra VII, (al-a'arāf), verse 111, "Fa'arjih wa-akhānu" etc.

al-Shahrastānī turns to describe the groups of which the Murji'a consist; these are the "Khārijite Murji'a,"⁽¹¹⁷⁾ the Qadarite Murji'a, the Jabarite Murji'a and the Pure Murji'a."⁽¹¹⁸⁾ The latter group constitutes the subject of the description in the Work. As in al-Baghdādī's Kitāb al-Farq bayn al-Firaq, Abū Hanīfa is mentioned with regard to the claim of Ghassān al-Kūfī that he held a similar view about the nature of īmān as the former. As indicated by Watt, Shahrastānī was in great difficulty trying to rehabilitate Abū Hanīfa from the label Murji'ite with which he was frequently mentioned. Al-Shahrastānī explains that Abū Hanīfa's views that belief is in the heart, and that it neither decreases nor increases may have led some heresiographers to assume that he put faith before acts. This is inconceivable for al-Shahrastānī. For him, Abū Hanīfa and his followers could be the "Murji'ites of the Sunna".⁽¹¹⁹⁾

(117) Helga Brentjes is referring in her Imamatslehren to the same name saying that al-Ash'arī in Maqālāt, I, 123ff., explained the circumstances in which this nickname was coined. See Brentjes, p. 45.

(118) See: Milal, I, p. 186.

(119) Ibid., pp. 188-189. Al-Shahrastānī elaborates on the matter saying that another reason for

The Shī'ite Heresiographic View

Shī'ite heresiography could be no less relevant than "orthodox" sources by the fact that they examined the Murji'a and other secessionist groups from their special position. This position produced, indeed, an interesting observation on the place of Murji'a within the community, by the Shī'ite heresiographer al-Nawbakhtī (d.c. 300 A.H.). According to the author, the Murji'a is one of the four basic sects of the Umma; "they were the great majority of the community, and they followed Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān. They were called Murji'a because they adhered to both opposing parties and considered all the people of the Qibla to be mu'minūn through verbal confession of faith, and hoped (rajaw) for pardon for them all".⁽¹²⁰⁾

Abū Hanīfa to be considered a Murji'ite was his opposition to the Qadarites and the Mu'tazilites. The latter were in the habit of calling Murji'ite anyone who rejected their doctrine of qadar. See: Ibid., p. 189.

(120) Firaq al-Shī'a, p. 6. To be noted is al-Nawbakhtī's remark on the etymological origin of their name.

Classifying the Murji'ites into sub-sects, Abū Ḥanīfa and his followers are mentioned as members of the Maṣiriyya (followers of 'Amr b. Qays al-Maṣir⁽¹²¹⁾) and as "the Murji'a of Iraq".⁽¹²²⁾ No Murji'ite doctrinal issues seem to be reflected by al-Nawbakhtī, except the not altogether surprising reference to the attitude of Abū Ḥanīfa and the rest of the Murji'a in connection with the question of the Imāma. Abū Ḥanīfa is attributed with the statement that only a Qurashī is eligible to the leadership of the Umma.⁽¹²³⁾

(121) See: Supra, Chapter II, section 2a.

(122) Firaq al-Shi'a, p. 7. It is most surprising to find prominent figures^{such} as Sufyān al-Thawrī, and others who belonged to the circle of Ahl al-Hadīth and who were known in their fierce opposition to the Murji'ites, classified as the fourth sub-sect of the Murji'a. Ibid. The significance of this observation will be discussed later.

(123) Ibid., p. 10. This statement does not seem to appear in any other source saving the work of the Mu'tazilite heresiographer al-Nāshī' al-Akbar; See his Masā'il al-Imāma, p. 62.

6) The Modern Outlook: Occidental Scholars on the Murji'a

Neither the attempts of occidental scholars, nor this work's account of their findings are exclusively concerned with comments on the theological aspects of the Murji'a. Although the former sections of this chapter dealt with the description of Murji'ite religious thought, it would only^{be} appropriate to re-incorporate the political-historical element, which constitutes an integral part of the theories of some of the orientalist who wrote on the Murji'a. This will also serve as a linking passage to the critique of the primary and secondary sources which were used in the study of the theological and the political aspects of the Movement.

What may have been the first comment on the Murji'a by a modern orientalist was voiced by Alfred von Kremer. According to him, the origin of the name Murji'a stems from the Greek word ἔλπίς (hope). (124)

George Sale, in the Preliminary Discourse to his commentary of the Qur'an, identified the Murji'a as derivates of the Jabariyya. They took the view that

(124) See his Herrschenden, p. 20.

no sentence should be passed on a man in this world, and that a grave sin does not nullify man's faith. Their name originated, according to some, due to their postponing works in favour of intention. Others think that it was due to their postponement of judgement of the grave sinner, and for degrading 'Alī from the third to the fourth place in the order of priority. (125)

Goldziher describes the Murji'a as "the loyal trend" to the regime since they did not consider the virtual rejection of the religious law by the Umayyads as sufficient reason to refuse obedience even theoretically, or to brand them as kāfirūn. (126) According to Goldziher, the Murji'ites were expected to proclaim the opponents of the court as kāfirūn. The origin of the Murji'a should be sought in Goldziher's view in a loyal accommodation with the Umayyad rule. Later, he continues, "when this cause disappeared and the justification of shedding believers' blood had lost all reality, the Murji'ites concentrated

(125) Preliminary Discourse, pp. 184-185.

(126) MS, p. 90. This thesis continues, stating that the Murji'ites did not object to the atrocities committed by the Umayyads and their governors against those pious who refused them their allegiance, and even defended the Umayyads for these acts. Ibid., pp. 90-91.

their attention upon the dogmatic evaluation of the practice of the law ('amal) on salvation.[¶](127) He describes their religious outlook through their alleged motto that faith does not depend on work, and explains that their unwillingness to pronounce judgment on anyone who prayed to the qibla, reserving this duty only to Allāh, put them in a position in which they were considered at least passive supporters of the Umayyads. He went on to speculate that the question of the relations between īmān and 'amal was more of a political necessity rather than a religious one.(128)

Duncan Black Macdonald traces the rise of the Murji'ite sect to the period "during and after the civil war between the Shī'ites, the Khārijites and the Umayyads." According to him, the Murji'ites took an opposite view to the Khārijites and Shī'ites, claiming that the Umayyads were de facto the rulers of the state and were to be considered believers,

(127) Ibid., p. 92.

(128) Vorlesungen, pp. 79ff. Goldziher's conclusion as to the origin of their name suggests that the context was the postponement of 'Alī (see MS, p. 92) and points out that their name derives from a hamzatd root which is often confused with the root rjw (to hope). Ibid., p. 90, n.7.

having confessed the unity of God and the apostleship of the Prophet. Thus, they were no polytheists, since no sin can be compared with shirk. Hence, sins which amounted to less than shirk could justify no revolt against the regime.⁽¹²⁹⁾ Like Goldziner, Macdonald remarks, too, that with the passage of time the situation which gave rise to Murji'sm the sect shifted its interest from politics to theology. "As a political party it had opposed the political puritanism of the Khārijites; it now came to oppose the uncompromising spirit in which these damned all who differed from them even in details and brandished the terrors of the wrath of God over their opponents".⁽¹³⁰⁾ "Their doctrine was Pauline in its sweep. Faith, and faith alone saves".⁽¹³¹⁾ According to Macdonald, Abū Ḥanīfa represents one wing of the Murji'a (the other being the "antimonian Murji'ites led by Jahm b. Ṣafwān), who held that īmān is acknowledged by the tongue as well⁽¹³²⁾ as the heart, and that works are a necessary supplement.

(129) Macdonald, p. 123.

(130) Ibid., p. 124.

(131) Ibid., p. 126.

(132) Ibid., p. 127. As to their name, Macdonald's interpretation is literal: "One who postpones judgement until it is pronounced by God on the Day of Judgement". See ibid., p. 123.

Arent Jan Wensinck presents the Murji'ites from a different angle. According to him, the Murji'ites were the opponents of the Khārijites, maintaining in clear contradiction to the latter that works are irrelevant to faith. They even went so far as to maintain that faith is an entity of its own that cannot be impaired by sin, and is not liable to increase or decrease. (133)

A.S. Tritton identifies the Murji'a as a development of the view of moderates like 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar, and postulates that it may have been an antithetical reaction against the Khawārij. The "school" as he calls it, included men who shared views only in certain subjects and that was the reason how a Qadarite like Ghaylān and a Jabarite like Jahm were included in the group. Politics had some share in the birth of the school. It declined to pass judgement on 'Alī and 'Uthmān and would not say who was better, much less who was an unbeliever, and left the question to God. As they would not pass judgement on the head of the state so they would not on any Muslim; Abū Hanīfa was the leader of the Murji'a and his teachings asserted that faith has no degrees and a man would either have it or would not at all. Faith

does neither increase nor decrease; and it is indivisible. Faith is in the heart alone and it is manifested by the knowledge of God, his apostle and His message. Works are not part of īmān but the channels through which it works.⁽¹³⁴⁾ The Murji'ites called attention to the relations between faith and works.⁽¹³⁵⁾

W.M. Watt opens his discussion of the Murji'a by drawing attention to the complexity of the subject, illustrating it by the heretical nature attributed to them by the heresiographers. His historical reconstruction points out that the early Murji'a accepted both 'Alī and 'Uthmān as rightful rulers of the community but refused to reject either on account of sin or to decide on the respective merits of the two men. In this Watt sees a concern for the unity of the community and a refusal to accept the Khārijite theses that the grave sinner is excluded from the community by his sin.⁽¹³⁶⁾ Watt considers one of al-Shahrastānī's applications of irjā' (i.e., the relegation of 'Alī to the fourth place) as unmeaningful at the time of the early Murji'ites, but accepts another way suggested by

(134) See Muslim Theology, pp. 43-47.

