WAS ABŪ DHARR AL-GHIFĀRĪ “EXILED” TO AL-RABADHA? 
A Review on the Relations between Caliph ʿUthmān and Abū 
Dharr al-Ghifārī

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Abstract

The period after the Prophet Muḥammad is significant in many respects. In particular, the events that took place during the time of the third caliph ʿUthmān, have a distinct importance because they had a profound impact on the future development of Islamic society. An important aspect of this period that affected political, religious, and social life during Islamic history was the relation between Caliph ʿUthmān and Abū Dharr, which resulted in Abū Dharr going to al-Rabadha. There are significant differences in the narratives related to these events. In some accounts, Abū Dharr went to al-Rabadha on his own request, whereas in others, he was sent into exile by the Caliph ʿUthmān because he protested his regime for corruption. This article aims to examine the relations between Caliph Uthmān and Abū Dharr in three steps: Abū Dharr’s leaving to Damascus; the events that occurred between Abū Dharr and Muʿāwiya; Abū Dharr’s coming back to Medina and then leaving (or being exiled) to al-Rabadha.

Key Words: Caliph ʿUthmān, Abū Dharr, al-Rabadha, exile, fitna

Historians generally divide Caliph ʿUthmān’s reign (644-656) into six “good” years and six “bad” years. The events from around the year 30/650-651 which occurred in the second six-year term are significant in many respects because they had a profound impact on the future development of Islamic society. In particular the events that took
place between Caliph ʿUthmān (d. 35/656) and Abū Dharr (d. 32/653) and that resulted in Abū Dharr going to al-Rabādha\(^1\) deserve consideration. First, it should be noted that there are significant differences between the narratives related to these events. However, it is accepted by historians that Abū Dharr went to al-Rabādha due to criticism, but at first sight it seems unclear whether he went upon his own request or was sent into exile by the Caliph. According to some narratives, the reason he was sent to al-Rabādha as an exile was that he expressed criticism toward Caliph ʿUthmān because he changed the Sunna of the Prophet and the policy of the previous two caliphs, and because of his donation from bayt al-māl to his close relatives. In addition Abū Dharr criticized Muslims who were hoarding wealth. In the narratives of the exile it is argued that some prominent ṣaḥāba such as ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661) and Abīd Al-Rahlmān ibn ʿAwf (d. 32/652) criticized Caliph ʿUthmān due to his attitude towards Abū Dharr. According to the other narratives Abū Dharr came to Medina from Damascus, then left to al-Rabādha on his own request.

I

In the historical sources there are two different groups of narratives of Abū Dharr’s arrival to Damascus. According to the first group by Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571/1176), Abū Dharr was residing in Medina. He had come to this region (Bilād al-Shām) to participate in the conquest of Palestine, and he met Caliph ʿUmar in Jābiya.\(^2\) He subsequently went to Damascus.\(^3\) The second group of accounts says that,

\(^1\) Al-Rabādha was a village located a three day distance from the Iraqi side of Medina; see Abū ʿAbd Allāh Shīhāb al-Dīn ibn ʿAbd Allāh Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, Muʿjam al-buldān (Beirut: Dār Sādir, 1977), III, 24.

\(^2\) Jābiya, a city eighty kilometers south of Damascus, is situated in Jawlān, not far from the site of modern Nawā. It was used as an administrative center in the time of the Ghassānids. In Islamic period, it was conquered during the time of Caliph Abū Bakr (d. 13/634) and became a military base (jumād) of this region. The importance of Jābiya increased during the time of Caliph ʿUmar (d. 23/644) and he visited there to decide upon conditions in the new conquests. A meeting of the generals and principal officers was held there and has remained famous with the name yawm al-Jābiya; see Henri Lammens and J. Sourdel-Thomine, “al-Jābiya,” The Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition, II, 360; Mustafa Fayda, “Cābiye,” Türekiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA), VI, 538.

\(^3\) Abū l-Qāsim Thiqat al-Dīn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Hibat Allāh Ibn ʿAsākir, Tārikh madinat Dimashq (ed. Ṭuḥiḥī al-Dīn Abū Saʿīd ʿUmar ibn Gharāma al-ʿAmrawī; Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1996), LXVI, 174; also see Abū l-Fidāʾ ʿImād al-Dīn Ismāʿīl ibn
Caliph ʿUthmān had sent Abū Dharr to Damascus a second time. There are three different narratives. According to the first narrative by al-Baladhūrī (d. 279/892-893), Abū Dharr settled in Damascus where his maktāb was and in the time of the pilgrimage he came to Medina. However after the pilgrimage he did not return to Damascus and began to live in Medina. When he saw that the buildings reached to Salī’s request ʿUthmān for permission to leave Medina for Damascus. According to the second narrative Caliph ʿUthmān heard that Abū Dharr said “ʿUthmān has changed the Sunna of the Prophet and the policy of the previous two caliphs.” Because of this, he sent him as an exile to Damascus, near Muʿāwiya. According to the third narrative quoted by al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956), Abū Dharr went to Damascus,


4Abū Dharr was recorded at Diwān al-Šām.


