

“No Ruler But God”

لا حكم إلا الله

Ibadi Sources as Kharijite Counterevidence

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Central Research Question

Can using Ibadi narrative sources in tandem with the predominant Sunni ones triangulate an accurate historical reading of the early Khawarij?

Methodology

- Source expansion: broadening the evidentiary base for the study of early Kharijite narratives by incorporating Ibadi ones provides nuanced perspectives on the otherwise reified early Khawarij
- Textual analysis: asking what the aims and influences are behind our primary sources
- Triangulation across different traditions, in which no tradition is inherently more “authentic”: reading sources side by side to identify convergences and divergences provides insight on concepts otherwise not expanded upon in Sunni narrative sources

Defining Terms

- **Kharijites:** Political and sectarian grouping of those that rejected Ali's arbitration with Mu'awiya during the First Fitna
- **Ibadis:** Kharijite subsect considered 'moderate'
- **Azariqa:** Kharijite subsect considered 'extreme'; broadly prescribed death and takfir
- **Takfir:** The act of denouncing a Muslim as a non-muslim
- **Madhab:** 'School of Thought' within sectarian orthodoxy

Our Sources

Secondary source informing our research: *The Kharijites in Early Islamic Historical Tradition* by Hannah Hagemann's

- She argues that the narrative role of the early Khawarij in Sunni historiography serves an apologetic purpose for Ali
- Why does Hagemann not use Ibadi sources?

The account of the famous debate between Ibn Abbas and the early Khawarij, as narrated by al-Dārimī in his Sunan (1/68-69) and by Baḥshal in: Tarīkh Waṣīt.

Date: 9th century

Epistle of Salim ibn Dhakwan (*Sirat Salim*): an early Ibadi source, a long polemic narrative against Kharijite, Murji'a, Fatana

Date: believed to be before 800 AD, earliest copy 17th century

Selected Ibadi hadith from al-Jami' as-Sahih: in which Ali instructs his envoy to pray primarily amongst themselves

Date: Original *musnad* collected in 12th century, manuscript collection from the 16th century

Thesis

We argue that using *Sirat Salim* in tandem with our Sunni sources, along with the narrative Ibadi hadith we have chosen, **paints a multifaceted picture of early Kharijite stances and justifications** that would not otherwise be expounded upon in the reified Sunni Kharijite narrative corpus.

While *Sirat Salim*, as a Kharijite source, is not void of its own influences and agendas, the political and historical context of narrative sources gives us insight into how they may have been intended to function.

Analytical Exercise

1. The account of Ibn Abbas with the Epistle
2. A selected Ibadi hadith with the Epistle

Sunni Historiography in Conversation with the Epistle

What does this particular Sunni source tell us about the early Khawarij?

- Ibn Abbas' debate: Ali apologia; the Khawarij concede and agree on his points
- Ibn Abbas refutes their allegations against Ali with Qur'an verses -> this debate is a matter of refutation and *rightful* interpretation of the Qur'an. In appealing to prophetic precedence of arbitration, and Ali's moral excellence, **pragmatic, religious, and moral frameworks** are all used to defend him.

Sunni Historiography in Conversation with the Epistle

What does the Epistle add?

- Expands on the predominate Qur'anic verse the Kharijite invoke and provides legal definitions of infidels

Salim classifies who he deems as misguided (infidels) and the legal consequences which flow therefrom - classifications the Ibn Abbas narrative does not provide due to differences in time, intention, and narrative style.

Sunni Historiography in Conversation with the Epistle

Infidels as defined in the Epistle

Arab polytheists

Zoroastrians: can avoid perpetual jihad through participating in jizya tax; no right to inheritance or intermarriage

Ahl al-Kitab: Jews and Christians; granted more extensive legal protections; no right to inheritance

Hypocrites: deemed *kuffar* but cannot be stripped of legal protections because they openly profess Islam)

Ahl al-Qibla: Muslims it is lawful to kill because they are guilty of a capital offence; cannot be treated as members of other categories -> Uthman paradigmatic example

Sunni Historiography in Conversation with the Epistle

Although the Khawarij call upon the following verse in Ibn Abbas' debate, the justifications for its use cannot be fully derived:

“They (the Khawarij) said “One of the points is that he (‘Ali) had men judge in a matter of Allah while Allah says:

“The Judgement is for none but Allah.” (*Surah al-Ana'm*, verse 57)