(135) Ibid., p. 18.

(136) See Formative Period, pp. 119ff., especially p. 125.

this heresiographer, namely, the postponement until the resurrection of the decision about the grave sinner. Since the grave sinner should be considered as a member of the community, "works" must be excluded from īmān, and therefore it comes to be defined as intellectual assent to certain doctrines together with a verbal profession of this. The element of giving hope and granting pardon to sinners is also mentioned in Watt's account.⁽¹³⁷⁾ Discussing the Murji'ite views of īmān, Watt follows the description of al-Ash'arī, and remarks ^{that} those Murji'ites mentioned there were nonentities. From this he concludes that the discussion about īmān was dominated by Abū Hanīfa and the Hanafite tradition, whereas other persons mentioned as Murji'ites were completely insignificant.

L. Gardet characterizes the Murji'ites as those whose central element of faith was its knowledge. Their attitude may be interpreted as laxist.⁽¹³⁸⁾

(137) Ibid., pp. 126-127. Cf. also Free Will, p. 47.

(138) Gardet, p. 302. Watt also touches the problem of moral anxiety. However, he bases his argument on later Hanafite sources and comments on later Hanafite teachers. See Formative Period, pp. 136-138. At any rate he does not accept the notion that the Murji'ite were laxists. See Free Will, p. 42.

Gardet suggests that the origin of the sect was political, and together with favour towards the Umayyads, the Murji'ites advocated utter negation of free will. (139)

The Japanese scholar Toshihiko Izutsu is merely concerned with the concept of *īmān* and the related elements in the thought of the Murji'a. Although he accepts that the original concept of *irjā'* had emerged due to political circumstances, he claims that it developed in the course of time into a theological one. At this second stage the term did not stand any longer for suspension of judgement which meant political neutrality, but meant putting 'work' behind belief. (140) Izutsu examines the factors of the concept of *īmān* and reaches the following conclusions: *taṣdīq*, the mental act of *īmān*, was understood by the Murji'ites in terms of 'knowledge' (*ma'rifa*). *Iqrār* is the verbal acknowledgement of the existence of *ma'rifa*. These factors were positively emphasized as mandatory, whereas 'amal was denied as an essential importance in the concept of *īmān*, although its value was not belittled. Hence, the name *irjā'*. Izutsu defines this approach as 'motivation theory' which puts

(139) Gardet, p. 354.

(140) Izutsu, p. 83.

emphasis on the motive rather than on the action itself.⁽¹⁴¹⁾ The Murji'ites, in his view, "were not content with regarding īmān as something external, but wanted to emphasize that it is something lying deep in the human heart, a spiritual event occurring in the very depth of the mind."⁽¹⁴²⁾ The Murji'ite dictum that īmān is basically a matter of knowledge, not of practice, reveals for Izutso their "intellectualist inclination". He continues to say that "they were interested in discussing the nature of īmān solely as a matter of conceptual analysis."⁽¹⁴³⁾ Izutsu continues and concludes that the most important theoretical consequence of the thesis that 'amal is not part of the concept of īmān is that faith remains unaffected by sins, even grave ones.⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ The intellectualist-rationalist tendency that Izutsu

(141) Ibid., pp. 93-94.

(142) Ibid., p. 95.

(143) Ibid., p. 100. Izutsu even carries on the argument saying that "on the level of analysis the 'knowlege' of the obligatory works may be included in the concept of īmān, but not 'doing' itself, for the latter belongs to an entirely different level, that of practice." Ibid. This has no foundation in the sources.

(144) Ibid.

detects in the Murji'ite thought is voiced again with reference to the nature of ma'rifa, illustrated by several anecdotes on Abū Hanīfa, which Izutsu interprets as evidence to his rationalist concept of knowledge. (145)

J. Meric Pessagno takes the view in his article about "the Murji'a and īmān" that the Murji'ite thesis on the relationship between the īmān and 'amal was a reaction to the Khārijite doctrine regarding the membership of the community. (146) However, it was not the place of work in faith which determined the Murji'ite outlook; once they had arrived at the definition of faith, the next logical question was what could be said to have real influence on it. Since faith was viewed as an entity coming from God, it was impossible to conceive that the works of man could have real effect over the existence or non-existence of something placed in the heart by God Himself, unless one would expect formal rejection of God Himself. Therefore, "the subordination of works to faith in the Murji'ite system is an effect of their doctrine on īmān, not a cause of it. The Murji'a's view of īmān is better described as

(145) See: Ibid., pp. 105-108.

(146) See Pessagno, p. 386.

theological voluntarism, not rationalism." (147)

7) The Murji'ite Thought: Critique and Analysis
of Primary and Secondary Sources

From a close examination of the development of oriental studies, it is evident that the interest in the Murji'a emerged due to the re-discovery of the books of sects. Initially, it was al-Shahrastānī's Kitāb al-Milal wa'l Niḥal,⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ which constituted the sole source for the study of the Murji'a. Other heresiographic sources which were published later, like al-Baghdādī and al-Ash'arī, made their hallmark on Western and Muslim scholarship alike.

(147) See ibid., pp. 393-394. The characterisation of the Murji'ite doctrine as "theological voluntarism" is proposed by Pessagno as against Izutsu's interpretation of rationalist tendencies. To this end, Pessagno discusses in length the usage of Murji'ite terminology in an attempt to show that the Murji'ite notion of īmān is more than rationalistic. See ibid., pp.391-392.

(148) Published in 1846 by the Rev. William Cureton.

Therefore, it would be only appropriate to examine first the heresiographers quoted above.

The earliest of them, al-Ash'arī, seems to be the only heresiographer who placed Abū Ḥanīfa and his followers on the same level as the other sub-sects.⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ His account of their theological theses is more or less accurate when compared to the Murji'ite sources, even if it is over-simplifying in its approach. Al-Baghdādī's account of the Murji'ite distinction between the 'amal and īmān is clearly a distortion of their doctrine. His impression (or premeditated distortion) that Murji'ites considered external works secondary in importance led him to the conviction of the heretical nature of the movement. It is interesting to note that al-Baghdādī does not include Abū Ḥanīfa as a leader of one of the Murji'ite sub-sects. The same views are shared by al-Shahrastānī, although the latter admits that "he belonged to the Murji'a of the Sunna".⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ Al-Shahrastānī repeats al-Baghdādī's

(149) This tendency was later to be changed; see *infra*.

(150) Watt remarks that the exclusion of Abū Ḥanīfa as an affiliate of a heretical sect was due to the feeling of some proximity between the Sunnites and the Ḥanafites, so that al-Baghdādī and al-Shahrastānī could no longer criticize Abu Ḥanīfa as al-Ash'arī had done. See Formative Period, p. 142.

claim about the secondary importance of external works, and expands on the interpretation of *irjā'* in the sense of giving hope. These claims have no foundation in the Murji'ite sources. It is quite remarkable that al-Shahrastānī explores various applications of the term *irjā'*. However, most of his suggestions bear the mark of an incriminating tone; the only suggestion where *irjā'* was mentioned in the context of suspending judgement on the grave sinner is weakened by what seems to be the uncertainty of al-Shahrastānī regarding this application. (151)

However, no matter what were the differences between the various heresiographers, it is the books of sects as a source for the study of the Murji'a which should be put under scrutiny.

The first thing to be borne in mind while dealing with the books of the sects is that they treated the Murji'ites as heretics. The multiplicity of the sects was first pointed out by Goldziher, who linked it with a certain tradition of the Prophet which had gained currency. An early form of the tradition as recorded by al-Dārimī (d.869) transmits: "Did not the People

(151) This impression is gained from his style "wa-qīla" - "it was . . . said" - a phrase usually used to express uncertainty about a source or truthfulness of information. See: Milal, p. 186.

of the book before you divide into 72 sects and in truth this community ^{will} one day divide into 73 sects, (152) of which 72 will go to hell and only one to paradise." Watt, who expounded on the subject with erudition, remarks that the tradition about the sects had a positive significance for the heresiographers, who in turn increased the number of sects so as to bring them to the number of 72. The purpose of these works was to point out the erroneous doctrines of religious dissidents and their followers, and it was carried out on a large latitude of styles from blunt branding as heretics through polemics to simple expounding of the doctrines. It is precisely this feature of the heresiographic literature which makes it a highly dubious source for the study of the Murji'a. The motivation behind these works was polemical, and the methods were totally unhistorical. By mentioning only doctrinal points, it is evident that the heresiographers were merely interested in deviations from what they regarded orthodoxy, hence their accounts lack historical

- (152) See I. Goldziher, "Le dénombrement des sectes Mohamétanes", Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, XXVI (1892), 129ff.; cf. Vorlesungen, pp. 188ff, quoted from W.M. Watt's "The Great Community and the Sects", in G.E. von Grunebaum (Ed), Theology and Law in Islam, Wiesbaden, 1971, p. 25.

background or perspective. Their description of no less than ten Murji'ite sub-sects at certain examples, and the claim that they stood independently from each other on theological discrepancies call for more than partial discredit. The heresiographic literature is not completely without useful and reliable information. A salient example of that is the list of Murji'ites whose affiliation is corroborated in many other biographical sources.⁽¹⁵³⁾ But on the whole, these sources may lay no claim to historicity since they represent foretastes of tendentious theological leanings which had borne grudge against the Kufan milieu of the Murji'ites.⁽¹⁵⁴⁾

As has been previously stated, until the end of the 19th century the only primary source available which could be used for the study of the Murji'a was Shahrastānī's al-Milal. With the absence of any other

(153) See al-Milal, I, p. 194 where al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya, Sa'īd b. Jubayr, Ṭalq b. Ḥabīb, 'Amr b. Murra, Muḥārīb b. Dithār, Dharr b. 'Abdallāh, 'Amr b. Dharr, Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān, Abū Ḥanīfa and others were mentioned.