because Caliph ʿUthmān posed a question in a gathering, which Kaʿb al-Akhbār (d. 32/652-53) attended, asking whether anyone else has the right to the property of a person who gives alms. Kaʿb expressed the opinion that no one had has this right. The Caliph posed another question asking whether it is lawful to spend funds from bayt al-māl for themselves. Kaʿb replied that there is nothing wrong with that. Abū Dharr became enraged because of these responses and struck his chest while raising his stick. His words are recorded: “Oh son of a Jew! What leads you to talk about our religion?” ʿUthmān who was uncomfortable due to these words reacted against him and said “Oh Abū Dharr! How much are you paining us? Get out of my sight.” Because of the Caliph’s attitude, Abū Dharr left for Damascus.8

Considering these narratives, it is clear that Abū Dharr joined the conquests in Syria and, after some time, returned to Medina for pilgrimage. He stayed in Medina for a while and when he saw that the buildings in Medina reached the foot of Salī, he asked ʿUthmān for permission to leave Medina for Damascus because the Prophet had told him to do so.9 In fact, according to the account that is mentioned in al-Mustadrak and accepted as authentic (ṣaḥīḥ), Umm Dharr, Abū Dharr’s wife, said that ʿUthmān did not exile Abū Dharr; rather he left Medina and went to Damascus on the advice of the Prophet.10 Furthermore after Abū Dharr came to Medina from Damascus, he asked

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9 Also Rihan says, Abū Dharr spent his time mostly in Syria and in Egypt under the Caliphate of ʿUmar (13-23 AH). He came back for a short period to Medina on ʿUthmān’s accession to power. He, however, did not remain there for long and asked the caliph to let him to go to Damascus. See Mohammad Rihan, The Politics and Culture of an Umayyad Tribe: Conflict and Factionalism in the Early Islamic Period (London & New York, NY: I. B. Tauris, 2014), 147-148.


II

After Abû Dharr returned from Medina to Damascus, he criticized Muʿāwiya as well as the Muslims who hoarded surplus wealth and did not spend it in the way of Allah. In his criticisms he recited a verse (34) from surât al-Tawba as evidence.\footnote{“O you, who believe! Lo! Many of the (Jewish) rabbis and the (Christian) monks devout the wealth of mankind wantonly and debar (men) from the way of Allah. They who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, unto them give tidings (O Muḥammad) of a painful doom.” According to al-Ṭabarî, this verse is both of particular and of general application. It is of particular application to those Muslims who do not pay the poor-rate on their property and to Jews and Christians who are infidels; see al-Ṭabarî, Jâmî‘ al-bayân ‘an ta‘wil ây al-Qur‘ân (Beirut: Dâr al-Fikr, 1984), IX, 117-122. Al-Râzî however, as Cameron says, mentioned three cases: this verse alludes to rabbis and monks, b) to those Muslims who were niggardly with regard to the poor-rate, and c) to all those who hoarded wealth and did not produce the impost whether they were rabbis, monks, or Muslims; see Abû ʿAbd Allâh Fakhr al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Râzî, Taṣîr al-Fakhr al-Râzî al-mushabbar bi-l-Taṣîr al-kabîr wa-Mafâtîḥ al-ghbayb (Beirut: Dâr al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1990), XVI, 36; also see Alan John Cameron, Abû Dharr al-Ghifârî: An Examination of His Image in the Hagiography of Islam (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1982), 73-74.} His views attracted attention from poor people and those who opposed the government. Therefore an opposition movement began against the government and the rich. After this Abû Dharr fell out with Muʿāwiya. Historical sources provide narratives about Muʿāwiya sending Abû Dharr from Damascus to Medina. Al-Ṭabarî (d. 310/923) said that many things have been recorded about why he sent him into exile and most of which he is unwilling to mention. After making this statement, al-Ṭabarî cited an account by Sayf ibn ʿUmar. Accordingly, when ʿAbd Allâh ibn Saba\footnote{ʿAbd Allâh ibn Saba’ also was called Ibn al-Sawdâ’, Ibn Ḥarb, and Ibn Wahb.} came to Damascus he met\footnote{Abû Dharr and said, “Abû...}
Dharr, are you surprised by Muʿāwiya saying `the public money is God’s property (al-māl māl Allāh)?’ No doubt, everything belongs

