

AL-MADĀ'INĪ AND THE NARRATIVES OF THE 'ABBĀSID DAWLA

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This is a study on the Arabic historical narratives of the 'Abbāsīd revolution and its aftermath that occurred in 747–755 CE. Its main focus is a medieval work on these events, called the *Kitāb al-Dawla*, composed by an Arabic Muslim collector and composer of historical narratives, Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Madā'inī (d. c.228/842–843). The work is not extant, but its skeleton can be reconstructed on the basis of later quotations of it. Al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* is an important source for the events of the the 'Abbāsīd revolution: since al-Madā'inī was not directly sponsored by the 'Abbāsīd dynasty, he was not constrained to be a spokesperson for the ruling house's propaganda needs.

INTRODUCTION

This is a study on the narratives of the 'Abbāsīd revolution and its aftermath that took place in 129–137/747–755.¹ Its main focus is a medieval work on these events, called the *Kitāb al-Dawla*, composed by an Arabic Muslim *akhbārī*, collector and composer of historical narratives, Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Madā'inī (d. c.228/842–843). The work is not extant, but can be reconstructed, to some extent, on the basis of later quotations of it. A detailed discussion of the reconstruction forms Appendix I of this study. Appendix I should be read only by those who are really interested in the question of reconstructing lost works and how the later authors quoting the *Kitāb al-Dawla* reworked the accounts. The reader who is more interested in general questions about the historiography of the 'Abbāsīd revolution can refer to it only when needed.

I have previously published two articles that deal with al-Madā'inī and the 'Abbāsīd revolution and that supplement the current study (Lindstedt 2013; 2014). In the study at hand, my aim is to discuss and analyze the narratives of the 'Abbāsīd revolution in two lost works (by al-Madā'inī and al-Haytham b. 'Adī) that can be reconstructed. The narratives will be compared with each other and other surviving quotations. I will also probe the surviving works of the third–fourth/ninth–tenth centuries and how they reused the older material.

¹ The dates are given in this study in the *hijrī* (AH) and Common Era (CE) dates. Professor Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, Mehdy Shaddel, Kaj Öhrnberg, and the anonymous peer reviewers read an earlier manuscript of this study and commented on it. I am very grateful for their important comments and suggestions.

My aim is to scrutinize what I call the early *dawla* literature and, especially, to answer the following questions:² When and to what end did the narratives originate? How were they transmitted? How did the later (fourth/tenth-century) authors and historians reuse and rework the material? At the end of this work, I will also say a few words on the modern scholarly study of the coming to power of the 'Abbāsids.

Reconstructing lost works: possibilities and pitfalls

Most Arabic works of the first–third/seventh–ninth centuries are not extant. Arabic historiography emerges in the form of lecture notes and notebooks at the end of the first/seventh century, developing into true literature transmitted as monographs around 200/815 and later (Schoeler 2006; 2009). Middle Persian historical works seem to have been translated and adapted into Arabic in the second/eighth century as well (these early translations are not preserved).³ Still, many historians and *littérateurs* of the first part of the third/ninth century, including al-Madā'inī, transmitted their works by lecturing and without giving a finalized form to them (Lindstedt 2013). This changes toward the end of the third/ninth century. What is more, the books of the Arabic historians grew longer. The works of these later historians are often extant: for example, al-Balādhurī, al-Ṭabarī, and Ibn A'tham, who are discussed at length in this study. What is notable is that the later historians often quoted the earlier monographs and incorporated material from them in their own works. The question that then arises is, can we access and even partly reconstruct the earlier works on the basis of later quotations of them? The answer is “yes”, with some noteworthy pitfalls, however.

The most important and useful tool for reconstructing lost works and smaller narrative items is undoubtedly *isnād-cum-matn* analysis. The most notable developers and proponents of this method of late have been Gregor Schoeler and Harald Motzki.⁴ They rely on the common link theory first promulgated by Joseph Schacht (1950) and further remodeled by G.H.A. Juynboll (1983). The *isnād-cum-matn* analysis has been a great leap forward in the study of Arabic traditions and narratives, allowing one to date and analyze their textual history with some precision. The method

begins by analysing and comparing the *asānīd* (chains of transmitters) of a single *ḥadīth* [i.e. narrative unit] in as many variants as possible in order to discern common transmitters in the different chains, including the earliest one (the common link), who is assumed to be the person that distributed a particular tradition. Then, the textual variants (*mutūn*) of the *ḥadīth* are analysed. This means that the use of words and the structure of the text of each variant of a tradition is compared with others. This process helps determine whether the *aḥādīth* have a common source or have simply been copied from others. Because *aḥādīth* were mostly transmitted aurally (even if supported by written notes), meaning that small mistakes were easily made, the analysis assumes that even slight differences in the textual variants of a single *ḥadīth* indicate actual transmission from one person to another while identical texts should be treated as having been copied from others and their *asānīd* as having been forged. The results of the *asānīd*-analysis are then compared with the outcome of the comparison between the *mutūn*. If the latter support and confirm the former, it may be assumed

2 For the term *dawla*, literally ‘turn’, here mostly translated as ‘revolution’, see Lewis 1973: 253–263; Sharon 1983: 19–27; Lassner 2000: 60–94. For the occurrences of the word in this sense in the primary sources, see, e.g., al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 66, 218. Only later does the word *dawla* receive the meaning ‘dynasty’, although sometimes, as in al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 157), the meaning ‘the new dynasty’ seems to be intended.

3 On the translation of Persian historiography into Arabic, see Hämeen-Anttila 2013; forthcoming.

4 On the study of the *isnāds* and the common link with this method, see, e.g., Motzki 2003; Schoeler 2011; for skeptical views, see, e.g., Berg 2003.

that the *ḥadīth* in question is not a forged one but has a real history. The transmitter that all *asānīd* have in common can then be established as the person who distributed (the reconstructed kernel) of that particular *ḥadīth*. (Boekhoff-van der Voort, Versteegh & Wagemakers 2011: 10)

With this method, Görke and Schoeler (Görke & Schoeler 2008; Schoeler 2011), for example, have studied the corpus of traditions of 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr (d. 93 or 94/711–713) concerning the life of the Prophet Muḥammad. This (fluid) corpus of material was collected or composed at most sixty years after the death of the Prophet, which takes us some hundred years earlier in time than the standard extant *sīra* works by the second–third/eighth–ninth-century authors Ibn Ishāq/Ibn Hishām, al-Wāqidī, and others.

It has to be noted that, because the quotations of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* appear, it seems, only in three extant works (none of them mention the title of the work they derive their quotations from, however), my reconstruction cannot be properly called *isnād-cum-matn* analysis, which usually relies on, say, five or more strands of transmission. Because of this lack of independent witnesses to al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* narratives, there is uncertainty about their exact shape and wording. However, the *isnād-cum-matn* method can be used to ascertain that the main sources used in my reconstruction attempt, al-Balādhurī, al-Ṭabarī, and Ibn A'tham, were independent sources that had a common source (the common link, in the parlance of *isnād-cum-matn* analysis), namely, al-Madā'inī, since all three sources diverge in their quotations in a way that is suggested by what we know of the aural, lecture-based transmission environment and how this environment affected the transmutation of texts. The chains of transmission, *asānīd*, also seem to be authentic (although we cannot really ascertain this in terms of al-Madā'inī's own sources). However, it must be noted that quoting was often done rather freely in Arabic historiography that was transmitted in a purely written environment. It should be assumed that in the written environment the changes are different; for instance, long sections in an otherwise verbatim-quoted text have been removed or added in-between, and so on.

Two scholars that have in the recent past discussed the problems in recovering lost Arabic texts are Lawrence Conrad (1993) and Ella Landau-Tasseron (2004). Conrad's review article concerns Gordon Newby's (1989) effort to recreate Ibn Ishāq's lost *Kitāb al-Mubtada'*. Conrad (1993: 258–259) takes Newby to task for not clearly setting out the methodological premises of his recreation effort and for not taking all the Arabic source material into consideration. It is not very clear how Newby ended up with the accounts as he presents them (only in English translation) and there is rather little evidence to support the idea that the text given by Newby could be identified with Ibn Ishāq's *Kitāb al-Mubtada'*. Conrad (1993: 261) also notes that Ibn Ishāq (similarly to al-Madā'inī, as will become clear) probably did not compose an authoritative, single version of his works but rather taught them in lectures and could, then, have modified the material in their course. Also, Ibn Ishāq's student reworked the material: “comparison of recensions made by these [Ibn Ishāq's] students will lead the investigator back not to a stable archetype attributable to Ibn Ishāq, but rather, and only, to a fluid corpus of notes and teaching materials either taught to students in different ways or given specific form by these students in different ways.”