(154) This subject of the rivalry between the Murji'a and their scholarly opposition is to be later expounded.

source to illuminate the subject from a different angle, George Sale writes about the Murji'a without challenging al-Shahrastānī's account.

Goldziher made his observations on the Murji'a in the context of the discussion about the religiosity of the Umayyads. Therefore, for him they were the party which advocated the principle of imāmat al-fāsiq (the leadership of the wanton). Despite the mistaken sweeping generalisation that Murji'ites did not object to Umayyad atrocities against the pious, all in all, Goldziher gave a correct interpretation of the basic stances of the movement and the motives behind them. He was right in pointing out that the relations between īmān and 'amal were more of a political necessity rather than a religious one, but he failed to show how, or to elaborate what precisely was that political necessity. The political dimension introduced by Goldziher was undoubtedly a break-through in the modern study of Islamic doctrines and was based on historical sources published towards the end of the 19th century.

Although Duncan Black Macdonald agreed that politics gave rise to the Murji'ite movement, his choice of the fitna of 660 as the landmark for the emergence of the Murji'ites seems to be influenced by heresiographical accounts,⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ and is historically

(155) These reports occur in al-Nāshī' al-Akbar's

weak and unfounded. Like Goldziher he had rightly distinguished the transformation of the Murji'a from a political party into a theological circle, but like Goldziher he also failed to explain at whom the Murji'ites aimed their criticism against the "uncompromising spirit in which these damned all who differed from them even in details".⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ There had been also no attempt to expound on the motives which contributed to the crystallisation of the Murji'ite doctrine.

Arent Jon Wensinck's approach seems to be somewhat single-minded and too explicitly defined. It is true, of course, that his study dealt with the development of the Muslim Creed, a subject whose sources will mostly be Hadīth, Qur'ān and the creeds involved. But, it is precisely this reliance on Hadīth and the significant lack of historical background which caused Wensinck to interpret the Murji'ite phenomenon as "the extreme opponents of the Khawārij." This is not belittling the significance of Wensinck's findings about the evolution of Hanafite

Masā'il al-Imāma, pp. 19-20 and also in al-Muqaddasī, p. 38. Unfortunately, Macdonald does not state his sources; however no other sources seem to voice the same ideas.

(156) Macdonald, p. 124.

theology by and large. However, it is evident now that anti-Kh̄erijite and anti-Murji'ite ahādīth launched by the two opposing parties cannot be singled out as the only trait characteristic in the history and doctrines of the Murji'a. That is, the ideological side of the Murji'ites was emphasized without being supplemented by historical substance. The historical factor, as we shall see later, played a crucial role in the shaping of Murji'ite doctrines.

A.S. Tritton's remarks on the political circumstances which gave birth to the Murji'a are very astute, but his impression of the common denominator of Murji'ites which still enabled Qadarites to be called Murji'ites is clearly influenced by the heresiographers description of the Murji'ite sub-sects. (157) Confronted with the strictly deterministic Murji'ite sources, this claim seems to be without foundation.

W.M. Watt offers one of the most extensive discussions in both the theological message and the historical background of the Murji'a. Watt points out Kufa at the beginning of the 8th century as the milieu from which Murji'ism had evolved, and rightly

(157) See Muslim Theology, p. 43.

suggests that the first application of "irjā'" would have been the postponement about 'Alī and 'Uthmān. (158) His discussion pioneered the first attempt to explain the relation between 'amal and īmān, or the regarding of the grave sinner^{as} a believer. According to Watt, the concept of "belief" or faith was secondary among the Arabs who had the tendency to think in communal terms. That is, "the believers" were thought of as a social unit. For those who "postponed" the decision, the grave sinner was a member of the social unit. This stand made them face the problem of defining īmān so that it corresponded to that which made a man a member of the social unit. Since they considered the grave sinner a member of the community (mu'min), "works" must have been excluded from the definition of īmān. (159) This theory is perfectly valid, and it contributed greatly to our understanding of the Murji'ite concept of īmān. A point to be disputed in Watt's conclusions is his suggestion that in the discussions about īmān, the dominant influence was that of Abū Ḥanīfa and the [later] Hanafite tradition, and that the other persons mentioned as Murji'ites were completely insignificant. This may be true for the men who were mentioned as

(158) See Formative Period, pp. 124-128.

(159) Ibid., pp. 126-127.

leaders of the questionable Murji'ites sub-sects by al-Ash'arī (whom Watt had followed for that matter).⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ However, it certainly is not true for prominent Kufan Murji'ites who were known to have taken part in religious discussion and to be part of the circle which was later led by Abū Hanīfa. As was shown in the former chapter, the main Murji'ite principles, especially about the nature of īmān, were already in the air towards the end of the second decade of the 8th century, and well before Abū Hanīfa could have made his impact on the Murji'ite circle.

The study of the Murji'ite concept of īmān by Toshiko Izutsu is the epitome of the pitfall implicit in the heresiographic literature. His conclusion that at its advanced stages the concept of irjā' had lost its political nature and had^{been} transformed into a mere theological concept which meant putting "works" behind belief, shows his unchallenging approach towards his sources, namely, al-Ash'arī. Although the book is understandably pre-occupied with semantic and philosophical discussions, it fails to take into account that the Murji'ite doctrine may have been influenced by political circumstances. However, it is not surprising to find that Izutsu ignores this factor, bearing in mind that his chief source was

(160) Ibid., p. 134.

purposely avoiding this background. That is why Izutsu does not even question the historicity of all the Murji'ite sub-sects mentioned by al-Ash'arī, and which were most likely forged sects made up out of the opinions of their alleged leaders. Instead, he is misled by the terminological quibble which allegedly distinguished between the doctrines of these alleged sub-sects.⁽¹⁶¹⁾ His suggestion that the emphasis on "knowledge" and verbal confession in the concept of Īmān meant an emphasis on the motive ("motivation theory") tends to over-intellectualise a doctrine which is at least partially fuelled by a political consideration. After all, if the Murji'ites are to be considered as those who were concerned about the unity of the umma, their idea to postpone judgement on the grave sinner (be it 'Uthmān and 'Alī or the Umayyads themselves) implies that 'amal or its absence are no element in the definition of Īmān. This is, if anything else, a political motive, far from the intellectualist scholasticism attributed by Izutsu to the Murji'ites.⁽¹⁶²⁾ Once again, the heresiographic sources, or rather their lack of historical perspective, shows how dangerously misleading they can be without confronting their

(161) See for example, Izutsu, p. 95.

(162) Cf. Ibid., pp. 93-95; 100; 105-108.

information with less biased sources.

As has been already mentioned, J.M. Pessagno describes the Murji'ite thought as "theological voluntarism", contrasting it with the rationalism Izutsu saw in it. His suggestion that the subordination of works to faith is an effect of their doctrine of Īmān and not the cause of it is logically pursued. "Once they have arrived at the definition of faith... the next logical question was what could be said to have real influence on it. Since Īmān was viewed as an entity coming from God, it was impossible to conceive that the works of man could have real effect over its existence or non-existence".⁽¹⁶³⁾ However, the fact is that the political situation which gave birth to Murji'ism did not positively define Īmān, it rather coined a political attitude, on the basis of which an analogy was later made by some Murji'ites who deduced a principle of a broader basis, and of religious significance. The sophisticated line of thought suggested by Pessagno could hardly be typical for the beginning of the 8th century and it seems as if he inappropriately applies theological speculation, inspired, perhaps, by the late sources he was using. In this respect, Pessagno does not excel the methods employed by Izutsu. His neglect of any historical

(163) Pessagno, p. 393.

source leads him to speculate in^avoid, and to adopt Wensinck's unhistorical statement that the Murji'ite thesis on the relationship between 'amal and Īmān was a counter-attack on the Khārijite view regarding the doctrine of the membership of the community. (164)

This, of course, is only partially true. Another weakness to be pointed out is Pessagno's use of the alleged doctrines of some of the off-shoots to illustrate Murji'ite doctrine. Thus, for example, the Shimriy'a is said to have taken the view that "matters not properly objects of Īmān should not lead to calling one's opponent a kāfir..." (165) This statement may be acceptable if it were used in a study of the Murji'a according to the description of the

(164) See Pessagno, Thesis, p. 36. This disregard to the historical dimension is conscious. In his introduction, Pessagno admits that Muslim theology is a branch of political tactics in Islam. However, he remarks, "the most appropriate method for the study of religion is the theological study. Only theology deals with a religion seriously and in its most basic aspects; no historical issues and no socio-economic factors constitute the foundation of any religion." Ibid., pp. 9-10.