However, it is not clear whether he was a real personality. Sayf ibn ʿUmar, one of al-Ṭabarî’s sources, was the chief authority for Ibn Saba’’s political activity against Caliph ʿUthmān; see M. G. Hodgson, “ʿAbd Allāh b. Saba’,” The Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition, I, 51. Without entering debates on the historical existence of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saba’, I refer to Yûsuf al-ʿIshsh’s substantial findings on the main narratives related to the events of fitna which occurred in the time of Caliph ʿUthmān and ʿAlī. The reports regarding these events have reached us mainly through three narrators, Abū Mikhnaφ, al-Wâqīdī, and Sayf ibn ʿUmar. Although these three narrators transmitted the same events, there are significant differences in their reports. In addition they have been criticized by muḥaddībūn. Because of this, al-ʿIshsh says that these narratives must be compared with other reliable reports that mention the same events to decide which is true. For this purpose he identified three reports narrated by eyewitnesses of the events. These reports belong to Abū Usayd al-Anṣārī’s mawâla Abû Saʿīd, ʿAlīn ibn Qays, and Abū Khunays Sahm al-Azdī. Finally, he compared these reports with three other narratives and concluded that the narratives by Sayf ibn ʿUmar point in the same direction of these three reliable reports. For more information see Yûsuf al-ʿIshsh, al-Dawla al-Umawiyya wa-l-āṣdâb allati sabaqyab wa-mabbadat labā ihtidā “min fitnat ʿUthmān” (2nd edn., Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1985), 33-40, 65 ff. It must be noted that some scholars who consider the differences between the historical narratives and ḥadīths, state that Sayf is an authority and inmān on history; see al-Dhahabi, Mizān al-ʾitidāl fi naqḍ al-rijāl (ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Ǧīwāṭ; Beirut: Dār al-ʿArbaʿ, 1963), II, 255; Abū l-Faḍl Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAṣqālānī, Taqrib al-Tabdhīb (ed. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ʿAbd al-Laṭīf; 2nd edn., Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifā, 1975), I, 344. Also see Faydā, “Seyf b. ʿOmer,” Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (Dİ), XXXVII, 37.


Wilferd Madelung has connected, as Sean W. Anthony states, the term māl Allāh with the caliphal title khalīfat Allāh, see Madelung, The Succession to Muhammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 84. Anthony criticizes two aspects of Madelung’s argument. The first one is that this term is redolent of the events that occurred in al-Kūfah, particularly Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ’ declaration of Sawwād and ʿUthmān’s expression to ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd about bayt al-māl. The second is that this articulation of māl Allāh, which is attributed to Ibn al-Sawwād, appears only in Sayf’s narrative about Abū Dharr; see Sean W. Anthony, The Caliph and the Heretic: Ibn Saba’ and the Origins of Shiʿism (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2012), 56, also fn. 130. Madelung’s
to God. But he intends to seize it for himself by the exclusion of Muslims and to delete the Muslims’ names from the fiscal registers.” Abū Dharr came to Muʿāwiya and said, “What leads you to use the term ‘God’s property’ for the public money of the Muslims?” Muʿāwiya responded “God be merciful to you Abū Dharr. Are we not God’s slaves, the public money His property, the created world His creation and public authority His authority?” Abū Dharr said, “Do not use this expression.” Muʿāwiya said “Indeed, I do not say that the public money does not belong to God, but I shall call it ‘the property of the Muslims.’” After that Abū Dharr continued to warn the rich to aid the poor people and said “There will be branding irons from a fire to those who treasure up gold and silver and do not expend them in the way of God, and with this iron their foreheads, sides, and backs shall be branded.” Because of his words, the poor people were angry at the rich and they remained in a difficult situation. The rich people who were uncomfortable, came to Muʿāwiya and reported their discomforts. Muʿāwiya reported to ʿUthmān that Abū Dharr rendered him helpless. ʿUthmān wrote to him in response: “Verily, dissonance (fitna) has protruded its snout and eyes and poised to jump. Do not scrape the scab, but rather dispatch Abū Dharr to me. Send a guide along with him, give him adequate provisions, and treat him gently. Restrain the people and yourself as far as you can, for you will keep control of affairs only so long as you keep control of yourself.” Thus, Muʿāwiya sent Abū Dharr with a guide to Medina.16

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16 Al-Ṭabarî, Tārikh, IV, 283-284; The History of al-Ṭabarî, XV, 64-65; also see Abū l-Ḥasan ʿIzz al-Dīn ʿAli ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karîm Ibn al-Aṯīr, al-Kāmil fi l-tārikh (ed. C. Johannes Tornberg; Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1965), III, 114-115. Hishām Jaʿīt argues, without justification, that this narrative by Sayf ibn ʿUmar cannot be accepted; see his al-Fīna: Jadaliyyat al-dīn wa-l-siyāsa fī l-Īslām al-mubakkir (4th edn., Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalīʿa, 2000), 75, fn. 1. Mahmut Kelpetin evaluated this narrative in a different way and criticized Sayf ibn ʿUmar by arguing that in this narrative it is meant to be explained that Abū Dharr in point of fact did not think about the subject like this. Abū Dharr influenced by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saba, criticized first Muʿāwiya and then Caliph ʿUthmān. In continuation of his remark, Kelpetin claimed that the reason that impelled Sayf to such a depiction was that Abū Dharr had been exiled; see his Hulefā-yi Rāṣidīn Dönemi Taribi: Seyf b. Əmer ve Tarihibçiliği (İstanbul: Siyer Yayınları, 2012), 250. However, Ahmet Güzel
Before addressing the events that occurred after Abū Dharr had arrived in Medina, I will note other narratives that mentioned different events that caused him to be sent to Medina. Mu‘āwiya built a palace in Damascus, which was called al-Khadra. Abū Dharr criticized him by saying that if it was built with public money it was betrayal and if it was built with his own money it was a waste. His criticism against Mu‘āwiya continued. Ḥabīb ibn Maslama17 (d. 42/662) came to Mu‘āwiya and informed him that Abū Dharr was inciting the populace of Damascus against him. He recommended that Mu‘āwiya exile Abū Dharr and his family if necessary. Mu‘āwiya wrote a letter to ʿUthmān and said that he wanted to dispatch Abū Dharr to Medina. ʿUthmān accepted his offer and ordered Mu‘āwiya to convey him to Medina [in contrast to the previous narrative] on the roughest mount.18 It was also reported by al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 292/905) that Abū Dharr was sent to Medina for another reason. Abū Dharr used to sit in the mosque and went on to make the previously reported statements. People crowded around in growing numbers to hear him. Furthermore he stood at the door of Damascus when he prayed the morning