Takeaway: Sunni Historiography in Conversation with the Epistle

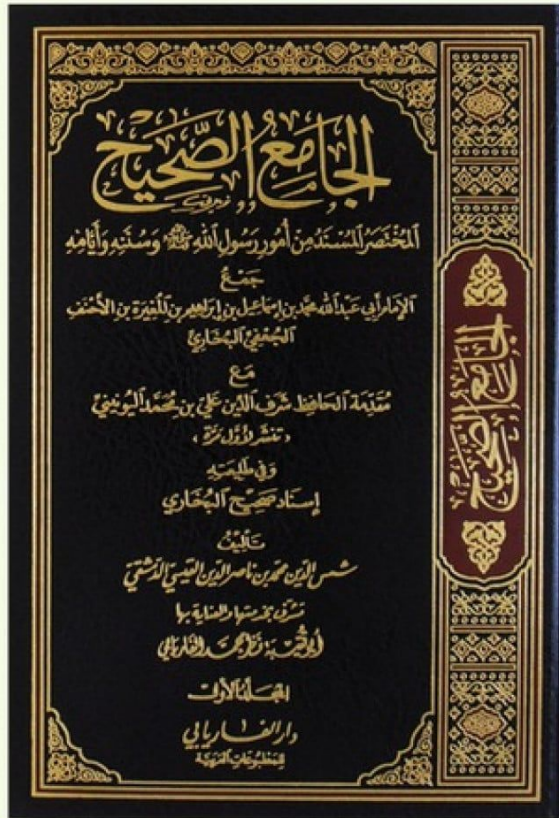
Source expansion allows us to understand how Sunni Kharijite narratives **may be limited in providing the justifications or nuances behind Kharijite beliefs**. Because the debate of Ibn Abbas is primarily engaged in Ali apologia, we cannot glean reasonings behind why they base their allegation in a specific verse or how they may categorize non-Kharijites, only how *Sunni historiography* interpreted these reasonings.



Al-Jami' as-Sahih : The Ibadi Hadith Collection

- **The central text**, *Musnad ar-Rabi' bin Habib*, was purportedly collected in the **12th century**
- **Accompanied** by other Ibadi ecclesiastical narrations (Ibn Hanbal, Imam Aflah)
- Final compilation of all these sources was in the **16th century**

Scholarly Objection to al-Jami' as-Sahih



- **John Wilkinson**, a leading Ibadist at Oxford, takes a very strong, almost vitriolic stance against this collection
- He considers it to be ‘a fake’ and anachronistic because the **Ibadi tradition is discursive** and its **fiqh does not rely on Hadith** like Sunni and Shi’a divisions do, among other problems (isnad)
- He talks about the ‘**madhabization**’ of Ibadi islam during the period of its collection, in which Ibadi islam presented itself as a palatable ‘school’ to Sunni orthodoxy: the collection effort is associated with this

Reference: John Wilkinson, “Madhabization”, *Ibadism - Origins and Early Development*, 2010

Why Use it as a Source?



Although it does not function as a useful theological source in the same sense that Sunni and Shi'a hadith do, the collection has **intrinsic value** as **historical evidence** from the time of its collection

Wilkinson challenges the collection as a meaningful source of **Ibadi tradition** but he does not challenge the **historicity of al-Rubi's Musnad itself**

This allows us to collect evidence on early Ibadi perspectives to support documents like the Epistle of Salim ibn Dhakwan

We can doubly give importance to positions that contradict Sunni narratives despite 'madhabization'; such positions evidently held important enough to keep

al-Jami' as-Sahih, 45:796

النسخة الأصلية باللغة العربية

وقال علي بن أبي طالب لما وجه رسله إلى معاوية بن أبي سفيان: صلوا في رحالكم واجعلوا معهم سبحة فإن الله لا يتقبل إلا من المتقين وكان حسن البصري وسعيد بن جبير يصليان في بيوتها الجمعة ثم يخرجان إلى المسجد فيصليان مع والي بين أمية ويجعلان صلاتهما معه سبحة

Our Translation

And Ali bin Abi Talib said when he sent his messenger(s) to Mua'wiya bin Abi Sufyan: Pray in your tents and make with them a supplementary prayer; for God does not accept [that] except from the righteous. And Hasan al-Basri and Sa'id bin Jubair prayed in their tents together and then they departed to the mosque, and they prayed with the Governor from the Umayyads and made their [al-Basri's and ibn Jubair's] prayer with him as a supplement.

Muawiya as *Sub-Muslim*, but not an Infidel

Reflects a legal status for the Umayyads, a differentiation that would not be included in Sunni sources; Sunni narrative sources are not sprouting from the Kharijite / Ibadi perspective where the central tension is defining whether Uthman, Ali, and/or their supporters are infidels - they are engaged in apologia and pragmatic defense

Hadith Explained

In the Hadith, 'Ali instructs his envoys that their main prayers should be done by themselves and that their prayers with Muawiya's forces should be considered supplementary.

Hadith Analysis

- **Deranks** the Umayyads **within the framework** of being Muslim (parallels seen to the Epistle)
- **Does not** outright **invalidate** the prayers; instead those prayers become supererogatory
- Takfir **is not** invoked, but a hierarchy of faith is imposed instead

Conclusion

Here, we've used an Ibadi source (a Kharijite source) to supplement an existing Sunni narrative on the early Khawarij. For narrative sources in particular, source expansion and textual analysis allows for a wider scope of interpretation, especially when engaging with the earlier period and with populations without very many primary sources like the Kharijite groups.

Bibliography

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