(165) Pessagno, p. 388.

heresiographers. But it is quite inconceivable that fundamentals of Murji'ite thought, anti-Khārijite in this case, should be derived from late sources that describe alleged sects which are supposed to reflect a doctrine which was formulated about a century before those dubious sub-sects were said to have existed. Pessagno's conclusion that the accusation of moral laxity was not fair should be adhered to, and the reference he quoted to that end is methodically appropriate. (166)

Kitāb al-Īmān by Abū 'Ubayd takes us back to the realm of primary source material, which is also the earliest source on Murji'ite doctrine except, of course, for the Murji'ite treatises themselves. Apart from being an early source, it is also quite unique in its fair and rather accurate description of Murji'ite thought on the question of Īmān. (167) These qualities

(166) See: Oriens, p. 114, clause 40, where it is said that believers are liable for punishments for their sins.

(167) See his characterisation of the Murji'a: "Those who declare their belief in what had come down from Allāh and make profession of the truth with ~~their~~ tongues achieve Īmān in its absoluteness because Allāh had called [people who practise that] mu'minūn. Kitāb al-Īmān, p. 75. This

are markedly missing from most of the accounts of the heresiographers.

The thesis of Kitāb al-Īmān is, clearly, an anti-Murji'ite one; however, the purpose of the book was not primarily to refute the Murji'ites. Despite the affiliation of Abū 'Ubayd to the anti-Murji'ite traditionist circles and his close friendship with Ahmad b. Hanbal, it is most significant to note that Abū 'Ubayd does not consider Murji'ite thought as heretical. This becomes clear when Abū 'Ubayd contrasts the Murji'a with the Jahmite doctrine of Īmān. From the introduction to the chapter where he relentlessly criticizes the Jahmiyya, it is explicitly stated that the Murji'ite doctrine [advocated by Abū Hanīfa and his circle, and which excluded 'amal from the definition of Īmān, but included the verbal confession] is simply "an erroneous way which differs with us as to the inclusion of 'amal as an integral part of Īmān."⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ This, in Abū 'Ubayd's view is "insolence to God and ⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ ignorance of his book," but no more than that.

depiction faithfully reflects the argument of Abū Hanīfa in Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī, p.35

(168) Kitāb al-Īmān, p. 79. Cf. also Pessagno, p. 386, No. (4).

(169) Kitāb al-Īmān, p. 71.

Despite the tolerant tone of the work, its chapter 6 is outstanding in its ferocious attack on the Murji'a, where well-known anti-Murji'ite ahādīth on the authority of famous traditionists are quoted. Pessagno seems to be justified in thinking that the traditions did not reflect Abū 'Ubayd's personal opinion and suggests that in this chapter he did not interfere with his sources. He remarks that Abū 'Ubayd's opinion is expressed in the beginning of the chapter on the Jahmiyya, and this view can by no means be reconciled with the anti-Murji'ite ahādīth of chapter 6.

Another significant point emerges from a mention Abū 'Ubayd made with regard to the scholars who advocated the principle of professing a man's belief without *istithnā'*. It is striking to find out that all the persons in question are mentioned by the biographical sources as affiliates of the "early Murji'a" (*al-murji'a al-ūlā*). Some of the scholars belonged to the circle of *fuqahā'* in Kufa, out of which Abū Hanīfa emerged later. This leads to the following conclusions: Firstly, it shows that the heresiographers did neither reflect the original thought and the theological significance of the Murji'a in its nascent stage, nor did they report (with the exception of *al-Shahrastānī*) about the real, or at any rate, the significant personalities of the circle,

who historically deserve the appellative 'Murji'a'. Secondly, the change of the historical image of the Murji'a did not take place before the end of the first half of the 9th century (Abu 'Ubayd died in 224/839).⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ Thirdly, since some of the scholars mentioned by Abū 'Ubayd died fairly early,⁽¹⁷¹⁾ it seems that the adherence to certain religious doctrines like the rejection of istithna', may suggest that the movement took a stand on religious issues from its early

(170) By the "change in the historical image of the Murji'a" it is meant their status as an opposing doctrine and movement to the traditionalist orthodoxy, but not an ostracized group from the Muslim community. This is as opposed to the Ash'arite attitude which considered them heretics. This, of course, does not mean to convey the impression that at the time of Abū 'Ubayd there were no scholars who branded the Murji'ites as heretical. However, such attitudes were taken by relatively few Kufan opponents of Abū Hanīfa, and certainly did not represent an "official orthodox stance".

(171) During the second decade of the 8th century.

"political" stage. (172) Another example supports this suggestion. In the Kitāb al-Īmān Ibn Abī Shayba (d. 235/850), a ḥadīth is attributed to the Basran Murji'ite Ṭalq b. Ḥabīb (d.c. 714) where he takes the view that "a'māl are mere acts of piety, and are not part of Īmān". (173)

Another interesting feature of Kitāb al-Īmān is that it reveals perhaps first signs of acceptance of Murji'ite principle by a traditionalist theologian. Abū 'Ubayd states in the end of his treatise: "Nobody who professes the shahāda will either be harmed or branded as kāfir if he committed a sin. Only shirk is tantamount to disbelief". (174) The basis of Abū 'Ubayd's antagonism to the Murji'a derives, not from the fact that 'amal is an integral part of Īmān

(172) This should not imply a positive impression that the Murji'a as a body formulated these views, but it may just as well be true that these were questions which gave additional common denominator to those who became Murji'ites, apart from the political motivation.

(173) Kitāb al-Īmān by Ibn Abī Shayba (in the same volume of Kitāb al-Īmān by Abu 'Ubayd), p. 33, no. 99; cf. also Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī, p. 37.

(174) Kitāb al-Īmān, p. 97.

like niya, iqrār and tasdīq, but from the fear that the omission of 'amal might lead to increased subjectivity in the definition of īmān, as is the case with the abhorred Jahmiyya. As correctly interpreted by Pessagno, his attack was aimed at what could have been caused because of Murji'ism rather than on irjā' itself. This gives us an idea on the concept of early orthodoxy of 'amal as a preserving element of īmān. (175)

Since the discussion of the sources took the course of reviewing modern research down through the heresiographers and the early traditionist point of view, it ^{will} be drawn to a close in a critique of the Murji'ite treatises.

(175) See Pessagno, Thesis, p. 18. Abu 'Ubayd's attitude can be further illustrated by his attack on the Khārijites who consider minor sins to imply kufr. Murder, he continues, is not an act of disbelief, otherwise the right to vengeance could not be transferred to a brother of the murdered. (Sūra XVII (al-isrā') verse 33.

Evidently, the central issue of the Murji'ite thought is the exclusion of 'amal from the definition of īmān. The point was reasserted time and again in the Murji'ite treatises, and it is high time to examine the reason behind this principle. Evidence showing that the view which excluded 'amal from the definition of īmān seems to have originated earlier than the period of activity of Abū Hanīfa has continuously been brought up throughout the second and the third chapter. This evidence is further reinforced by what could be considered the most significant piece of information in this matter. This is an excerpt from the Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī, where Abū Hanīfa named the scholars who agreed with him on the question of denying the faith of the grave sinner.⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ Among those scholars were 'Abdallāh b. 'Abbas (d. 68/688),

(176) This principle is a corollary of the definition of īmān, since committing a grave sin contradicted the practice ('amal) laid by the requirements of the religious law (farā'id). The practical identity between the two issues was made abundantly clear by the Murji'ite sources. See Supra, section 3, "The Relationship between īmān and 'Amal", and "The Relationship between Kufr and Grave sin".

'Atā' b. Abī Rabāh (d. 117/735),⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ the Kufan Murji'ite Sa'id b. Jubayr (d. 95/714) and 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (d. 101/720) (sic!). That statement re-affirms that these ideas originated in an earlier period than Abū Hanīfa's and his circle; it indicates again the circle of 'Abdallāh b. 'Abbās as the source of Murji'ism, and it illuminates the contacts between the Kufan Murji'ites and Meccan scholarly circles.⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ However, the most significant conclusion relevant for the present discussion is that these principles were

(177) He was one of the Meccans who were arrested on the order of Hajjāj for giving shelter to the Murji'ite fugitives who escaped to the Hijaz after the abortive insurrection of Ibn al-Ash'ath.

(178) Other Meccan scholars mentioned by Abū Hanīfa were Nāfi', Tā'ūs, and 'Abd al-Karīm [b. Abī'l Muhāriq]. See Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī, p. 37. It is also interesting to notice that the would-be Caliph, 'Umar 'Abd al-'Azīz who served at the time as the governor of the Hijaz, came under the influence of this circle. This evidence reasserts the impression which had already been mentioned that the Murji'a circle had more than a mere political common denominator.

aired when the Murji'a was in its nascent stage, and when politics played a crucial role in the assertion of the movement in the community. This conclusion calls, therefore, for an evaluation of the historical perspective, that is, an examination ~~of~~ the historical and ideological continuity between the "Murji'a al-Ūlā" and the circle of Abū Hanīfa. Only when this question is settled, would it be possible to determine the criteria on the basis of which the Murji'ite theology, and particularly the exclusion of 'amal from the definition of īmān, should be evaluated.