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17 Ḥabīb ibn Maslama, born in Mecca in 610 or 620 AD, was a companion of the Prophet. He joined the conquest of Syria and distinguished himself in the fights against the Byzantines. By order of Mu‘āwiya, he conquered Armenia in 22/642. He was one of the persons whom Mu‘āwiya consulted, and was a brave commander. After ʿUthmān’s death, he supported Mu‘āwiya against ʿĀli. He was appointed as a governor of Armenia in 41/661 and died there in 42/662; see Asrı Çubukçu, “Ḥabīb b. Meslemi,” Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA), XIV, 372-373. Fück has argued that he was not a companion of the Prophet; see J. W. Fück, “Ḥabīb b. Maslama,” The Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition, III, 12.

prayer and said: “The train carrying the fire came. God may curse those who advise good but they themselves avoid it, and those who desist others from evil but they themselves act upon it.” Mu‘āwiya wrote to ʿUthmān, saying, “You have incited Damascus against yourself through Abū Dharr.” ʿUthmān wrote back telling him to set Abū Dharr on a packsaddle without a cover and send him to Medina.\(^1^9\)

When Abū Dharr reached Medina, he entered ʿUthmān’s presence, and ʿUthmān said “O Abū Dharr, why are the Syrians complaining about your sharp tongue?” Abū Dharr described what had happened. ʿUthmān explained his policy of not forcing people to be ascetics, rather he was required to invoke them to care about God’s commandments and to follow the path of moderation. Abū Dharr then asked permission to leave Medina. ʿUthmān replied that if he wanted, he could stay in a place close to there. But Abū Dharr said that the Prophet commanded him to leave Medina when the buildings reached Sal̲h. ʿUthmān replied that it would be good to do as the Prophet commanded him. Abū Dharr settled in al-Rabadha and Caliph ʿUthmān gave him a small herd of camels and two slaves, and instructed him to come to Medina occasionally to avoid getting used to the customs of Bedouins.\(^2^0\)

In the conversation mentioned above, ʿUthmān explained as a caliph his limits of power in matters of financial skill. As Aḥmad Jawdat Pasha (d. 1895) says, although ʿUthmān was a caliph; he did not have

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\(^1^9\) Al-Ya‘qūbī, Tārīkh, II, 171-172.

\(^2^0\) Al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh, IV, 284; The History of al-Ṭabarī, XV, 6566; also see Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, III, 115. Keaney has argued that this narrative is the typical Sayf account in which ʿUthmān is portrayed as an ideal ruler, responding promptly and wisely to complaints in the provinces and trying to find a just solution. In continuation of her remark, she claims “Sayf thus brings a faḍā’il sensibility of ʿUthmān and key companions to bear on issues of political policy. While the ruler is not shown exercising religious authority, there is no tension in Sayf between politics and piety, between secular and sacred authority. While this was the ideal believed to have been modeled by Muḥammad, by the third/ninth century, the situation in practice was very different.” See Heather N. Keaney, Medieval Islamic Historiography: Remembering Rebellion (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 38. Keaney’s approach, which attempts to interpret Sayf’s account on the basis of two modern concepts, secular and sacred, is dispositive because it is unfeasible to evaluate the early era of Islamic history with such concepts, particularly, if there is no hint of religious and political distinction in the state administration. Additionally, there is no doubt that this point of view would bring about anachronism.
the authority to distribute the surplus wealth that was in the hands of the rich Muslims giving their alms. Because they gave their alms, they could acquire possessions.\(^{21}\)