Ella Landau-Tasseron's article discusses reconstructing lost Arabic works in more general terms. She considers many problems in such projects, including omissions of material of the original work by the later authors quoting the work, false ascriptions, and the metamorphoses of transmitted texts (Landau-Tasseron 2004: 47–57), ending the article with case studies of how earlier material has been quoted by later Arabic authors such as Ibn Ḥubaysh (Landau-

Tasseron 2004: 57–86). These critical and pertinent comments are taken into consideration in my effort to reconstruct al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*: some of its material was omitted by one or more later authors quoting it,⁵ some problematic ascriptions can be detected,⁶ and, in general, it is taken as axiomatic in this study that al-Madā'inī's students and later authors – usually al-Madā'inī's students' students – reworked the material to the extent that we can only reconstruct the outline of al-Madā'inī's work but not, I believe, the original wording (which never existed in one single form, in any case).⁷

AL-MADĀ'INĪ'S LIFE AND THE 'ABBĀSIDS

Birth and early education

To understand al-Madā'inī's oeuvre and intellectual outlook, we have to turn to his biography. According to the biographical sources, his full name was Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. Abī Sayf al-Qurashī al-Madā'inī.⁸ Of his family we know virtually nothing other than that they were *mawlās* 'freedmen' of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Samura b. Ḥabīb al-Qurashī (d. 50 or 51/670–672) (Ibn 'Adī, *Kāmil* V: 1855).⁹ Since 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Samura was an officer campaigning in the east, this seems to signify that one of al-Madā'inī's forefathers, maybe his great-grandfather or great-great-grandfather, was not of Arabian origin (Rotter 1974: 104), but probably a captured war prisoner of Iranian descent. Al-Madā'inī's other *nisba* (a name denoting descent or origin), al-Qurashī, is, of course, due to his family's *mawlā* status and relation to 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Samura al-Qurashī. However, this clientage relationship does not seem to have played any role in al-Madā'inī's life as far as I can tell. It might be interesting to note that, as far as I have been able to ascertain, nothing seems to be known of al-Madā'inī's father or grandfather.¹⁰ Nor can his son al-Ḥasan (if such a son existed or lived to maturity) be found in the sources.

Al-Madā'inī was born in al-Baṣra. The year 135/752–753 is given as his year of birth (al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-Qabas*: 184), which, if credible, would place his childhood in the first years of the rule of the 'Abbāsids, who ruled from Iraq, not Syria, as the Umayyads had done. Al-Madā'inī received his education in al-Baṣra and al-Kūfa,¹¹ as the following list of his teachers shows (al-Dhababī, *Ta'rīkh* VI: 104): 'Awāna b. al-Ḥakam, died 147/764–765 or later, Kūfan; Qurra b. Khālid, died 154/770–771 or later, Baṣran; Ibn Abī Dhi'b, died 159/776–777, Medinan; Mubārak b. Faḍāla, died 164/780–781 or later, Baṣran;¹² Ḥammād b. Salama, died 167/783–784, Baṣran; Sallām b. Miskīn, died c.167/783–784, Baṣran; Juwayriya b. Asmā', died 173/789–790, Baṣran; Shu'ba (b. 'Ayyāsh?), died 193/808–809, Kūfan.

5 E.g. Appendix I, no. 26. Of course, there might have been material in al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* that is lost for good, since it is possible that some accounts were not quoted by any later source.

6 E.g. al-Balādhurī's sources in Appendix I, no. 37.

7 For more in-depth discussion of these reworking processes, see Lindstedt 2013; 2015 as well as Appendix I of the present work.

8 For al-Madā'inī's biography and bibliography, see also Rotter 1974; Fahd 1975; Sezgin 1986; and especially Lindstedt 2012–2014, which this discussion is largely based on.

9 On 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Samura, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Iṣāba* IV: 161.

10 Crone (2012: 87) claims that al-Madā'inī transmitted from his father in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'rīkh* III: 418), but this is incorrect. The 'Alī b. Muḥammad appearing there is actually 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Hāshimī, as can be seen in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'rīkh* III: 417).

11 Al-Madā'inī's Kūfa connection was already noted by Sezgin (1986: 946).

12 In Ibn Ḥajar (*Lisān* XXVII: 190) al-Madā'inī is quoted on his opinion that Mubārak died in the year 166.

This list demonstrates that al-Madā'inī's studies should probably be dated to the 140s–160s/760s–780s. Indeed, al-Madā'inī is quoted as saying that he was in al-Baṣra in the year 153/770–771 (al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* II: 93). While the list of names above is very *ḥadīth*-dominated, other teachers and informants can be found by analyzing the *isnāds*, the chains of transmission, found in al-Madā'inī's works, such as the *Kitāb al-Dawla*, which is the object of this study.¹³ These persons were *akhbārīs* or *adībs*, often associated with the Umayyad or 'Abbāsīd courts (Lindstedt 2012–2014: 238).

At some point in his life, al-Madā'inī spent some time in al-Madā'in (the ancient Ctesiphon), from which he got his *nisba* (al-Ābī, *Nathr al-Durr* VI: 339; Ibn Ḥamdūn, *Tadhkira* III: 84). Of his activities there we know nothing, however. It is also possible that al-Madā'inī might have visited Damascus as well as Mecca on a pilgrimage, but this must remain open for now since only a few reports hinting at this have survived (Lindstedt 2012–2014: 238–239). Although al-Madā'inī is known as an authority on Khurāsān and the eastern Islamic world, perhaps surprisingly we have no evidence of him visiting areas to the north or east of Iraq.

Mu'tazilism

In al-Kūfa, al-Madā'inī also studied Mu'tazilī *kalām*, a rationalistic branch of theology. He is mentioned among the students (or servants? *ghilmān*) of a shadowy figure called Ma'mar ibn/abū al-Ash'ath (there is some confusion about his name; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* I: 100; van Ess 1991–1997: II, 37–38). Van Ess (1991–1997: II, 37) places Ma'mar in al-Baṣra, but since al-Madā'inī is mentioned as a Kūfan Mu'tazilite (al-Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl al-'Iṭizāl*: 344; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt*: 54, 140), we should probably place Ma'mar ibn/abū al-Ash'ath there, too. Ma'mar is missing from the biographical lexica, but he is mentioned by al-Jāḥiẓ in two of his works in a way that links him with the Mu'tazila (al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* I: 91–92; *Ḥayawān* II: 140; III: 357, 530). Al-Jāḥiẓ (*Ḥayawān* II: 140) calls him a philosopher among the *mutakallimūn*, 'theologians'. As an anecdote it is mentioned that Ma'mar disapproved of eating *bāqilā* 'beans' and his students, al-Madā'inī amongst them, followed suit (Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* III: 357).¹⁴

Al-Madā'inī's Mu'tazilī studies are an intriguing detail, but his Mu'tazilism does not appear to have affected his career much. Theological subjects are all but lacking in his bibliography (Lindstedt 2012–2014: 236).¹⁵ However, later in his life, after he had relocated to Baghdād, al-Madā'inī visited Caliph al-Ma'mūn (reigned from Baghdād 204–218/819–833) a couple of times. One could speculate that al-Madā'inī's knowledge of Mu'tazilī theology facilitated his relationship to al-Ma'mūn, who sponsored Mu'tazilī thinkers, although, it must be noted, al-Madā'inī was never more than a minor guest at al-Ma'mūn's court.¹⁶

Al-Mawṣilī and al-Madā'inī

At some point in his life, al-Madā'inī moved to Baghdād, the capital of the 'Abbāsīd caliphate. While an exact date cannot be given for al-Madā'inī's move, it must be noted that, toward the end of the second/eighth century, many other scholars also moved from al-Baṣra and al-Kūfa to

13 See Appendix II for al-Madā'inī's sources in his *Kitāb al-Dawla*.

14 For more on the "bean taboo", see van Ess 1991–1997: II, 38–39.

15 For a full bibliography of titles attributed to al-Madā'inī, see Lindstedt 2012–2014: 245–263.

16 On al-Ma'mūn's relationship with Mu'tazilism, the exact details of which are still debated, see van Ess 1991–1997: III, 199–508.

Baghdād (Cohen 1970: 44). In Baghdād, al-Madā'inī found a friend and patron in Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī (b. c. 150/767–768 in Rayy or Marw, d. 235/849–50 in Baghdād), whom he often used to visit.¹⁷ Later, al-Madā'inī supposedly died in his house (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* I: 101).

Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī was a famous poet-cum-singer as well as boon companion of the caliphs. What is more, Ishāq transmitted literary and, to a lesser extent, historical *khbars*. It is difficult to pinpoint with much accuracy when al-Mawṣilī and al-Madā'inī became acquainted. They seem to have been of similar age, with al-Mawṣilī outliving al-Madā'inī by some years. It was probably through al-Mawṣilī that al-Madā'inī gained access to al-Ma'mūn's court: al-Mawṣilī is said to have been befriended by the 'Abbāsīd caliphs from Hārūn al-Rashīd to al-Mutawakkil (al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-Qabas*: 318).

Al-Madā'inī's relationship with Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, who is portrayed as al-Madā'inī's Maecenas, is underlined in a narrative (al-Khaṭīb, *Ta'rikh* XII: 55).¹⁸ Al-Madā'inī's income was secured in Baghdād, and he was able to teach and compose a bulky oeuvre of over two hundred titles (Lindstedt 2012–2014: 245–263). Yāqūt (*Irshād* VI: 221) quotes Aḥmad b. al-Ḥārith al-Kharrāz (d. 256–259/869–873), also al-Madā'inī's student, as saying:

The authorities [in history] are: Abū Mikhnaf as to Iraq and its conquest and history [...]; al-Madā'inī as to Khurāsān, India and Persia; al-Wāqidī as to al-Ḥijāz and traditions [on the life and campaigns of the Prophet? *al-siyar*]. And they have all contributed to the conquest of Syria.

Al-Madā'inī's role as an esteemed authority on the history of the Eastern Islamic world, especially Khurāsān, is a notion that recurs in the sources, which is especially interesting since it appears that he never visited Khurāsān. His *futūḥ* accounts were much valued by later historians, who quoted them extensively (Robinson 2003: 28). He did not write on the Western Islamic world. Even in the case of Egypt, his material is not quoted by many historians (for instance, Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam or al-Kindī).¹⁹ Furthermore, his *khbars* on the life of the Prophet Muḥammad were all but neglected, surviving almost solely in Ibn Sa'd (*Ṭabaqāt* I/1: 106–125; I/2: 30–85) and al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* I: index, s.v. 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh). The sixth/twelfth-century author Ibn Razīn gives a rare example of al-Madā'inī's narratives of pre-Islamic lore, namely, on Alexander (*Ādāb al-Mulūk*: 117–119, via al-Madā'inī's student al-Ḥārith ibn Abī Usāma).²⁰

In al-Ma'mūn's court

It was probably through Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī that al-Madā'inī gained access to the court of the 'Abbāsīd caliphs. Al-Madā'inī's relations with the court can be seen from the fact that he mentions Caliph al-Manṣūr (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* VII, ed. Damascus: 55) and Ḥasan b. Rashīd

17 On Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, see al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* IV: 53, 222–224; Abū l-Faraj, *Aghānī* V: 142–396; al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-Qabas*: 316–318; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* I: 140–142; al-Khaṭīb, *Ta'rikh* VI: 336–342; al-Sam'ānī, *Ansāb* V: 407–408; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam* VI: 438–439; Yāqūt, *Irshād* II: 197–225; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt* I: 202–205; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* XI: 118–121; al-Khaṭīb, *Ta'rikh* VI: 209–211; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi* VIII: 388–393; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān* II: 38–40; al-Sakhāwī, *I'lān*: 428, 502; GAS I: 371; Fück 1978; Werkmeister 1983: 352–358; Leder 1991: 44–45; Fleischhammer 2004: 89–91, 123–124.

18 For a different version of the story with a different *isnād*, see Abū l-Faraj, *Aghānī* V: 247.

19 See, however, al-'Askarī (*Awā'il*: 202–203); Ibn Taghrī Birdī (*al-Nujūm al-Zāhira* I: 201, 347) which suggest that al-Madā'inī did write something on the conquest of Egypt. Al-Madā'inī's bibliography corroborates this (*Kitāb Futūḥ Miṣr*, Lindstedt 2012–2014: 256).

20 The editor of the *Ādāb al-Mulūk* notes that he has not seen the narrative in any other source. I thank Prof. Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila for this reference.

al-Jūzjānī, the *ḥājib* of Caliph al-Mahdī (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 82), in his *isnāds* as sources of information. Although al-Madā'inī had some contacts with the 'Abbāsīd court, he seems to have been rather free of any need to compose or transmit apologetic accounts.

Al-Madā'inī's visit to al-Ma'mūn is quoted on the authority of al-Madā'inī himself:

Al-Ma'mūn ordered Aḥmad b. Yūsuf [the caliph's secretary] to bring me in. I entered and al-Ma'mūn mentioned 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib – peace be upon him. I recounted al-Ma'mūn traditions about 'Alī. When al-Ma'mūn mentioned the cursing of 'Alī by the Umayyads, I said: Abū Salama al-Muthannā b. 'Abdallāh, the brother of Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Anṣārī, has told me: a man has said to me:

"I was in Syria. I did not hear of anyone named 'Alī, Ḥasan or Ḥusayn. Instead, I heard Mu'āwiya, Yazīd and al-Walīd. Once, I walked past a man sitting in front of the door of his house. I was thirsty so I asked him for something to drink. He said: 'O Hasan, bring him something to drink!' I asked him: 'You call him Ḥasan?' He answered: 'Yes, by God, I have named my sons Ḥasan, Ḥusayn and Ja'far. The people of Syria, may God curse them, call their children with the names of the caliphs of God, but all the time someone is cursing and reproaching his children [which is tantamount to cursing the caliphs]. I, on the other hand, have named my children after the enemies of God, so when I curse my children, I curse the enemies of God.'" He continued: "I said in my mind: 'I considered you to be the most righteous of the people of Syria, but even in Hell there is no one worse than you!'"

Al-Ma'mūn said: "God has certainly sent against them [i.e. the Shī'a]²¹ those who curse those who are alive and those who are dead and curse those of the Shī'a who are in the loins of the men and in the wombs of women [i.e. who are yet to be born]." (al-Marzubānī, *Mukhtār*: 410–411; cf. Yāqūt, *Irshād* V: 311; Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ* VII: 129–130)

Although we do not have to believe that the narrative transmits the words of the meeting verbatim, the story is interesting as it shows the pro-Shī'a sentiment at the court of the time.²² It appears certain that al-Madā'inī died in Baghdād, but we do not know when exactly. Al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'rīkh* III: 1330), our earliest source on this matter, records al-Madā'inī's death year as being 228/842–843.²³ Al-Mas'ūdī's (d. 345/956) *Murūj* (V: 44–45) gives two different years for the death of al-Madā'inī: 228/842–843, already given by al-Ṭabarī, and 233/847–848. Al-Rabā'ī (d. 379/989–990) gives the rather precise date Dhū l-Qa'da 224/September–October 839 for al-Madā'inī's death (al-Rabā'ī, *Ta'rīkh Mawlad al-'Ulamā' wa-Wafayātihim* II: 495). In Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist* (I: 100–101), two years are given: 215/830–831 and 225/839–840. Al-Madā'inī is said to have been 93 when he died (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* I: 102). This piece of information could support somewhat the date of death in al-Ṭabarī (AH 228), supposing that the date of birth (AH 135) and his age when he died (93) are at all reliable. It may be noted that the year 215 appears in any case to be too early for his death, one reason being that in the *Fihrist* it is stated that al-Madā'inī composed a work called *Kitāb Akhbār al-Khulafā' al-Kabīr*, which included the history of the caliphate from Abū Bakr up to al-Mu'taṣim (r. 218/833–227/842). However, the last *khbars* which I have found attributed to al-Madā'inī in the sources deal with al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn's civil war (193–198/809–813) (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* III: 935–936).

All in all, I would argue that the most reliable dates for al-Madā'inī's death seem to be the one furnished by al-Ṭabarī (because he is the earliest authority to give a date): 228/842–843 and

21 The end of the passage in the facsimile edition of al-Marzubānī (*Mukhtār*: 411) is garbled, so I translate here the text found in Yāqūt. Note that al-Marzubānī (*Mukhtār*: 411) also recounts another literary meeting between al-Madā'inī and al-Ma'mūn.

22 Cf. Margoliouth 1930: 86–87 on this story.

23 Rotter (1974: 104) deems this date to be the most accurate.

that given by al-Raba'ī (because his date is exact, also containing a month): Dhū l-Qa'da 224/September–October 839, but preferring one over the other is more or less arbitrary.