Except for al-Ash'arī, all the heresiographers did not consider Abū Hanīfa as a Murji'ite. Clearly, it was quite inconceivable for them to imply that an outstanding religious and legal master could belong to what they described as a heretical sect. Their motives for doing so had already been discussed, but let it be repeated again, their description, apart from being distorted, does not indicate that the movement had had any historical background at all. An interesting remark about the Murji'a comes from Abū Hanīfa himself. Aware of the pejorative connotation attached to the name Murji'a, Abū Hanīfa wrote to 'Uthmān al-Battī asking him, "What sin did people who speak for the sake of 'adl commit? [to deserve the name Murji'a]. These were 'ahl-al-bida'' who branded them with that [nick]-name. They, the Murji'ites, were ahl-al-'adl

wa-ahl al-sunna." (179) However, this statement should not mislead the observer, as it is to be understood as a means used by Abū Ḥanīfa to reach an understanding with the Baṣran scholar. Supporting such^{an} interpretation is the very mention of the principle of Irjā' in Kitāb al-'ālim wa'l-muta'allim where it is expressed as the corner stone of their political stance. (180)

A different kind of evidence regarding the link between the Murji'a of Abū Ḥanīfa and the early Murji'a can be found in the biography of the Muḥaddith Sufyān b. 'Uyayna (d. 198/814). It is said that when the latter came to Kufa, Abū Ḥanīfa encouraged people to go and listen to him since he transmitted aḥādīth from the Meccan Murji'ite 'Amr b. Dīnār. 'Amr was another Meccan scholar who gave shelter to the Murji'ite fugitives who escaped to the Hijaz from the wrath of al-Ḥajjāj. (181) By that Abū Ḥanīfa seems to

(179) Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī, pp. 37-38. The editor of the Risāla added in a footnote quoting a statement attributed to the Meccan Murji'ite 'Atā' b. Abī Rabāḥ saying that 'Murji'a' was a name given by the Khārijite Nāfi' b. al-Azraq to ahl-al-jamā'a. Cf. also Kern, p. 169, note 2.

(180) Al-'ālim, clause 28, pp. 22-25; SE, pp. 93-98.

(181) See Wafayāt, II, p. 393.

have acknowledged a sense of continuation to the early Murji'ites.

However significant these isolated pieces of information may be, the main arguments supporting the thesis of historic continuity ^{must} ~~would~~ be derived from a comparison between the principles of the early Murji'a and the principles mentioned by the later treatises. An examination of both stages reveals the following conclusions: The politically motivated suspension of judgement exercised by the early Murji'a on the rivals in the fitna implied that no human should pass judgement on these rivals, since it is only Allāh who knows who was the sinner. This principle continued to be the corner stone of the Murji'ite principle, but has later been modified, or rather, broadened in sense. This elaboration re-phrased the principle more explicitly, deducing from it that since no judgement should be passed on the grave sinner (and now the maxim did not mean only 'Uthmān and 'Alī), he is to be considered a mu'min - or a member of the community. Hence, they arrived at the definition of īmān and its independence of 'amal, or indeed, any sin, apart from shirk (polytheism).⁽¹⁸²⁾ As can only be expected,

(182) The question of the change of style and the shift in emphasis from politics to theology will be discussed later on.

there are disparities like different Qur'ānic references as to the origin of Irjā'. However, assuming that Irjā' was chiefly political expression for which a Qur'ānic basis must have been attached in order to avoid ibtidā' (religiously-illicit innovation), the different Qur'ānic reference in Kitāb al-'ālim wa'l-muta'allim is indicative of a superior and more sophisticated degree of theological reasoning. All in all, the impression is gained that the circle of Abū Hanīfa was an elaborated extension in terms of methods of reasoning, its stand on religious issues,⁽¹⁸³⁾ and indeed, on political ones.⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ The difference was in style, emphasis and level of reasoning.

The fact that the political stand of the early Murji'a was aimed not only at the Khawārij or the 'Alids, but also constituted a response towards the Umayyads, evokes the need to try and examine the Murji'ite doctrine at its later stage not only on

(183) See e.g. Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī, p. 37, on the view of early Murji'ite scholars on the relationship between sin and belief; Kitāb al-Īmān, p. 76, with regard to the view of early Murji'ites on Istithnā'.

(184) To be discussed later in the section.

its theological merits, but as a possible political expression. This brings the discussion back to its initial question of the criterion on which the relations between 'amal and īmān should be evaluated and it is suggested that they should be examined in the light of the Umayyad claims to divine rule.

The Umayyad claim to divine rule may be considered as the main pillar of their raison d'etre. The title of Khalīfat Allāh was insisted upon by them alongside ~~with~~ their claim that their reign was predestined by Allāh. This made their rule divine in their view, and explained how they acceded to power. In his article, "God's Caliph, Qur'ānic Interpretations and Umayyad Claims", Watt quoted ample evidence from the dīwāns of al-Jarīr and al-Farazdaq attesting that claim with regard to various Umayyad Caliphs.⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ This can be further supported by more references to other Umayyad poets who express these adulatory remarks.⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ More evidence comes

(185) "God's Caliph", pp. 568-572.

(186) For example: Al-Akhtal (d. 92/710) on "al-Walīd, Khalīfat Allāh", Dīwān I, p. 245
"Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz was predestined by Allāh to be a Caliph as Moses was to be a Prophet"; Jarīr in Aghānī, VIII, p. 47.
"Allāh made al-Walīd Caliph"; Al-Ahwas in

from statements attributed to the Umayyads themselves and their officials: Abū Bakra, (Ziyād b. Abīhi's brother) was said to have told Mu'āwiya that he had "in his hands Khilāfat Allāh ma'a Khulqihī" (in his natural disposition).⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ The Umayyads, namely 'Abd al-Mālik, minted the first Muslim coins with his name and title of Khalīfat Allāh.⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ The practice of al-Hajjāj was to coerce the scholars who participated in the rising of Ibn al-Ash'ath to confess that

his Dīwān, p. 10. "Hishām is the Mahdi"; Jarīr in his Dīwān, I, p. 288. "The Umayyads are sons of Khulafā' Allāh" - Miskīn al-Dārimī (d. 89/708) in his Dīwān, pp. 32-33. "'Abd al-Mālik Khalīfat Allāh" - Ibn Qays al-Ruqayyāt (d.c. 704) in his Dīwān, p. 5; his panegyric for 'Abd al-Mālik is particularly curious since he was known to have fought for Ibn al-Zubayr in Mecca! (See Bayard Dodge, p. 1085). This may give a fair idea on the methods of the Umayyads ~~of~~ obtain^{ing} support by coercing enemies, and it, indeed, may support the theory that the idea of Kitāb al-Irjā' too might ~~too~~ have been initiated by the court.

(187) See Tabari, II, p. 14.

(188) See J. Walker, A Catalogue of the Muhammadan Coins in the British Museum, Vol. I, plate V; pp. 24-25; Vol. II, pp. XXXVI, CII, 30-31.

rebellious made them unbelievers. Thus, the enemies of the Umayyads were branded kuffār. (189)

Since the stage when the Murji'ites were generally supporting the Umayyads, they were increasingly transformed into a school which was more interested in theology and which expressed itself in theological terms. Hence, the emphasis laid by the circle of Abū Hanīfa on the exclusion of 'amal from the definition of īmān, apart from retaining the traditional principle that was held by earlier circles, may also hold the clue for the understanding of the political attitude of the later Murji'ites towards the court. Therefore, it is suggested that the omission of 'amal from the concept of īmān served a political purpose in a way which safeguards the title mu'min from being denied from a man who was considered disloyal to the Umayyads. This stand would have been taken by the Murji'ites in the wake of the above mentioned instances where the Umayyads or their officials regarded rebels as kuffār, thus coining a ^{political} ~~statedly~~ attitude that insurrection against the divine Caliph was a religious sin. (190) If this theory is

(189) See for example Tahdhīb, II, pp. 210f.;
Tabarī, II, p. 1066.

(190) The same strong claim for divine kingship was made by al-Hajjaj's successor in Iraq, Ibn Hubayra. See Formative Period, pp. 73-74.

acceptable it is reasonable to assume that it was developed after the reign of 'Umar b. Abd al-'Azīz. Despite the fact that even the latter was considered to be Khalīfat Allāh,⁽¹⁹¹⁾ he represented the apex in the relations between the Murji'a and the court. It would be the accession to power of al-Walīd II with his marital connections to the family of al-Hajjāj and the despotic Hishām b. 'Abd al-Mālik which, despite the similar attitude he had shared with the Murji'a towards the Qadariyya, made the Murji'ite circle concerned as to their religious freedom.⁽¹⁹²⁾ This theory should not belittle the religio-political value of the traditional Murji'ite principles derived from the historical and theological evolution of the movement. However, this attitude could have

(191) See Aghānī, (Cairo Edition), VIII, p. 47.

(192) The memory of the atrocities committed by the Umayyads in Yawm al-Jamājim (the crucial battle in the revolt of Ibn al-Ash'ath in 701) was still borne for a long time afterwards. Bahshal records a conversation between scholars who hesitate whether to join the revolt of Zayd b. 'Alī in 740, fearing that their fate will be similar to the scholars captured by al-Hajjāj. See Ta'rīkh Wāsiṭ, pp. 218-219.

well been an additional aspect of their principle to exclude 'amal from the definition of īmān. (193) On this basis we can make an observation on their attitude to the Umayyads. Here there is an interesting change. Whereas in its earlier stage the Murji'ites had principally supported the Umayyads, but would rebel when they felt that the authorities did not deserve this support, in the later stage their doctrinal emphasis was shifted. This is illustrated by two statements. The first rules that "prayer behind either a pious or immoral Caliph is permitted", (194) while the other statement: "Side with the just party and the current regime" complements the Murji'ite attitude. (195) The significance of these statements is that the Murji'ite doctrine permitted, or perhaps even recommended, loyalty to the current sovereign regardless of his personal traits. But especially

(193) It is interesting to note that early Hanafite jurists hardly used the term 'amal (practice).

