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Abdülkadir Özcan

al-Mughīriyya

The Mughīriyya were originally the followers of al-Mughīra b. Sa'īd (d. 119/ 737), a prominent leader among the Kufan Shī'ī ghulāt (transgressives) of the early second/eighth century. Al-Mughīra is often described as a blind sorcerer or magician of some kind, purveying enchantments and sleights of hand (al-Ash'arī, 7; al-Dhahabī, 6:490; Ibn Abī I-Ḥadīd 8:121; al-Kashshī, 225; al-Ṭabarī, 2:1619-20). However, he presented himself as a prophet who possessed knowledge of the unseen and the true esoteric interpretation of the Qur'an (al-Ash'arī, 6-7; Pseudo-al-Nāshi', 41; al-Nawbakhtī, 55). He also claimed he could communicate with the dead and, according to some sources, even raise them to life through the power of God's "Greatest Name" (al-ism al-a'zam; Abū Tammām, 69-70; al-Ash'arī, 7; al-Ṭabarī, 2:1619), although

he may have attributed the latter power to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (al-Dhahabī, 6:491; Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, 8:121; Ibn Qutayba, 'Uyūn, 2:149).

Mughīra was a mawlā (non-Arab client) of the Bajīla tribe (al-Balādhurī, 2:496; Ibn Qutayba, *Uyūn*, 2:147, 149; al-Jāḥiz, 2:267, 6:390). He is sometimes even construed specifically as a mawlā of his eventual executioner, the Umayyad governor Khālid b. 'Abdallāh al-Qasrī (d. 126/743)—Qasr being a clan of the Bajīla (Pseudo-al-Nāshi', 46; al-Nawbakhtī, 55). It is likely a misreading of al-Bajalī as al-Tili (as the two are similar in unpointed Arabic script) in a common source probably Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī's (d. 319/ 931) Maqālāt firaq ahl al-qibla ("The doctrines of the factions of the people of the qibla [the direction towards which Muslims pray]")—that leads one stream of later heresiographical works to suggest he was a member of the 'Ijl clan (for example, Abū Tammām, 68; al-Baghdādī, 238; al-Ḥimyarī, 222; al-Shahrastānī, 134). Although there are several reports of meetings between al-Mughīra and the Kufan hadīth scholar Abū 'Amr al-Sha'bī (d. between 103/721 and 110/728), it is doubtful he was ever considered the latter's student (al-Balādhurī, 6b:179; al-Dhahabī, 6:490; al-Fasawī, 2:581-2).

The sources agree that al-Mughīra was executed in 119/737, but their accounts of this are inconsistent. One cluster of reports has it that he was killed alongside six or seven followers, often together with Bayān b. Sim'ān, another ghulāt leader. Here we find them burned alive in a dramatic scene watched over by Khālid in the Great Mosque of Kufa (al-Dhahabī, 6:491-2; Ibn Ḥazm, 5:44; al-Ṭabarī, 2:1620). Other reports claim al-Mughīra was killed, and his corpse was crucified