It can be said that al-Madā'inī was one of the most important early *akhbārīs* in compiling and arranging historical accounts (Rotter 1974: 105). Although he visited the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Ma'mūn and perhaps also knew some other figures of the dynasty, he was not, it appears, directly sponsored by the ruling dynasty, in contrast to al-Haytham b. 'Adī, for instance.²⁴ Lassner (1986: 55) notes that al-Haytham b. 'Adī was “a scholar with strong credentials as an apologist for the 'Abbāsīd house and a frequent visitor to the court of the Caliph al-Manṣūr”. This is of importance for the arguments of this study. Al-Madā'inī seems to have been a more or less independent scholar, whose work on the origins of the 'Abbāsīd dynasty was not an apologetic account. Of course, al-Madā'inī had his own ideological tendencies (Lindstedt 2014: 112–114), but these were not always identical to those of the ruling dynasty. In fact, it will be seen below that al-Haytham b. 'Adī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* seems to have been much more ideologically motivated than al-Madā'inī's work with the same title, although al-Madā'inī quoted some material from al-Haytham and probably received the idea and model of such a work on the beginnings of the 'Abbāsīds from him. For al-Madā'inī, the 'Abbāsīds' attempt to legitimize their rule through a genealogical link to the family of the Prophet was only a minor theme, for example.

AL-MADĀ'INĪ'S *KITĀB AL-DAWLA*

Introduction to the work

A tentative reconstruction, as well as comparative discussion, of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* is the main aim of this study. The work can be reconstructed to some extent because it was quoted by three later, and independent, authors of the third–fourth/ninth–tenth centuries: al-Balādhurī, al-Ṭabarī, and Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī. Other authors, such as the anonymous author of the *Akhhbār al-'Abbās* and Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, could also have had al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* at hand, but this seems to be difficult to prove. Certainly, one of the pitfalls in my tentative reconstruction is the fact that none of the authors quoting narratives from what I take to be the *Kitāb al-Dawla* ever actually mention al-Madā'inī's work's title explicitly.

The problem with these kinds of reconstruction attempts is that we cannot retrieve the exact, original wording of the work. There are two reasons for this. First of all, al-Madā'inī in all probability never composed an authoritative version of the text, instead disseminating the work in a dynamic, lecture-based environment; and second, the later authors quoting the work reworked the material according to their own tastes (Landau-Tasserion 2004; Schoeler 2006; Lindstedt 2015). Nonetheless, because the work was quoted, as I argue below, by three separate authors, we can get a fairly accurate image of it.

If, one day, a manuscript of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* should miraculously resurface in some part of the world, there is a possibility that it would be somewhat unlike my reconstruction of it for the reasons just mentioned. Be that as it may, I believe that the historiographical survey and investigation of the *Kitāb al-Dawla* presented here will help us understand the historical-literary sources of the 'Abbāsīd revolution, and perhaps even the revolution itself.

I am not the first scholar to discuss the work. In his very useful article on al-Madā'inī, Rotter (1974: 128–131) discussed, among other things, al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* and tried a brief

24 On whom, see Pellat 1971; Leder 1991.

reconstruction. His study is a very good, albeit preliminary, attempt. The greatest shortcoming in Rotter's approach is that he based his investigation solely on al-Ṭabarī and did not realize that the most important source is actually Ibn A'tham.

Rotter (1974: 128–129) notes that in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*, *Kitāb al-Dawla* is classified under the rubric *kutubuhu fi l-futūḥ*, "al-Madā'inī's books on the conquests", and asserts that the work should be understood in the context of his other titles in this vein, such as the *Kitāb Futūḥ Khurāsān*. While this is an intriguing remark, one should note that the section of al-Madā'inī's books on the conquests also includes other miscellaneous material that is not directly connected with the *futūḥ* narratives, such as works on the different governors of Khurāsān (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* I: 103). However, as will be seen below when discussing Ibn A'tham's *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, Rotter was certainly not the first one to think in this way. Rather, the idea that the *dawla* narratives (whether al-Madā'inī's or other authors') could be reproduced in the context of the conquests was already present in the works of medieval Arabic authors.

Rotter goes on to propose the passages that he thinks belong to al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*. He suggests that the work encompassed accounts concerning the coming to power of the 'Abbāsids, starting from the earliest appearance of the 'Abbāsīd propagandists around the year 100/718–719 until the death of Abū Muslim in Sha'bān 137/February 755. That is a good approximation, although it will be argued that the work probably did not include many accounts of the earliest 'Abbāsīd propagandists. Or, at least, we have no definite way of proving this. I agree, on the other hand, with Rotter on the ending of the work.

As has been noted, Rotter (1974: 129) based his reconstruction only on al-Ṭabarī, listing those *khbars* (reports) that could fit the subject of the work and that are attributed to al-Madā'inī. There are some deficiencies in this approach. First, it glosses over those passages in al-Ṭabarī that actually stem from al-Madā'inī but are quoted anonymously or, for instance, with a chain of transmission *dhukira*, "it has been mentioned". Furthermore, al-Ṭabarī could have used many different works for information on that era. For the 'Abbāsīd revolution, he could have derived material from the following works of al-Madā'inī: for instance, *Kitāb al-Dawla*; *Kitāb Akhbār al-Khulafā' al-Kabīr*; *Kitāb 'Abdallāh b. Mu'āwiya*; *Kitāb Wilāyat Asad b. 'Abdallāh al-Qasrī*; *Kitāb Maqṭal Yazīd b. 'Umar b. Hubayra*; *Kitāb Wilāyat Naṣr b. Sayyār*; *Kitāb al-Khawārij*; *Kitāb al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib*; *Kitāb 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās*; *Kitāb 'Alī b. 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās*; *Kitāb Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās*; *Kitāb Akhbār al-Saffāḥ*.²⁵ This problem can be somewhat resolved, as will be done in this study, by comparing al-Ṭabarī's al-Madā'inī quotations with other authors, especially Ibn A'tham, who did not have access, it seems, to works by al-Madā'inī other than his *Kitāb al-Dawla*. Rotter (1974: 129–130) also ponders the provenance of the al-Madā'inī quotations in al-Ṭabarī. It appears that he is right in assuming that the whole of the work reached al-Ṭabarī in the recension of Aḥmad b. Abī Khaythama Zuhayr (d. 279/892), one of al-Madā'inī's significant direct students.²⁶

How do I proceed with the *Kitāb al-Dawla* in this study? Discussing and reconstructing it is problematic, as would be the case with all of al-Madā'inī's *kitābs*, since he cannot be considered to have authored books with definitely fixed forms (Lindstedt 2013: 50–53). We must proceed cautiously with the contents – even the title – of the work. I will begin by discussing the information given in the sources (Ibn al-Nadīm, Yāqūt, and an anonymous list of books)

25 For the complete bibliography of al-Madā'inī, with references, see Lindstedt 2012–2014.

26 On him, see Lindstedt 2013: 51, n. 57.

that mention the *Kitāb al-Dawla* explicitly by name. I will then examine other *Kitāb al-Dawlas* ascribed to early authors. After this, I will present the sources and methodology for the investigation of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*.

The *Kitāb al-Dawla* is referred to in only three sources that I am aware of. In Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*, it is catalogued under al-Madā'inī's conquest works. Yāqūt (*Irshād* V: 315), who copies Ibn al-Nadīm but also has some independent information, does not list it there but mentions another, very similar title, namely, *Kitāb al-Dawla al-'Abbāsiyya*, under the rubric *kutubuhu fī l-ahdāth*, "his [al-Madā'inī's] books on the historical events", and says:

It is a large book, comprising many parts. It is not mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm. I have got it in the handwriting of (*bi-khatt*) [al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn] al-Sukkarī who had read it to al-Ḥārith b. Usāma [i.e. transmitted it from al-Ḥārith b. Usāma by means of reading the transmitted text back to him in order to check its validity].²⁷

Following Rotter, it seems plausible enough to suppose that the said al-Ḥārith b. Usāma is al-Madā'inī's student al-Ḥārith b. Abī Usāma (d. 282/895–896) and that the omission of the word *abī* is due to a copyist's error. Rotter (1974: 130) proposes, on the basis of Yāqūt, that the existence of such a work is to a large extent due to al-Ḥārith, who compiled it from al-Madā'inī's material. He also suggests that the *Kitāb al-Dawla* and the *Kitāb al-Dawla al-'Abbāsiyya* were different works.