See Origins, p. 76

(194) Fiqh Absat, p. 52. Schacht's remark that according to Kitāb al-'alim wa'l-muta'allim this doctrine was conspicuously missing, ~~had~~ overlooked this statement. Cf. Oriens, p. 101.

(195) "Kun ma'a 'l-fi'a 'l-'ādila wa'l-Sultān al-jā'iz". Fiqh Absat, p. 48.

in the second statement, "the just party" is distinguished from "the current regime". This distinction seems to corroborate the interpretation of this work regarding the exclusion of 'amal from the definition of *īmān*. That is to say, although adherence to the caliph is recommended, a religious-political conflict with him should not imply disbelief on the people, since they belong to a "just party". (196) This is a striking example of change of style, where theological reasoning and terminology were employed in order to express political attitudes. As to the actual change in the Murji'ite attitude, it should be looked upon as much more lukewarm and cautious towards the Umayyads. Although it commended the prayer behind every current Caliph, this recommendation was strongly counter-weighted by what was implied

(196) The terminology used, "fi'a 'ādila", leaves no doubt as to the pious nature of the described party. By making piety the most distinct trait of this party, immunity from branding as *kuffār* became implicit. The same phrase (*ahl al-'adl*) was used by *Abū Hanīfa* to distinguish the (pious) Murji'ites from the (obnoxious) *Khawārij*. Cf. *Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī*, p. 38 and clause 17, *al-'ālim*, p. 18.

by their doctrine ~~of~~ the non-inclusion of 'amal in the definition of īmān. This attitude towards the court will further be corroborated by the biographical information about Abū Hanīfa.

A more explicit language was used in the treatises to express Murji'ite attitudes towards the Khawārij. Although imbued with theological terminology, this is not inappropriate. The Khārijites were, indeed, a political party, but the conflict between them and the Murji'ites was primarily on theological grounds. At any rate, the Murji'ite argument does not fail to make itself abundantly clear, showing that the Khawārij were in the wrong. However forceful and uncompromising, the Murji'ites were also very cautious not to brand the Khārijites as non-believers despite their serious mistakes and dangerous doctrines. (197) In this respect, Abū Hanīfa voices again the principle of Irjā', i.e., complete suspension of all the affairs

(197) See Clauses 2-4. al-'ālim, pp. 9-11; clause 32, al-'alim, pp. 26-27. Cf. also Fiqh Absaṭ, clauses 1-3, p. 40, Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī, p. 37, and the commentary of A.J. Wensinck on article of the Fiqh Akbar I, in MC, pp. 104-106.

which concern the "Ikhtilāf bayn ashāb rasūl allāh" (198)
Noteworthy is the lack of reference to the 'Alids (apart
from including 'Ali in the "postponed"). This is an
indication of the decline in significance and power
of the Shī'ites towards the middle of the 8th century.

A different subject, however, no less important,
is the style of the Murji'ite treatises. Joseph Schacht
in his article on Kitāb al-'ālim wa'l-muta'allim had
already pointed out that this treatise was not addressed
to the specialist as was the case with Risālat Abū
Hanīfa ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī. This duality of popular (199)
appeal which is expressed in somewhat naive questions
as opposed to ^{the} style employed in the Risāla ilā 'Uthmān

(198) See Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī, *ibid.* "Ikhtilāf"
as employed by Abū Hanīfa denoted the political
dispute between the two rival parties. Wensinck's
interpretation of article 7 of Fiqh Akbar I
speaks of "juridical divergence". This seems
highly irrelevant in the context of the treatises
and positively shows that this article (which is
the only one missing from Fiqh Absat) is a later
insertion. Cf. Fiqh Absat, clauses 5-7, p. 40.

(199) Like Clauses 8, 10, 11, 16, 20, 21, 37 etc. of
al-'ālim. Cf. also "New Sources", p. 38 and
Oriens, p. 101.

al-Battī. (200)

Another example is the contrast between the clauses of Fiqh Absat and some of the questions there which were styled in the form of simple do's and don't's; this as opposed to the careful wording of the elements of īmān, where the words were as if meant to cover all the spheres of relationship between man and God. (201) This characteristic must have been an effective tool used by Murji'ite theologians to appeal to both the masses and the religious scholars. This, in Schacht's view, made the Murji'ite thought representative of the great majority of Muslims at the time of the Umayyads. (202) Although this conclusion might be somewhat overrating the actual strength of the Murji'a, it is certainly plausible that their popular style may have earned them a great deal of support among the Muslims during the Umayyad period.

(200) For example, the argument on the definition of īmān in the early days of Muhammad suggested historical fundamentalism, and ^alevel of reasoning aimed at a scholar. See Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī, p. 35.

(201) See Fiqh Absat, pp. 40, 45, 47 and Passim; and al-'ālim, clause 6, p. 13.

(202) Cf. "New Sources", ibid., and "Theology and Law", p. 16.

Conclusion of this analysis of the Murji'ite thought would not be complete if the message of the Murji'ite treatises was not compared to an early manifesto of Murji'ism. To this end, it would be beneficial to examine them in comparison to the poem of Thābit Qutna. Disregarding the different literary styles, one feature is continuously outstanding in the Murji'ite treatises and it is missing from the poem and any other early Murji'ite document. This feature is a striking change of style in the way Murji'ite theologians expressed themselves. This style conveys the impression of a coherent method of theological reasoning, and the usage of theological terms and concepts which were evidently missing before the transformation of the Murji'a into a religiously-oriented school. As has^s been previously pointed out, there had not been^{so} much a change of principles as there were changes in emphasis, jargon and level of reasoning. These changes are particularly striking in the political implications of their doctrine on the relationship between 'amal and Īmān. The incorporation of political attitudes in theological terms and arguments were clearly a sophistication of the means and the style used by the Murji'ites to voice their political attitude. That is, it was a politically prudent way to use theology as a medium for politics, for under the aegis of piety they were immune from attacks of a regime who considered itself divine and its opponents unbelievers. This

technique was only a part of a complete religious-moral system which covered the issues of the relationship between the individual to his God, and the community in its political and non-political senses. All these elements as parts of a coherent system are conspicuously missing from the evidence we possess about early Murji'ite thought.

8) The Murji'ites and their Scholarly Opponents

Having clarified the Murji'ite stand in various doctrinal questions, it is time to investigate the scholarly milieu and the context of theological rivalry in which Murji'ites acted. However, such investigation could naturally be carried out on a scale which will only identify the problems and lay a stepping stone to a comprehensive study of this subject. The anti-Murji'ite scholarly circle of Kufa in the 8th century is undoubtedly too large a subject to be fully dealt with in the framework of this study.

The biographical sources, and later Hanbalite-Ash'arite-inclined authors present the rivalry as a conflict between ahl-al-hadīth representing their side, and ahl al-ra'y, a title given to Abū Hanīfa and his circle. (203) These titles refer to two discrepant

(203) See for example Ibn Qutayba in Ta'wīl, pp. 51-52.

methods of making legal decisions^{establishing} and the criteria of acceptance of "traditions" or transmitted word and practice attributed to the Prophet. The prejudice of these terms is luminously evident in its discredit to the way they described their rivals' method as "those who exercise personal opinion or reasoning", implying that they do not rely on authentic traditions, which ahl al-hadīth possessed. As had been pointed out by Schacht, ra'y was a term which was employed in a legal sense.⁽²⁰⁴⁾ This would suggest that the rivalry was on legal discrepancies, which may be partially true. After all, Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778), who epitomizes this rivalry from the side of ahl al-hadīth, was a well-known Kufan jurist, who founded a legal school of his own.⁽²⁰⁵⁾ However, this rivalry found a no less explicit

Abu Zur'a, 14a, 75b, 77b, 85b, 137a. Al-'Ilal, pp. 124, 168, 284. However, it is to be noted that the terms "ahl al-hadīth" and "ahl al-ra'y" are not employed here in the same sense suggested by Goldziher in MS, IV, p. 181f. Cf. Azmi, pp. 18-27, esp. p. 27.

(204) See Origins, pp. 98ff.

(205) See ibid., p. 242; and Plessner in EI¹, s.v. "Sufyān al-Thawrī".

expression in doctrinal positions.

Generally speaking, these two spheres of Law and theology were to a large extent inseparably intertwined; but evaluating the rivalry as a mere legal disagreement between the two circles would do injustice to the historical factors which precipitated this rivalry. Another argument may sustain the line of thought that the rivalry did not originate, at least not exclusively so, from purely legal disagreement. Since it is common knowledge that local practices pervaded into what is called "Sunna", especially so in Iraq, (206) it is striking that two jurists from the same milieu (Kufa) were associated with opposing legal traditions of methods and practices. All these indicate that the crux of the rivalry was theological. Fortunately, it is not only by elimination that this conclusion was reached, and ample evidence sustains this claim: In Kitāb al-'ālim wa'l-muta'allim, the author came out vehemently against the traditionists and traditions, claiming that they are inconsistent, and voice abrogated ahādīth (mansūkh). These attacks were launched in the context of asserting theological questions like faith and sin. (207) Kitāb al-Īmān of

(206) See Islamic Law, p. 33.