In the historical sources other accounts were also narrated about Abū Dharr going to al-Rabadha on his own request. The reliable account on this subject is reported by Zayd ibn Wahb (d. 83/702). According to this narrative, Zayd ibn Wahb went through al-Rabadha and encountered Abū Dharr. He asked what had moved him to settle there and Abū Dharr replied that when he was in Damascus, he recited a verse (34) from sūrat al-Tawba. Muʿāwiya argued that it did not concern Muslims but rather Jews and Christians. However Abū Dharr declared that it was revealed concerning Muslims as well as Jews and Christians. Muʿāwiya then wrote to ʿUthmān complaining about him, so the Caliph wrote to Abū Dharr to come to Medina. When Abū Dharr arrived in Medina, the people gathered around him as if they had never seen him before. Abū Dharr explained to ʿUthmān what had happened between him and Muʿāwiya. Upon this, ʿUthmān told him that if he so wished he could relocate to a spot where he would be a neighbor. Zayd ibn Wahb said “That is what moved Abū Dharr to settle in al-Rabadha.” At the end of the narrative Abū Dharr says that if an Abyssinian were to be invested with authority he would hear and obey him.\(^ {22}\) Ibn Ḥajar, the commentator of al-Bukhārī, said of the narrative by Zayd ibn Wahb that although ʿUthmān had wanted Abū Dharr to leave Medina out of fear of the spread of fitna, Abū Dharr went to al-Rabadha on his own request.\(^ {23}\) Al-Qaṣṭallānī, another shārīf of al-Bukhārī, said that some people condemned ʿUthmān because he sent Abū Dharr into exile. Zayd ibn Wahb asked Abū Dharr about this matter and Abū Dharr explained what happened. Accordingly, al-Qaṣṭallānī mentioned that Muʿāwiya’s soldiers tended to Abū Dharr, and that Muʿāwiya was afraid of conflict between the Muslims. ʿUthmān also feared the people of Medina as much as

\(^{21}\) Ahmad Jawdat Pasha, *Kisâ-i Eubiyâ ve Tevârîb-i Hulefâ* (İstanbul: Bedir Yayınları, 1966), I, 455; also see Ādem Apak, *Hz. Osman Dönemi Devlet Siyaseti* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2003), 156.


Mu‘āwiya had feared the people of Damascus. Because of this, Abū Dharr went to al-Rabadha on his own choice.²⁴

Although there are alternative narratives mentioned by al-Ya‘qūbī, al-Baladhurī, Ibn A’tham, and al-Mas‘ūdī that have many irreconcilable contrasts with the account by Zayd ibn Wahb al-Juhañ, the latter should be superior to others in terms of three aspects: (1) Zayd ibn Wahb is an eyewitness and one of the main sources of these events. Because he met with Abū Dharr in al-Rabadha and talked with him about the matter, then narrated what occurred between Abū Dharr and Caliph ʿUthmān and why and how Abū Dharr came to Medina and then departed from Medina to al-Rabadha. (2) There are other reliable accounts that have parallels with Zayd’s account. For instance, according to the narrative by Muḥammad ibn Sirin,²⁵ after Abū Dharr came to Medina, he warned ʿUthmān as he had warned Mu‘āwiya in Damascus. However, when Abū Dharr saw that ʿUthmān did not incline to him, he went to al-Rabadha on his own request, and Mu‘āwiya sent his household after him.²⁶ It is also narrated by ʿAbd al-Allāh ibn al-Ṣāmit,²⁷ Abū Dharr’s nephew, that Abū Dharr himself asked ʿUthmān to allow him stay in al-Rabadha.²⁸ Ibn Shabba (d. 262/876) mentioned that al-Ḥasan al-Ǧaṣrī (d. 110/728) was asked if Abū Dharr was exiled by ʿUthmān, and he replied “No, God forbid! (Lā maʿādh Allāh).”²⁹ (3) Zayd ibn Wahb, who converted to Islam during the lifetime of the Prophet (although he never met him), was prominent among the ṭabīʿīn (successors). He has been accepted as ṭbiqa (trustworthy) and reported many ḥadīths from some of the

²⁵ Muḥammad ibn Sirin, mawla of Anas ibn Mālik, has been accepted as ṭbiqa (trustworthy). He had narrated from some of the saḥāba such as Abū Hurayra and ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar. Al-Shaʿbī and Qatāda also narrated from him; see Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā, VII, 193; Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, al-Tārikh al-kabīr (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1986), I, 90.
²⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, Tārikh, IV, 284-285; The History of al-Ṭabarī, XV, 67.
²⁷ He is from the ṭabīʿīn and has been accepted as ṭbiqa; see al-Bukhārī, al-Tārikh al-kabīr, V, 118; al-ʿIlī, Maʿrifat al-ṭbiqā, II, 38.
ṣahāba such as ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, and ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.\textsuperscript{30}

This account by Zayd ibn Wahb is also accepted as reliable by modern scholars. For instance, Cameron mentions that the earliest available and reliable account on this subject is narrated by Zayd ibn Wahb, who tells us, quite briefly, that Abū Dharr settled in al-Rabadha because of a difference of opinion with Muʿāwiya on the interpretation of verse 34 of sūrat al-Tawba.\textsuperscript{31} Cameron also explained his contention that Abū Dharr's controversy was with the whole class of those who secularized the theocracy of Islam and that due to the failure of his preaching he withdrew from Damascus to Medina and thence to al-Rabadha.\textsuperscript{32} According to Amḥazūn, this narrative is the most reliable account among those about Abū Dharr going to al-Rabadha.\textsuperscript{33} Considering this narrative, Yiğit states that Abū Dharr had been sent by Caliph ʿUthmān to al-Rabadha on his own request.\textsuperscript{34} However, Aydınlı argues that Caliph ʿUthmān chose al-Rabadha, because of its solitude and because some acquaintances of Abū Dharr were living there. It cannot be determined, however, who made this decision about Abū Dharr going to al-Rabadha.\textsuperscript{35}

In contrast to the narratives above, there are some accounts about Abū Dharr being sent by Caliph ʿUthmān to al-Rabadha as an exile. According to the narrative by al-Yaʿqūbī, when Abū Dharr arrived in


\textsuperscript{31} Cameron, \textit{Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī}, 64, 66.