It is indeed interesting that Yāqūt states that the *Kitāb al-Dawla al-'Abbāsiyya* "is not mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm" and that he locates it under a different rubric. This leads one to strongly consider the possibility of the existence of two different works with almost identical titles. However, here Yāqūt is mistaken because, it seems, in his copy of Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*, the title *Kitāb al-Dawla* was simply missing.²⁸

The anonymous *al-Muntakhab mim mā fī Khazā'in al-Kutub bi-Ḥalab*, written in 694/1295, knows the work with the title *al-Dawla al-'Abbāsiyya*, too (*al-Muntakhab*, no. 368). This is probably because the word *dawla*, when used alone, had lost its connection with the 'Abbāsīd revolution and begun to mean only "dynasty" in a more general sense. In any case, we have to live with the possibility of different versions, perhaps with different titles, composed by al-Madā'inī or his students and transmitted by different routes. Indeed, al-Madā'inī could have modified the work during his lifetime. Below it will be seen that Ibn A'tham and al-Ṭabarī, our main sources for al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* quotations, had at hand different recensions or versions of the work. However, supposing that there were two totally different works, one called the *Kitāb al-Dawla* and the other, the *Kitāb al-Dawla al-'Abbāsiyya*, seems incorrect, although it is not impossible.

It is unfortunate that, as far as I have been able to ascertain, Yāqūt did not use al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* as a source when compiling his *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, although he certainly had access to the work. In general, he quotes al-Madā'inī very rarely in his *Mu'jam al-Buldān*.

27 Yāqūt (*Mu'jam al-Buldān* V: 25) mentions that he also had another work of al-Madā'inī in the *khatt* of al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sukkarī, namely, *Kitāb Akhbār Zufar b. al-Ḥārith*.

28 As can be seen from comparing Yāqūt (*Irshād* V: 315, ll. 16–17) with Ibn al-Nadīm (*Fihrist* I: 103, l. 12).

Other authors' *Kitāb al-Dawlas* in the second–third/eighth–ninth centuries

Other authors, too, are credited with composing *Kitāb al-Dawlas* which, given the dates of the authors, in all likelihood dealt with the same events of the 'Abbāsīd revolution and not with some later “dynasty”. Among these authors, in roughly chronological order, are the following:

- **Al-Haytham b. 'Adī** (d. c.205/820–821), whose *Kitāb al-Dawla* (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* I: 99; GAS I: 272; Nagel 1972: 9–69), perhaps the first of a kind, will be discussed at more length below.
- **Al-Ḥasan b. Maymūn al-Naṣrī or al-Baṣrī**, who is an unknown author (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* I: 108).
- **Al-Rāwandī**, who is hard to identify. He is not to be equated with the “*mulhid*” Ibn al-Rāwandī, as Flügel does in the index of his edition of the *Fihrist*.²⁹ This al-Rāwandī could be connected with the group Rāwandīyya, who deemed Caliph al-Manṣūr to be divine (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 235; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* III: 129; see also Daniel 1979: 130–133, who refers to it as one of the “Abū Muslim sects”). Ibn al-Nadīm (*Fihrist* I: 108) calls al-Rāwandī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* “excellent” (*jawwada fīhi*) and says it is approximately 2,000 folios long, noting that he has seen a part of the work. Later, Ibn al-Nadīm (*Fihrist* I: 108, 204) recounts that this al-Rāwandī was a neighbor of the jurist Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d. 189/804–805) at Bāb al-Shām on Darb Abū Ḥanīfa, Baghdad. Al-Rāwandī's students, called here the Rāwandīyya and *abnā' al-dawla*, used to disturb al-Shaybānī's teaching sessions by yelling, which made al-Shaybānī change the place where he and his students convened. The appearance of the term *abnā' al-dawla* is interesting, but it is hard to say whether it is used here in the same meaning as it is used during the war between al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn (see Crone 1998: 4 and, for a different view, Turner 2004: 10–11, following Ayalon 1994: 33). Also, it could be too hasty to equate al-Rāwandī's followers with the al-Rāwandīyya sect. In any case, this al-Rāwandī seems to be an early composer of a *Kitāb al-Dawla* of sorts. Could he be equated with 'Abdallāh al-Rāwandī, who participated in the 'Abbāsīd revolution but whose later destiny is unclear? (Agha 2003: 338). However, this would make al-Rāwandī a very early figure indeed.
- **Abū Ṣāliḥ Sulaymān/Salmawayh b. Ṣāliḥ al-Laythī al-Naḥwī al-Kutubī** (d. before 210/825–826), who was a *mawlā* of Banū Layth and a transmitter of historical accounts and genealogies (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* I: 107). Yāqūt credits him with a *Kitāb Futūḥ Khurāsān*, adding *wa-huwa kitāb al-dawla*, “and it is a book on the *dawla*”.³⁰ Note here, too, an interesting connection between the *futūḥ* – especially of Khurāsān – and the *dawla*. The conquest of and beyond Khurāsān and the 'Abbāsīd revolution were, then, often seen as continuous events (Sharon 1983: 51–71). Al-Mizzī (*Tahdhīb* XI: 453) calls what is probably the same work *Waqā'i' Khurāsān*, “The Battles of Khurāsān”. Al-Mas'ūdī quotes a short passage from the work, calling it *Kitābuhu fī al-Dawla al-'Abbāsiyya wa-Umarā' Khurāsān*, “his book on the 'Abbāsīd Revolution and the Governors of Khurāsān” (Al-Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*: 65).

29 For an overview on Ibn al-Rāwandī, see Lindstedt 2011: 131–137.

30 Yāqūt has two different entries for Sulaymān and Salmawayh, *Irshād* III (ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās): 1384 and 1389 (the entry is missing from ed. Margoliouth), but Ibn Abī Ḥātim (*Jarḥ* IV: 123–124); al-Dhahabī (*Siyar* IX: 433–434); al-Dhahabī (*Ta'rikh* V: 401); and al-Mizzī (*Tahdhīb* XI: 453–453) indicate that they were one and the same person.

- **Ibrāhīm b. al-‘Abbās al-Šūlī** (d. 243/857–858), who wrote a work called *Kitāb al-Dawla al-Kabīr*, “The Great Book of the *Dawla*” (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* I: 122).
- **Muḥammad b. al-Haytham b. Shabāba al-Khurāsānī**, an unknown author (al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj* I: 13). Sezgin places his death in 250/864, without giving sources (GAS I: 316).
- **Ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, Muḥammad b. Šāliḥ b. Mihrān al-Bašrī** (d. 252/866–867) is also credited with a *Kitāb al-Dawla* (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* I: 107; GAS I: 317; Omar 1971). He was al-Madā'inī and Ḥasan b. Maymūn's student (Yāqūt, *Irshād* III: 221), so his *Kitāb al-Dawla* could be modeled on theirs. The anonymous *Akḥbār al-‘Abbās* has sometimes, but erroneously, been identified with Ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ's *Kitāb al-Dawla*. This does not hold up to scrutiny and the surviving quotations from Ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ show that Ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ and the anonymous author of the *Akḥbār al-‘Abbās* had different foci (Daniel 1982: 423). It seems that Ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ's work dealt with the revolution and continued at least until the founding of Baghdād by al-Manšūr (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 276). The *Akḥbār al-‘Abbās*, on the other hand, appears to have concentrated more on the pre-revolution phase (although this is somewhat unclear, since the unique manuscript of the work ends unexpectedly). Whereas al-Haytham and al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawlas* ended c. 137/755 (see below), Ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ's work with a similar title continued to narrate later events of the reign of al-Manšūr, continuing at least until 145/762–763.

It could also be noted that in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ* III: 496–497), Ghamr b. Yazīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik's *ghulām* is depicted as possessing a *Kitāb al-Dawla* which prophesies the duration of al-Mahdī's reign. It is unclear whether the eschatological figure al-Mahdī or one of the ‘Abbāsīd caliphs is meant. The early ‘Abbāsīd caliphs were often depicted as playing an eschatological role, so there is no clear demarcation in any case.

Curiously, it is said in the *Fihrist* that it was Ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ who composed the first *Kitāb al-Dawla* (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* I: 107–108). This seems to be incorrect – later Ibn al-Nadīm says that Ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ transmitted from al-Ḥasan b. Maymūn, who is already credited with a *Kitāb al-Dawla*, as are other earlier authors, like al-Haytham b. ‘Adī and al-Madā'inī (see above). Of the *Kitāb al-Dawlas*, al-Haytham b. ‘Adī's seems to have been especially popular and is quoted, with the title, in several sources (al-Dāraquṭnī, *al-Mu'talif wa-l-Mukhtalif* II: 830; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta'riḫ* LXXIV: 113; Ibn al-‘Adīm, *Bughya*: 9, 3928), although it was criticized by al-Jāḥiẓ (as noted by Nagel 1972: 28–29). It might have been the earliest *Kitāb al-Dawla* composed (Nagel 1972: 9).