(207) Clauses, 2, 4, 30 in al-'ālim; Cf. also, on zinā' and Īmān, in Kitāb al-Īmān, p. 84.

Abū 'Ubayd is another excellent illustration of the dogmatic disagreement between the Murji'ites and the Kufan traditionists. (208) Madelung raises another issue as an alleged point of controversy between the Murji'a and the Kufan traditionists' circle. Quoting traditionist and Hanbalite-Ash'arite sources, Madelung suggests in the wake of the widespread allusions and evident Hanafite attempts to suppress them, that there must be some foundation in the allegations that Abū Hanīfa was teaching that the Qur'ān was created. (209)

The nature of the rivalry, however, seems to have far exceeded the realm of mere disagreement, and according to both traditionist and Hanafite sources involved personal hostility and acrimonious exchanges.

(208) The subjects in question like the definition of īmān, istithnā', increase and decrease in īmān etc., were discussed in the comparison between the Murji'ite sources and Kitāb al-īmān. See supra.

(209) See Madelung in Orientalia Hispanica, I, pp. 508-512, 519. Cf. also Abū Zur'a, 85b.

Madelung illustrates the hostility of some of the prominent traditionists like Sufyān al-Thawrī, al-A'mash (d. 145/762) Wakī' b. Jarrāh (d. 197/798) by information on their reluctance to speak to Murji'ites or to attend the prayers on their funerals. (211)

Despite the relative lenience of Abū 'Ubayd in his Kitāb al-Īmān, the ferocious anti-Murji'ite ahādīth he quoted there (212) and other statements attributed to other traditionists illustrate the atmosphere. (213)

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(211) Al-Imām al-Qāsim, pp.237-238. Cf. also:

H. Laoust, REI, p. 36; Al-Ma'rifa, II, p. 764

A fuller list of scholars who repudiated Abū Hanīfa can be found in Ta'rīkh Baghdād XIII, pp. 369-70. However, the inclusion of a man like Ḥammad is tendentious.

(212) Kitāb al-Īmān, pp. 81-83.

(213) For example, a set of ahādīth attributed to Sufyān al-Thawrī and others from his circle is quoted, al-Ma'rifa II, pp. 782-787. Among them anti-Murji'ite statements from Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī, the champion of anti-Murji'ism in Basra, ibid., pp. 785, 791. Most statements were personally directed against Abū Hanīfa. Cf. also Ansāb, (MS) p. 810, and Ta'rīkh Baghdād, XIII, p. 404. Al-Ma'rifa, II, pp. 790-93, where anti-Murji'ite statements were aimed at

The attacks on Murji'ism continued for a number of centuries later and fuelled the writing of historians, compilers of ahādīth and Ash'arite theologians. Thus, for example, the Ta'rīkh of ^{the} Syrian historian Abū Zur'a is imbued with quotations of slanderous statements on Abū Hanīfa and Murji'ism. Since Abū Zur'a was a Hanbalite, it is not surprising to find him adopting the antagonism of Hanbalism to what they called "ra'y" and to other doctrines attributed to Abū Hanīfa like the createdness of the Qur'ān. (214) A number of anti-

the spiritual and scholarly nature of the Murji'a. The Murji'ite response to that did not bear a personal nature, and was content to answer on the scholarly level. See for example, Abū Zur'a, 97a.

- (214) The acrimonious tone of Abū Zur'a's hostility towards Abū Hanīfa can be illustrated by his citation of a statement attributed to Sufyān b. 'Uyayna (d. 196/811), where the latter attacked "ra'y", saying that its adherents were all descendants of slaves, meaning the mawālī. Abū Zur'a, pp. 85b-86a, quoted from Gernot Rotter's "Abu Zur'a ad-Dinašqi (st. 231/894) und das Problem der frühen arabischen Geschichtsschreibung in Syrien". Die Welt des Orients, VI (1971), p. 97. In this article

Murji'ite ahādīth (as well as pro-Murji'ite ahādīth) found their way into a compilation of spurious ahādīth (ahādīth mawdū'a) by al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505). It is not their validity, but the fact that such ahādīth were still current in the 14th century, which is striking. (215)

Another late mentioning of the Murji'ites in connection with bid'a can be found in Kitāb Minhāj al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya by the Hanbalite theologian and jurist Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328). (216)

To return to the period in question, here is another view of the background of the rivalry. Madelung in his book Der Imām al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm und die Glaubenslehre der Zaiditen, suggests the traditionist circle of Kufa that

there is an edifying review of the latent tendencies of Abū Zur'a, especially on his representation of the Syrian legal and traditional scholarship, namely this of al-Awzā'ī (d. 157/774). Ibid., p. 94ff. Thus we learn of the anti-Murji'ite feeling of the latter. On legal disagreement between Abū Hanīfa and al-Awzā'ī, see Origins, p. 35, and in Makkī, I, p.131.

(215) See F. Kern's "Murǧi'itische und Antimurǧi'itische Tendenztraditionen in Sujūṭī's al-La'ālī al-maṣnū'a fi'l-ahādīṭ al-mawdū'a", in ZA, 26, (1912), pp. 173-174.

(216) Minhāj al-Sunna, I, p. 14.

was dominated by Shi'ites who supported and participated in the revolts of the 'Alids. He quotes M. Plessner to reject the information concerning Sufyān al-Thawrī's pro-'Alid leanings. (217) However, having examined the list of Sufyān's tutors, Madelung remarks that it would be surprising if Sufyān was not a Shi'ite at least in his youth. (218) Even if he had been pro-'Alid in the beginning of his scholarly career, this certainly does not seem to be the tone of his later teachings, or indeed of the points he emphasized in rivalry between his school and the Murji'ites.

It is difficult to draw a clear-cut conclusion *as to* whether Sufyān al-Thawrī considered the Murji'ites heretics. As Madelung remarks, the fact that Sufyān had denied the name of believer from al-Hajjāj indicates that it was not impossible for him to consider a sinful Muslim a kāfir. (219) It is clear that his stand

(217) In EI¹, s.v. "Sufyān al-Thawrī".

(218) Al-Imām al-Qāsim, p. 237.

(219) See: Madelung, Studia Islamica, p. 242.

Al-Ash'ari quotes Sufyān ^{to the effect} ~~to say~~ that Hammād b. Abī Sulaymān (d. 120/738) renounced Abū Hanīfa "the mushrik" for having taught that the Qur'ān was created. Al-Ibāna, p. 29. That is, Sufyān must have been ready to label Abū Hanīfa with heresy. However, the authenticity of this is

was by far less lenient than Abū 'Ubayd's, but this does not yet indicate that the Murji'a was generally considered heretical by all the traditionists. Indeed, the case seems to be the reverse.

Concluding this subject, it can be said that the stand of the traditionists reflected a dialectical situation. That is, more than a century after the establishment of the community of believers, this event seemed dangerously distal. Therefore, in order to counter the wave of "laxity" and divergence from what they considered traditional, they presented a theological anti-thesis of stricter and more rigorous criteria of the definition of Imān and concomitant theological issues. Naturally, this is a schematic description; but however generalising it might be, it is worthwhile to define this stage in terms of the evolution of Muslim religious thought.

9) The Impact of Abū Hanīfa - The Account of the Early Hanafite Biographies.

The last section of this chapter will attempt to

highly dubious. Quoted from Madelung Orientalia Hispanica, I, p. 509.

review the account of the early Hanafite Manāqib literature and their image of Abū Hanīfa. Regrettably no more than general outlining of the major issues in this field could be undertaken. This is a subject which deserves a separate study on a scale which exceeds the realm of this work.

The two works used for this review were the Manāqib al-Imām al-A'zam by al-Makkī (d. 568/1172), which is possibly the earliest work of its kind; and a work bearing the same name by al-Kardarī (d. 827/1424), which largely reproduced al-Makkī's work.

Despite what might be expected from a source like that, there is little self-praise in comparison to comparable sources of other theological or legal schools. Historically, the Manāqib literature fills a curious gap. Despite Abū Hanīfa's established status in Islam, there ~~does~~ not seem to be a single comprehensive, and non-evasive biography about him. The reason for that is clear. Abū Hanīfa's standing in Islam was due to his eponymous status as the founding master of a legal school. His personal background, had it been dealt with by a writer earlier than al-Makkī, would have compelled him to introduce the theological background of Abū Hanīfa and his association with the Murji'a, which ~~was~~ continued to be considered for a very long time a heretical sect. (220)

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(220) Examples of this were set^{out} in the former section.

It was only in the 12th century when the first biography of Abū Hanīfa saw light, perhaps due to the relative feeling of proximity between Sunnites and Hanafites which had started a century earlier. Being the only source from which detailed information could be derived, the early Hanafite biographies on Abū Hanīfa add historical and anecdotal dimension. Although much of the information repeats theological stances and historical facts which had already been mentioned, it is important to find out what were the views of later Hanafites, from which all the later Hanafite biographers quoted. Especially significant is al-Makkī's work, for it contains what seem to be early Kufan ahādīth and various statements which deserve a separate study. Aware of the bias implicit in such a source, let us now mention a selection of data.