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Ibid.}, 115.

\textsuperscript{33} Muḥammas Amḥazūn, \textit{Tahqīq mawāqif al-ṣahāba fī l-fītna min riwāyāt al-Imām al-Ṭabarānī wa-l-muḥaddithīn} (Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 2007), 330.


\textsuperscript{35} ʿAbdullah Aydınlı, “Ebû Zer el-Gifārī,” \textit{Türkiyeye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)}, X, 267. Jobson, without making any preference, has indicated that Abû Dharr retired or was sent to al-Rabadha where he died in 32/652-653 or 31; see J. Jobson, “Abû Dharr al-Ghifārī,” \textit{The Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition}, I, 114. The opinion of Güzêl, however, is similar to that of Aydınlı; he argues that al-Rabadha was chosen by Abû Dharr; see “Muâviye ve Hz. Osman’a Muḥalefeti Ekseninde Ebû Zerr al-Ĝifārī,” 52-54.
Medina, he said that the Prophet Muḥammad, in warning the people of the malicious rule of the Umayyads, said, “When the children of Abū l-‘Āṣ reach the number of thirty, they make the Islamic treasury as their own and the servants of God as their slaves.” ʿUthmān said that he had heard that Abū Dharr narrated this hadīth. Abū Dharr replied that he heard the Prophet saying it. Upon this, ʿUthmān asked ʿAli ibn Abī Ṭālib whether he had heard the Prophet say what Abū Dharr narrated. ʿAli replied in the affirmative and said that according to the word of the Prophet, greenery (al-khāḍrā) never shaded and earth never bore a man more upright than Abū Dharr. After this conversation Abū Dharr stayed a few days in Medina until ʿUthmān commanded him to leave Medina. Upon this, Abū Dharr asked the Caliph whether he would expel him from the sacred city of the Prophet. ʿUthmān replied that he would. So, Abū Dharr countered by saying that he would go to Mecca. The Caliph rejected this, and Abū Dharr said “To al-Baṣra.” However ʿUthmān replied “No,” so he said “To al-Kūfa.” Again ʿUthmān did not accept and replied, “I send you to al-Rabadha where you came from and where you will die.” He then commanded his cousin Marwān to take him off.36

36 Al-Yaʿqūbī, Tārīkh, II, 171-172; also see al-Balādhurī, Ansāb, V, 54; Ibn Aʿtham, Kitāb al-futūḥ, I, 374-375; al-Masʿūdī, Murūj al-dhabab, II, 349-350. This narrative related to the Umayyads is mentioned in some sources. Al-Dhahabī said that it was muniqtiʿ (disconnected), see al-Ḥākim al-Nisābūrī, al-Mustadrak, IV, 647. Cameron associates Abū Dharr’s request to go to al-Kūfa with ʿAli’s residence there; see Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī, 87. In some narratives, it is said that Abū Dharr was subjected to ill-treatment by Marwān and a quarrel occurred between ʿAli ibn Abī Ṭālib and Marwān. Accordingly, ʿUthmān told Marwān to lead Abū Dharr away and ordered him not to let him talk to anyone. After they left there, ʿAli ibn Abī Ṭālib and his two sons as well as ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar and ʿAmmār ibn Yāsir went out with him. Abū Dharr went up to ʿAli, kissed his hand and wept, saying that when he saw him and his son, he was reminded of the saying of the Prophet, and that he could not be patient and wept. ʿAli also spoke to him, but Marwān tried to prevent him by saying that the Commander of the Faithful had forbidden anyone to speak to Abū Dharr. Thereupon ʿAli raised his whip and struck Marwān’s camel in the face saying “Get out of my sight! May God cast you into the fire!” Then ʿAli escorted Abū Dharr. Because of this matter, the relations between ʿUthmān and ʿAli became strained; see al-Yaʿqūbī, Tārīkh, II, 171-172; al-Balādhurī, Ansāb, V, 54; Ibn Aʿtham, Kitāb al-futūḥ, I, 376; al-Masʿūdī, Murūj al-dhabab, II, 350. Vaglieri, based on this narrative, has argued that when Abū Dharr was exiled from Medina because of ʿAli’s salutation to Abū Dharr in spite of ʿUthmān’s prohibition, a violent dispute occurred between ʿAli and ʿUthmān;
As Millīm rightly argues, this narrative reflects al-Ya‘qūbī’s negative approach against Caliph ʿUthman and the Umayyads. Al-Ya‘qūbī tried to confirm the word of the Prophet about the Umayyads, which he based on Abū Dharr, with the ḥadīth in which the Prophet praises Abū Dharr.\(^{37}\) In this point it should be kept in mind that a number of reports were narrated both in favor of the Umayyads and against them, and that most of them were fabricated due to political events.\(^{38}\)

It is also said that when Abū Dharr reached Medina, he began criticizing ʿUthmān because he appointed some people in governmental affairs, who did not reach the age of maturity,\(^{39}\) because of his establishment of state land (ḥimā)\(^{40}\) and because of creation of close ties with al-ṭulaqā.\(^{41}\) Due to his criticism, ʿUthmān ordered him to leave the city. Thereupon Abū Dharr said, “To Mecca.” ʿUthmān replied, “No”. So he said, “To Jerusalem.” Again ʿUthmān did not accept. So Abū Dharr said “To one of two cities [al-Kūfah or al- Başra].” ʿUthmān

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38 For further information concerning this kind of narratives, see İrfan Aycan, Sultanata Giden Yolda Muaviye bin Ebi Sufyan (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2001), 34-45; also see Apak, Hz. Osman Dönemi Devlet Siyaseti, 156.