It can be seen from the above-mentioned list of authors that the early third/ninth century was a time when interest in the history of the *dawla* really began, although it is impossible in most cases to date the works with precision. This interest in the history of the *dawla* continued first in monographs that were compiled or composed by different authors. These monographs, as discussed below, were later incorporated into the longer works of authors such as Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī and al-Ṭabarī. The whole process is something that Fred Donner (1998: 112) has termed “historicizing legitimation”, that is, “legitimation by means of narratives about the past”. First the early authors wanted to find out what had happened during the coming to power of the ‘Abbāsīds; this they did, for example, by collecting narratives from different sources, including

eyewitnesses.³¹ Later historians did not leave it at that but inserted these narratives on the *dawla* into the grand narrative of the Muslim community.

As it happens, one monograph that deals with the *dawla* is extant, although its focus is different, dealing with the whole history of the 'Abbāsīd family until their coming to power.³² This is the so-called *Akhhbār al-'Abbās*, an anonymous work that is later than the works of al-Haytham b. 'Adī and al-Madā'inī (Daniel 1982). It is also bulkier than the earlier works. The *Akhhbār al-'Abbās*, it seems, draws on the earlier third/ninth-century historical works on the revolution, but its writer also had some unique sources, the identification of which is difficult. Its central theme is the *da'wa* 'propaganda' phase that preceded the *dawla* 'revolution' (Daniel 1982: 419–420; for the *da'wa*, see Daniel 1979: 29–45), but its *dawla* narrative is broadly similar to those of al-Haytham b. 'Adī and al-Madā'inī and it will thus be discussed in this study as part of what I call the *dawla* literature. As Elton Daniel (1982: 425–426) has noted:

The part dealing with the events from Abū Muslim's arrival in Khurasan to the advent of Abū'l-'Abbās al-Saffāh is almost a book within a book which stands out clearly from the rest in both style and presentation. Unlike the preceding and following portions of the text, which are composed of short, juxtaposed stories and anecdotes, this long section is in the form of a virtually continuous narrative, with few digressions. [...] This strongly suggests that for this, historically the most important section of the book, the author incorporated extensive portions of a preexisting text (or texts) into his work.

However, as I suggest below, the author did not have direct access to al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*.³³ The *Akhhbār al-'Abbās* is a very pro-'Abbāsīd work and has even been termed a sort of "authoritative, official, interpretation" of the history of the 'Abbāsīds (Daniel 1982: 425).

There are also other transmitters of *dawla* narratives who are not credited with a book of their own in the biobibliographical sources. The most important, but rather shadowy, figure of these is Abū l-Khaṭṭāb (lived at least until al-Mahdī's caliphate).³⁴ The accounts that he transmitted can be retrieved from al-Ṭabarī and the *Akhhbār al-'Abbās*, but probably neither author knew Abū l-Khaṭṭāb's material directly and there is no reason to conclude that Abū l-Khaṭṭāb composed a book about the subject. In any case, Daniel considers Abū l-Khaṭṭāb to be an early and well-informed source.³⁵

It could briefly be mentioned that the much later Ḥājjī Khalīfā does not know a single work with the title *Kitāb al-Dawla*. It thus seems that they soon became dispensable as independent works, since most of their material was included in later, ampler chronicles. Their popularity seems to have waned already in the fourth/tenth century, although, as has been seen, the seventh/thirteenth-century Yāqūt, for example, still had access to the works of the genre.

31 See Appendix II of this work for the sources of al-Madā'inī. See, e.g., Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 154–155; Appendix I, no. 30, for a story where al-Manṣūr himself is the narrator. Especially in this case the eyewitness narration seems to be a mere literary device with no basis in fact.

32 As Mehdy Shaddel noted to me, perhaps we should also count the anonymous works *Ta'rikh al-khulafā'* and *Dhikr* as such.

33 Daniel (1982: 426) suggests that the author of the *Akhhbār al-'Abbās* might have drawn directly on another authority, Abū l-Khaṭṭāb. This is possible. The author probably received al-Madā'inī material through al-Balādhurī. Some of Abū l-Khaṭṭāb's accounts might also have been similar to al-Madā'inī's.

34 On him, see Daniel 1982: 426–427 and notes 41–42. Agha (2003: 349 and index) seems to identify him with al-Haytham b. Mu'āwiya al-'Akkī, who was an 'Abbāsīd propagandist and who took part in the revolution. Although al-Haytham b. Mu'āwiya al-'Akkī bore this *kunya*, the identification is far from certain.

35 See the previous footnote.

Al-Haytham b. 'Adī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*

Al-Haytham b. 'Adī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* has been reconstructed in a study by Tilman Nagel (1972: 9–69). His investigation is based on the observation that Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi's (d. 328/940) *al-'Iqd al-Farīd* (IV: 475–482) quotes the main bulk of the work, although abridging, it seems, al-Haytham b. 'Adī's original text. *Al-'Iqd al-Farīd*, then, proffers the outline to which other works, such as al-Ṭabarī, quoting al-Haytham b. 'Adī, can be compared. Nagel's starting point is very similar to mine. In my study of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, however, Ibn A'tham is the one providing the basic narrative arc. Based on Nagel's reconstruction, it can be conjectured that al-Haytham b. 'Adī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* was somewhat shorter than al-Madā'inī's. Nonetheless, it offered a model for later writers of *dawla* narratives.³⁶ It included the following items (Nagel 1972: 13–25):

- Abū Hāshim b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya gives the *waṣīyya* 'will' to Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās: the rule belongs to the 'Abbāsids, and Abū l-'Abbās will be the first 'Abbāsīd caliph.
- The origins of Abū Muslim are discussed.
- The 'Abbāsīd *dā'īs* 'propagandists' are sent.
- Abū Muslim's toils in Khurāsān. The armed *dawla* begins.
- Ibrāhīm al-Imām is killed while imprisoned.
- The 'Abbāsīd army marches to Iraq.
- Abu l-'Abbās is given the *bay'a* 'pledge of allegiance as a caliph'.
- Abu l-'Abbās murders Abū Salama and Abū l-Ja'far al-Manṣūr murders Abū Muslim.³⁷

As will be seen below, al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* included basically the same themes, although it apparently did not dwell so much on the theme "the 'Abbāsids as part of the Prophet's lineage through Abū Hāshim". To be sure, al-Madā'inī agreed with this notion, but it did not dominate his *dawla* narrative. On the other hand, his work seems to have been bulkier and his narrative on the armed revolution and its aftermath was more detailed than al-Haytham b. 'Adī's. In the latter's narrative, the concept of *dawla* has almost eschatological undertones. In al-Haytham's story, the *dawla* is not only to be understood as a change in dynasty, but also as the beginning of a new, eschatological era, according to Nagel (1972: 9–12). For al-Haytham, the most significant thing was the inception of the movement and the revolution, not its aftermath. From Abū l-Ja'far al-Manṣūr's reign, al-Haytham b. 'Adī seems to mention only one event, the killing of Abū Muslim. This is in contrast with al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, which continues to the first years of al-Manṣūr's caliphate. Al-Haytham b. 'Adī's *dawla* narrative reads more like an apologetic and pro-'Abbāsīd narrative than al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*. This is probably because al-Haytham had close contacts with the 'Abbāsīd court of his day.

³⁶ Indeed, al-Haytham b. 'Adī functions as a source in al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* (see Appendix I, nos. 33, 34). Hence, one can claim with some justification that al-Madā'inī had access to al-Haytham b. 'Adī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*. Perhaps al-Madā'inī participated in al-Haytham b. 'Adī's lectures or received the material in the form of notebooks.

³⁷ Mehdy Shaddel (pers. comm.) has conveyed to me that Nagel was not aware of some evidence on al-Haytham b. 'Adī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, which could then have been larger than previously supposed. For example, Ibn al-'Adīm (*Bughya*: 3928–3930) includes a long narrative from al-Haytham b. 'Adī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* on Abū Muḥammad Ziyād ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Yazīd al-Sufyānī's rebellion. See also Shaddel (2017). The work might also have included a report on 'Abdallāh ibn 'Alī contesting al-Manṣūr's succession, as quoted in ps.-Ibn Qutayba (*al-Imāma*: 298–299).