The impression gained by reading through the works is that, as was the case with legal Hanafism, theological Murji'ism (to the extent it was mentioned) was given too an eponymous character. Although other leading Murji'ites are mentioned, ⁽²²¹⁾ it seems as if there was no such circle before Abū Hanīfa; only his teachers were mentioned. ⁽²²²⁾

Abū Hanīfa is said to have been born in 80/699 to

(221) See Makkī, I, p. 118.

(222) Ibid., pp. 38ff.

a Persian father, Zūṭā. (223) The sources quote an incredible number of 4,000 teachers who were supposed to have taught him. Grasping this boldly, it is evident that his most influential teacher was Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān (d. 120/738), a Kufan qādī, and prominent among early Murji'ites. Abū Ḥanīfa's contacts with Ḥammād are said to have started in 720, and continued until the latter's death. (224) It was from Ḥammād that Abū Ḥanīfa had acquired the interest in fiqh. The predominance of fiqh in the career of Abū Ḥanīfa seems to be emphasized by the source whereas his interest in theology was curiously, but repeatedly played down. In various places Abū Ḥanīfa is quoted to have said that after a period of complete immersion in theology, he realised that it had adverse effects and was of little use. Therefore he shifted his interest from

(223) Further biographical details in M. Moin, "Imām Abū Ḥanīfa", Journal of Pakistan Historic Society, XVI, (1968) pp. 153-162.

(224) See Makkī, I, pp. 55-58. Another influential teacher was the Meccan 'Atā' b. Abī Rabāh (d. 117/735). He was one of the Meccan scholars who gave refuge to the Murji'ite fugitives who escaped to the Hijaz after the abortive insurrection of 701.

jadāl and ikhtilāf (theological polemics) to fiqh.⁽²²⁵⁾ This emphasis on an alleged change of heart attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa concerning his involvement with theological questions is very interesting indeed, and stands in clear contrast to the keen interest in theology demonstrated in the early Murji'ite treatises which are attributed at least by Ḥanafites to Abū Ḥanīfa. However, an examination of the historical circumstances, and the religious image of Abū Ḥanīfa at the time of the compilation of the *Manāqib* works, may offer the following explanation. The above mentioned narrowing gap between orthodoxy and the Ḥanafiyya on one hand, and the continuous association of Murji'ism as heretical on the other hand, may have instigated the forging of historical compromise. The 12th century Ḥanafites may have considered it expedient and timely to back down on the subject of the theological background of Abū Ḥanīfa, and accordingly they did every-

(225) This description recurs three times in al-Makkī's *Manāqib*. In one place Ḥammād b. Abī Ḥanīfa is said to have told how his father directed him to study kalām and later changed his mind, and told him to revert to fiqh, for kalām seemed futile to him. *Ibid.*, pp. 207-208. Cf. also Abū Ḥanīfa's spiritual will to Abū Yūsuf, where he advised him to avoid entanglement in theology. *Ibid.*, II, p. 112.

thing they could to blur it. Every link was severed, thus, between the master and the theological system which was largely styled by him, and to a lesser extent conceived by him. In this way, the Hanafites disavowed the heretical stigma inherent in the image of their master and his association with the Murji'a until then, thus completely rehabilitating Abū Hanīfa.

As this divorce between Abū Hanīfa and theology is already established in the beginning of the work his image as a religiously conforming figure, and as the central personality of the school, characterise his exploits throughout the biography.

He is described to have had the biggest halqa (group of students) in Kufa. Apart, he was a wealthy silk merchant.⁽²²⁶⁾ The sources give ample information on various encounters, scholarly or otherwise, that Abū Hanīfa had with various prominent personalities. Such a meeting took place with the traditionist Qatāda, where suspicion and an atmosphere of challenge and testing are conveyed by the dialogue. This is also typical of the atmosphere between Murji'ites and

(226) See Ibid., I, pp. 72, 75;
Ta'rīkh Baghdād, XIII, p. 422.

traditionists in 8th century Kufa. (227) Other encounters with traditionists took place, with the jurist Ibn Abī Layla', (228) and with the historian Ibn Ishāq, with whom Abū Hanīfa : discussed the question of 'astithnā' before the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Mansūr. (229) Interesting encounters with two prominent Shī'ites which do not seem to be mentioned in any other source illustrate a Hanafite view on the relationship between Abū Hanīfa (and his followers) and the Shī'ites. An audience with Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (the 6th imām) was marked by sheer suspicion and lack of communication. (230) Another leading Shī'ite who was met by Abū Hanīfa was Muḥammad al-Bāqir. The latter is said to have accused Abū Hanīfa in this meeting : of disputing aḥādīth of al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī and rendering them by analogy (qiyās). (231) In another instance

(227) See al-Makkī, I, pp. 103, 126; al-Kardarī, I, p. 157.

(228) Where legal disparities were in question, al-Makkī, I, pp. 114-115.

(229) Ibid., pp. 142-144.

(230) See, Ibid., pp. 134, 136; al-Kardarī, I, pp. 176-77. In another meeting between the two, more mutual respect and appreciation prevailed. See al-Makkī, I, pp. 172ff.

(231) See Ibid., p. 168; al-Kardarī, I, p. 208.

Abū Hanīfa is described to have been reluctant to see Jahn b. Safwān, for his adherence to a doctrine which was unacceptable to the people of the Qibla. (232)

The important issue of the relationship of Abū Hanīfa with the authorities received also a mention. Chronologically speaking, the abortive insurrection of Zayd b. 'Alī in 740 was the first affair in connection with which Abū Hanīfa is mentioned to have been implicated. According to the Hanafī sources, Abū Hanīfa had refused to physically join forces with the Shī'ite rebel, but gave him 10.000 dirhams. (233) This, of course, stands in clear contrast to the principles of obeying authority preached by Murji'ite sources, although such obedience was only a recommendation there. At any rate, Abū Hanīfa's support of Zayd b. 'Alī is further corroborated in this connection by a statement of al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī that Abū Hanīfa prayed and asked for pardon for those who broke the principle of "al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf wa'l-nahy 'an al-munkar" by joining the revolt. (234) Another hint as to the reason behind

(232) See al-Makkī, I, pp. 145ff; al-Kardarī, pp. 186-87. Here the Hanafite author must have been keen to demonstrate the disavowal of Abū Hanīfa of a heretic like Jahn.

(233) See al-Makkī, I, p. 260; al-Kardarī, I, p. 255.

(234) Ta'rīkh Baghdād, XIII, p. 83.

Abū Hanīfa's support of the rising is the fact that Zayd b. 'Alī was one of his teachers. (235) The passive support granted by Abū Hanīfa to the rebels should be taken as an indication of his feelings towards the caliphate of Hishām, and perhaps even represented the attitude of the Murji'ites as a whole. Strangely enough, this affair passed without any serious repercussions for Abū Hanīfa. What was even stranger was that the Umayyads, namely Ibn Hubayra, the governor of Marwān II in Iraq, asked Abū Hanīfa to serve as a qadī when the civil war broke out in 749. Evidently, although the Umayyads knew about Abū Hanīfa's feelings towards them, his influence in Kufa must have been indispensable for them in a time of emergency. (236)

(235) See Serjeant's article "The Zaydis" in Religion in the Middle East, II, p. 287. On the rising, see further details in 'Iqd, IV, p. 32; Sharh Nahj al-Balāgha, III, pp. 284-287.

(236) See al-Makkī, II, pp. 22ff. Another version suggests that the post offered to him was the Chancellor of the Iraqi Treasury (bayt al-māl). Ibid. According to this account Abū Hanīfa was the only scholar who refused to accept a nomination for office. Consequently he was arrested, flogged, and eventually escaped to Mecca when he heard that the governor :

The resentment which Abū Ḥanīfa must have felt towards the Umayyads following his experience in the last two years of their reign seems to have made him receptive to the 'Abbāsids. Thus, he welcomed the first 'Abbāsīd caliph and gave him the bay'a on behalf of the Kufan scholars. (237) However, as soon as al-Manṣūr acceded to the throne, he exerted pressure on Abū Ḥanīfa to accept a post of qādī . In the beginning, continuous refusals of Abū Ḥanīfa were tolerated by al-Manṣūr who assigned him to various legal tasks like drawing a treaty of non-belligerence between tribes in Basra, or acting as arbitrator between the caliph and his wife. (238) But it was not before long that the caliph resorted to forceful attempts to coerce Abū Ḥanīfa to accept the post of qādī. Abū Ḥanīfa was arrested, tortured, and released, to die shortly afterwards in 150/767. (239)

During the 'Abbāsīd period Abū Ḥanīfa does not

intended to execute him. Abū Ḥanīfa stayed in Mecca until the establishment of the 'Abbāsīds in 750. See: Ibid. Cf. also Ta'rīkh Baghdād, XIII, pp. 326-327, and al-Makkī, I p. 216.

(237) See al-Makkī, I, p.151; al-Kardarī, I, pp. 199-200.

(238) See al-Makkī, I, pp. 179, 230; al-Kardarī, II p. 15.

(239) See al-Kardarī, II, p. 19.

seem to have resorted to support ^{ing} rebels. (240)

Abū Ḥanīfa's experience with both the Umayyads and the 'Abbasids bears out the validity of the political implications construed from his theological views.

- (240) A report in a Shī'ite source which states that Abū Ḥanīfa and Mis'ar b. Kidān wrote to Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib who rebelled against al-Manṣūr, suggesting that he should come to Kufa in order to gain support, seems out of character. See Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn, p. 361.

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