39 The reason of Abū Dharr’s criticism was that although Marwān was under age, ʿUthmān appointed him as kāthib. Thus when he was the Caliph’s kāthib, he should be in his twenties; see Aycan, “Mervân I,” Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA), XXIX, 225.

40 The ḥimā is the land that is open to everyone for grazing of animals, and that is prohibited to appropriate of property; see Abū ʿl-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb al-Māwardi, al-ʿAḥkām al-sulṭāniyya wa-l-wilāyiyy al-diniyya (ed. Aḥmad Mubārak al-Baghdādi; Kuwait: Dār Ibn Qutayba, 1989), 242. The institution dates back to the pre-Islamic Arab society. To protect their flocks from the ill-effects of drought, the powerful nomadic lords used to reserve to themselves the grazing and watering rights in certain rich pasturages. For more information see J. Chelhod, “Ḥimā,” The Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition, III, 393; Mustafa Demirci, İslâmın İlk Üç Asrunda Toprak Sistemi (İstanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları, 2005), 174-186.

41 Al-ṭulaqā was the name given to people who became Muslim after the conquest of Mecca and were not treated as captives; see Abū l-Fadl Ibn Manẓūr ibn Mukarram Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Anṣārī al-Miṣrī, Lisān al-‘Arab (Beirut: Dār Şādir, 1955-1956), “ṭlq” s.v.; al-Ṭabari, Tārikh, III, 61.
replied, “I exile you to al-Rabadha.” which he eventually did. Abū Dharr lived in al-Rabadha until he died. 42

Madelung argues on the basis of the narrative by al-Balādhūrī that ʿUthmān ordered Abū Dharr to be sent to Medina by Muʿāwiya and, as Abū Dharr continued his ‘agitation,’ he was exiled to al-Rabadha in the desert. 43 Balcī has mentioned almost all narratives without making any distinction between them and asserts that the true essence of Abū Dharr going to al-Rabadha is not clear. However, he claims that according to the flow of events, Abū Dharr was forced to leave the city and he had let this decision pass unchallenged because he knew himself as a person who caused fitna. 44 Jabali did not comment on other narratives, but considering the narrative by Ibn Aṭham he argues that this exile was one of ʿUthmān’s policies and seems to indicate that it was ʿUthmān who forced Abū Dharr to leave Medina and that it was ʿUthmān who sent him into exile outside the city. 45

42 Al-Baladhrī, Ansāb, V, 52-53. It is also narrated in Ansāb al-ashrāf that when Abū Dharr came to Medina from Damascus, ʿUthmān said to him that it was better for him that they stay together than remain apart ʿUthmān also gave him some milch camels. However, Abū Dharr said that he had no need of this and he went al-Rabadha and died there.

43 Madelung mentions that the Küfan and Başran traditions mostly affirm that Abū Dharr was exiled by ʿUthmān against his own will. As for the Medinan tradition, it was divided into the Sunnī and the Shiʿī. According to the former, the Sunnī, Abū Dharr went voluntarily. According to the second, the Shiʿī tradition, which is the tradition of al-Waqidi, he was exiled by ʿUthmān against his will; see Madelung, The Succession to Muhammed, 84, fn. 24. Madelung has also argued that ʿUthmān mistreated Abū Dharr arrogantly as well as ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd and ʿAmmār ibn Yāṣir; see ibid., 87. If his relied upon account which is narrated by al-Baladhrī from al-Waqidi, is taken into consideration, it is understood that he prefers the Shiʿī tradition of Medina.


III

Lastly, we would like to note some other narratives with doubtful reliability. These narratives note that some prominent ṣaḥābā such as ʿAlī ibn ʿAbī Ṭālib and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf criticized ʿUthmān due to his policy on Abū Dharr. According to a narrative by al-Balādhurī, after Abū Dharr had died in al-Rabadha, ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib went to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf and accused him by saying that he had elected ʿUthmān as a caliph. Thereupon ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf replied, “O ʿAlī! If you want take your sword I will also take my sword. Because ʿUthmān did not keep his promise he had given me.” After that, he expressed his deep remorse in choosing ʿUthmān as a caliph.⁴⁶