Sources for the investigation of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*

I will proceed by mentioning and discussing the sources that I have used to study al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*. The main sources are al-Balādhurī, al-Ṭabarī, and Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, but other authors also have to be taken into account, even if it is often doubtful whether they had access to al-Madā'inī's work or whether they were just quoting authors drawing on it.

The main problem for the investigation of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* is that it is sometimes difficult to say which quotations come from this particular work, plus the fact that the later authors quoting the work greatly edited the material (Lindstedt 2013). Already al-Madā'inī's direct students, working in a lecture-based environment, could have redacted the material in the course of transmission. We also have to take into account that al-Madā'inī composed many works dealing with the late Umayyad and early 'Abbāsīd eras and so some of the quotations could be from a number of his works. Later authors like al-Ṭabarī are notorious for not mentioning the work they quote, just its author.

Writers that do not use the *isnād* and composed composite accounts, such as the third/ninth-century historians al-Ya'qūbī and al-Dīnawarī, are not considered below because their compositions do not appear to be illuminating as to al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*. Also, later authors, such as the eighth/fourteenth-century al-Dhahabī, who only copied al-Ṭabarī's historical work for their *dawla* narratives, are overlooked. I will begin with the most important work (the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*) and then go through the sources chronologically:

- The *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* by **Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī** (d. first half of the fourth/tenth century) is the main source for the study of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*. Why this should be so requires some justification, but let me first discuss his dates because they have been disputed in earlier scholarship. In other publications,³⁸ I have endeavored to investigate Ibn A'tham's life on the basis of biographical literature. To quote my conclusions (Lindstedt 2017: 308–309):

Abū Muḥammad Aḥmad b. A'tham b. Nadhīr b. al-Ḥubāb b. Ka'b b. Ḥabīb al-Azdī al-Kūfī was from the tribe of Azd [al-Sahmī, *Ta'rīkh Jurjān*: 41–42]. His name, which was easily corrupted in the sources, clearly shows that he was of an Arab, not for example of a Persian *mawlā*, lineage. He seems to have been from Kufa, although the *nisba* could have, of course, been just running in the family. The tribe Azd was an important one in Iraq, which fact also seems to connect him with Iraq. Ibn A'tham was almost certainly Shi'ite, which can be deduced from his works. The medieval scholar Yāqūt already made this observation [Yāqūt, *Irshād* I: 379].

At some point of his life, he lived in, or at least visited, Jurjān. Ibn 'Adī (d. c.365/976), who met him there, listed Ibn A'tham among his teachers [al-Sahmī, *Ta'rīkh Jurjān*: 41–42]. Hence Ibn A'tham's *floruit* is to be placed in the late 3rd/9th–early 4th/10th centuries. Another person who ties Ibn A'tham to the Eastern part of the Islamic world is the historian from Bayhaq, Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad al-Sallāmī who seems to have been Ibn A'tham's contemporary and met him [Yāqūt, *Irshād* I: 379]. Hence, although Ibn A'tham was an Arab from Kufa, he spent time in the Persian-speaking Islamic lands. This is also the geographical region where his *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* was most widely read after his death.

Ibn A'tham wrote three works, one of which (the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*) became relatively well-known and is still extant [...]. His *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* was not as famous as some of his contemporaries', such as al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī's, historical works, but was still used and quoted by many later sources. Long tracts of the work were translated into Persian on two different occasions. It is also possible that he dedicated the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* to someone whose identity, unfortunately, is unknown

38 His dating is discussed in Lindstedt (2014: 118–123) and Lindstedt (2017) with new evidence. It seems more or less certain to me that Ibn A'tham should not be considered an early third/ninth-century author, *pace* Conrad (2015) (Conrad's article was authored in the 1990s but published only recently).

to us. That person could be a minor Eastern prince, governor, or something along those lines, but this is mere conjecture.

Now back to Ibn A'tham's use of sources. Generally, Ibn A'tham is quite lackadaisical about giving his sources. Most of his *khābars* start with what could be called an anonymous *qāla*. It sometimes means "Ibn A'tham says", sometimes "the authority mentioned earlier continues". More often than not, its exact subject is obscure, which shows Ibn A'tham's vagueness about his handling of sources. To him, *qāla* was often just a way of saying that a new paragraph begins. The word might also have been added by a later copyist: the textual history of the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* is problematic and manuscripts are few.

However, Ibn A'tham did occasionally note his sources. According to my reckoning, al-Madā'inī is mentioned sixteen times in the *isnāds* of the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*. And herein lies the key: thirteen of these occur in the part of the work that deals with the 'Abbāsīd revolution.³⁹ Al-Madā'inī occurs only three times before that; one of the occurrences is in a so-called collective *isnād* and one is quoted by al-Balawī, the later redactor of the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, rather than Ibn A'tham.⁴⁰ It should be noted that Ibn A'tham does not include much of al-Madā'inī's material before the 'Abbāsīd revolution anonymously either. This I found out when searching in the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* parallels for al-Madā'inī quotations that appear in other works.⁴¹

So, thirteen out of sixteen of the explicit al-Madā'inī quotations appear in the latter part of the work, dealing with the coming to power of the 'Abbāsīds. In this part, there also appear many quotations of al-Madā'inī's material with a *qāla* without his name; this can be ascertained from other works that quote these narratives in parallel versions mentioning al-Madā'inī by name. What, then, is the reason for the dearth of al-Madā'inī's material in volumes I–VII of the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* and the sudden proliferation of his *khābars* in volume VIII of the modern edition? I believe that there is no answer other than to suppose that Ibn A'tham was using a monograph by al-Madā'inī for this part of his work.⁴² That source is in all likelihood the latter's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, which, on the basis of the title and comparison with other texts carrying that name, dealt with the 'Abbāsīd revolution. Analysis of the *dawla* narrative of Ibn A'tham shows that al-Madā'inī was his main, and in many cases only, source. Only three other authorities are mentioned in that part of the work, and even these occur in the course of a detour (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 211–214).

There is also some stylistic evidence that Ibn A'tham's narrative mostly follows a single source. For example, the phrase *jabā kharājahā*, "he collected taxes from it (i.e. the city or the province)", recurs in the first half of the *dawla* section of Ibn A'tham's work (*Futūḥ* VIII: 169: l. 16; 170: l. 9; 172: l. 5; 173: l. 5). It does not seem to be common in other parts of the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*.⁴³ This I take to be another indication that Ibn A'tham was mostly using for this part of his work a single source, which I would identify as al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*. This is exactly the missing key that we need for the investigation and that Rotter overlooked. Ibn A'tham offers us the skeleton, so to speak, for al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, in much the same

39 Ibn A'tham *Futūḥ* VIII: 159, 160, 190 (twice), 192 (twice), 195, 196, 202, 205, 206, 207, 218.

40 The collective *isnād*: Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* II: 147 (as Abū l-Ḥusain 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Qurashī, but to be corrected to Abū l-Ḥasan, as suggested by Shaban 1970: xviii); al-Balawī VI: 253–254 (this time correctly as Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Qurashī); VII: 278 (Abū l-Ḥasan al-Madā'inī).

41 Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* (ed. Beirut) has, fortunately, comprehensive indexes.

42 This was already suggested by Conrad (2015: 99, n. 77), calling it "a history by this writer" without trying to identify it more closely.

43 This assessment is based on digital searches of the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* <shiaonlinelibrary.com>.

way as Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi's *al-'Iqd al-Farīd* provides the basic form of al-Haytham b. 'Adī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*. With this in mind, we can more clearly suggest what belongs to that work and what to other works of al-Madā'inī.

It should be noted that Shaban already grasped the great importance of Ibn A'tham in retrieving al-Madā'inī's material. However, his contention that Ibn A'tham and al-Madā'inī were contemporaries seems incorrect (Shaban 1970: xvii–xviii; cf. Lindstedt 2014: 118–123). Even though Ibn A'tham is a unique source for the study of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* in that the *Kitāb al-Dawla* was possibly the only work of al-Madā'inī's that he had direct access to,⁴⁴ there are also problems relating to his exposition. Most annoying is his recurring use of a *qāla* without a name. Furthermore, Ibn A'tham also edits his source material rather freely and sometimes seems to incorporate additional information from other sources, even when he claims to be citing just one source. His description of the events is much simpler in style than, for instance, al-Balādhurī or al-Ṭabarī's. Comparison with other sources shows that the lack of minutiae (for instance, place and personal names) is due to Ibn A'tham's editorial spirit, not due to his sources. Finally and unfortunately, it should be noted that Ibn A'tham nowhere says which recension of the *Kitāb al-Dawla* he had. His *isnāds* are always: al-Madā'inī ← a possible source (the latter is rarely given), although, considering Ibn A'tham's dates, there must have been a transmitter between him and al-Madā'inī. This fact makes it much more difficult to discuss the origin, transmission, and transmutation of the *Kitāb al-Dawla*.