As mentioned above, after Abū Dharr died in al-Rabadha, ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib held ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf responsible for this event. Despite this ʿAlī did not react to him when Abū Dharr was “exiled” to al-Rabadha. Therefore, a reaction of ʿAlī to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān after two or three years is not plausible. Furthermore there is no account, except the narrative by al-Balādhurī that mentions ʿAbd al-Raḥmān’s criticism of ʿUthmān on Abū Dharr’s death in al-Rabadha. His words, which are related to taking his sword, are narrated on other events. For instance in a narrative by Ibn Aʿtham⁴⁷ ʿAbd al-Raḥmān used the same expressions when he criticized ʿUthmān because of his donation from bayt al-māl to his close relatives. Therefore this situation casts a shadow on the reliability of this narrative.⁴⁸ The existence of some accounts noting that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān had died earlier than Abū Dharr increases the doubts about this narrative.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Al-Balādhurī, Ansāb, V, 57. In this passage ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf allegedly refers to the question he posed to ʿUthmān before his election of caliph. In the shūrā council appointed by Caliph ʿUmar, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf asked, “Will you give me your oath based on the Qurʾān, the practice of his Prophet and the deeds of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.” ʿUthmān replied, “Yes indeed.”

⁴⁷ Ibn Aʿtham, Kitāb al-futūḥ, I, 371.

⁴⁸ For the narratives about Caliph ʿUthmān’s donation to his close relatives and assessment of them see Millḥim, al-Muʿārrikhūn al-ʿArab, 96 ff.

⁴⁹ According to an account by Ibn ʿAsākir, Abū Dharr came to ʿUthmān one day and the inheritance that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān had left at his demise, was being distributed by ʿUthmān. Caliph ʿUthmān said to Kaʿb al-Akhbār, “O Abū Ishāq! Do you see the goods which are given its alms? Shall the owner [ʿAbd al-Raḥmān] be accountable for these goods?” Kaʿb confirmed that which the Caliph had said. Thereupon Abū Dharr raised his stick and struck Kaʿb’s head while saying to him
IV

When the accounts above are considered together, it is understood that the matter of whether Abū Dharr went to al-Rabadha on his own request or by exile is very controversial. Nonetheless three main points must be noted about the narratives regarding the matter: The first is that these accounts can be divided into three main groups: Abū Mikhnaf Lūṭ ibn Yaḥyā (d. 157/773-774), Sayf ibn ʿUmar (d. 180/774), and Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823). The books of these historians, akhbāriyyūn, have been largely lost but they have reached us from the next generation of historians such as al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Balādhrī, and al-Ṭabarī. Here it must be noted that Sayf’s accounts were narrated only by al-Ṭabarī, and that although al-Balādhrī narrated from Sayf in Futūḥ al-buldān, he ignored his accounts about incidents of the fitna in Ansāb al-ashrāf. Sayf, unlike the others, did not implicate the saḥaba in the events of fitna and defended the caliphate of ʿUthmān. Furthermore, he emphasized the unity of Islamic umma. The reason for al-Ṭabarī’s choice is derived from his approach to the events; his viewpoint has parallels with that of Sayf. The best example of this can be seen in his expression “many things have been recorded as to why he sent him into exile, most of which I am loathe to mention.” As for other historians, if al-Yaʿqūbī who did not disclose his sources regarding the events of fitna, is excluded, al-Balādhrī, Ibn Aḥam, and al-Masʿūdī, a later historian who apparently benefited from al-Yaʿqūbī and al-Balādhrī, come to the forefront. A common feature of these historians is that their accounts mainly follow the tradition of al-Wāqidī and Abū Mikhnaf who were pro-Shiʿite. This aspect is clearly understood through the ac-

“Son of a Jew! Do you think that he will not be accountable because of his goods of which he had paid its alms?” He then recited some verses to him; see Ibn ʿAsākir, Tārīkh, LXVI, 197; also see Ibn Shabbā, Tārīkh, III, 1036-1037; al-Dhahabī, Tārīkh al-Islām, 411.

50 al-Balādhrī, Futūḥ, 354, 431.

counts of the period of *fitna*, which are narrated by them. In fact, according to these narratives Abū Dharr is always represented as a *ṣaḥābi* protesting the “corruption” of ʿUthmān’s regime and calling for a restoration of the ascetic piety and social equality of the community. It must be emphasized that a general characteristic of these accounts is that ʿAlī has an important and positive role in the events, and he is reflected as a companion who supported the Caliph ʿUthmān despite his many mistakes and who interceded on Abū Dharr’s behalf.

The second is that the text which Sayf provided is most coherent one. As for the other narratives, Abū Dharr was exiled to Damascus as well as al-Rabadha. However within the framework of narratives, the matter that cannot be resolved is that the same reasons are associated with both his exile to Damascus and to al-Rabadha. Additionally, in these accounts, different justifications have been argued about Abū Dharr’s exile to al-Rabadha, so they have contradictions. Therefore this case weakens the reliability of the accounts and renders the subject incomprehensible.

The third is that some contemporary scholars, such as al-Ghabbân and Amḥazūn, have found that the *insnād* of the narratives by Ibn Saʿd, al-Bukhārī, and al-Ṭabarī much more reliable than others. As a result, if all of these are taken into account it is clear that Abū Dharr went to al-Rabadha on his own request.

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