Ibn A'tham preserves for us al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* in the fullest form, for he chose to reproduce even those parts that ran counter to the chronological and historical consensus concerning the 'Abbāsīd revolution that had begun to solidify at the beginning of the fourth/tenth century.⁴⁵ The *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* quotes important parts of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, as such as al-Manṣūr's reply to Abū Muslim's excoriating letter, not preserved in other sources.⁴⁶ Here I will translate both the letter and its reply from Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 223–224):⁴⁷

The mention of Abū Muslim's letter to al-Manṣūr:

“In the name of God, the Merciful, the Beneficent. To the servant of God, the commander of the believers, from 'Abd al-Raḥmān Abū Muslim. And now, O commander of the believers: I took your brother as Imām⁴⁸ and guide according to what God has imposed upon His creation. I thought that I had been accommodated by him in the way station of knowledge because of his closeness to the Messenger of God (may God bless him), but he thought me ignorant of the Qur'ān and distorted its significations, desiring the petty vanities of this world that God has rebuked His creation for and, rather, induced His servants to abstain from them. Then he portrayed to me error in the form of guidance. He commanded me to unsheathe my sword, forgo mercy, not to pardon mistakes, and not to accept excuses. Affliction of that all fell upon myself, and he did not prevent me from that by granting success or true guidance, until the healthy in me became sick and the sick became

44 See, however, Appendix I, nos. 25, 27, 28, 32.

45 I have treated this at more length in Lindstedt 2014: 112–117.

46 Cf., however, ps.-Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma*: 307, where a reply (in different wording) is adduced. I thank Mehdy Shaddel for this reference.

47 Cf. al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* III: 105, which only contains Abū Muslim's letter (with some divergences in wording), not its reply. This item is also discussed in Appendix I, no. 37.

48 Probably referring to Abū al-'Abbās, not Ibrāhīm al-Imām, *pace* tr. McAuliffe, al-Ṭabarī, *History* XXVIII: 105, n. 132. Below, in al-Manṣūr's reply, [Abū] al-'Abbās is explicitly mentioned. It is interesting that in this letter, Abū Muslim is depicted as reprimanding the former caliph Abū al-'Abbās for leading him into error. As to al-Manṣūr, on the other hand, Abū Muslim claims to have been a faithful servant of his.

healthy.⁴⁹ I had brought calamity to the people of religion and this world in accordance to your obedience and to reinforce your authority, until those that had been ignorant of you knew you and those that had belittled your cause feared you. I had humiliated those of the Messenger's family that were above you with lowliness, belittling, offenses, and enmity. God – He is high – caught me from doing it by repentance and delivered me by penitence. Would that He forgave and pardoned [me]! He is ever-forgiving to those who repent.”

The answer:

Al-Manṣūr wrote to him: “And now, O disobeying criminal! My brother, may God – He is high – have mercy upon him, was the Imām of guidance who summoned [people] to God in accordance with correct insight and certainty of his/His cause. He made the way (*al-sabīl*) clear because the ways had become scattered to the people. He set you on the way of truth on which there are signs of prophethood and what is in the Book. Would that you had followed my brother, the *Riḍā*,⁵⁰ in his correct opinion (*bi-ra'yihī*) and guidance and followed eventually his cause, when [actually] you were deviating from the truth! But you have never been obedient to us, not a single day. Since you assumed unduly our love and our reign, the wind has continued blowing on you from a bottomless place.⁵¹ Not even two ideas occur to you without you leaving their sensible conduct and embracing what leads astray. You kill in anger and assault like tyrants do. God has brought down through you three affirmative propositions (*al-mūjābāt*) from God – He is blessed and high. He – mighty and majestic – has said: ‘Those who fail to judge by what God revealed, they are unbelievers.’⁵² ‘They are sinners.’⁵³ And ‘they are wrongdoers.’⁵⁴ God has brought all of them [these qualities/verses] together in you. Take it easy, O *abū mujrim*,⁵⁵ until the letter [or the preordained book? *al-kitāb*] reaches its appointed time (end? *ajalahu*). The Commander of the Believers swears by God, the Lord of the World, by His close angels, by His prophets that have been sent, by His pious servants, and by his brother [Abū] al-'Abbās that we have been cleared from [the blame that] you [have caused] toward God because of the diversion you have caused upon yourself by killing and doing horrible things. You will soon come to realize what kind of man you are, O *abū mujrim*, when the armies have surrounded you and the swords have seized you! I swear by the great God – there is no god than Him – that I will cross the ocean to find you even if I reach the rising or setting sun. God suffices the commander of the believers. He is the best protector.”

This and other cases where it can be clearly seen that Ibn A'tham (and only he) is quoting material that logically belongs to al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* show the value of his *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* in the investigation of al-Madā'inī's work.

- The *Ta'riḫ* of **Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ** (d. c.240/854–855) is important since Khalīfa was one of al-Madā'inī's direct disciples who heard him lecture in al-Baṣra (Rotter 1974: 117). However, for the reconstruction of the *Kitāb al-Dawla* he is not very useful, for only very short passages of such material that could be from this work of al-Madā'inī appear in his work. We have two possibilities for this: either Khalīfa heard al-Madā'inī lecture a shorter, perhaps earlier, version of the *Kitāb al-Dawla*, or then he had access to another work of al-Madā'inī that contained some overlapping material.⁵⁶ The latter choice seems to be closer to the mark.

49 This passage appears difficult to comprehend. As a suggestion, one might understand the phrase “until the healthy in me became sick and the sick became healthy” to mean that things turned around when al-Manṣūr became the caliph.

50 On the term *al-riḍā*, see Sharon 1990: 29–34.

51 *Yahwī bika al-rīḥ min makān saḥīq*. Cf. Q. 22:31, *tahwī bihi al-rīḥ fī makān saḥīq*.

52 Q. 5:44.

53 Q. 5:47.

54 Q. 5:45.

55 “The father of the criminal”, a pun on the name of Abū Muslim.

56 See Appendix I, nos. 11, 24, 26.

- **Al-Balādhurī** (d. 279/892–893) was a direct student of al-Madā'inī (Lindstedt 2014: 108) and his *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* is an invaluable source for the study of the early history of the Islamic world (Rosenthal 1960; Hasson 1999). The material that could stem from al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* can be found in volume III (the 'Abbāsids) and the forthcoming volume IV/3 (the last Umayyads) of the *Ansāb* (ed. Orient-Institut Beirut). Since volume IV/3 is yet to be published, we have to use volume VII of the Damascus edition in the meantime. A detailed analysis of the contents of the *Kitāb al-Dawla*, attempted in Appendix I, shows that al-Balādhurī had access to the material in al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* but did not want to reproduce passages from it at length. Rather, he summarized freely al-Madā'inī's (and other authors') material. Problematical is al-Balādhurī's use of the collective *qālū* and the formula *qāla fulān wa-ghayruhu* that appear often in the 'Abbāsīd part of his work (see, e.g., al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 129–132, for a long composite *khabar*). In his work, al-Balādhurī did not quote the *khabars* as distinct pieces but endeavored to give a longer narrative. The 'Abbāsīd part can, in fact, be read as a sort of *dawla* narrative in itself but, as with the *Akhbār al-'Abbās*, its focus is on the whole 'Abbāsīd family and its origins. Hence, both the *Akhbār al-'Abbās* and al-Balādhurī provide much information on al-'Abbās and his son 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās, something that al-Haytham and al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawlas* did not discuss, at least at any length.
- The anonymous *Akhbār al-'Abbās* (composed in the late third/ninth or early fourth/tenth century) is an intriguing work (on it, see Daniel 1982), which Lassner (1986: 102) describes as “a text rich in 'Abbāsīdiana”. It contains one explicit al-Madā'inī quotation, an account of 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās. This was probably not from his *Kitāb al-Dawla*, however. The *Akhbār al-'Abbās* appears, on the other hand, to include anonymously quoted material that is somewhat similar to al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*.⁵⁷ However, the exact relationship between it and al-Madā'inī's *dawla* material is rather difficult to pin down. Because its author chose not to use the *isnād* profusely but rather strived to combine his sources into a continuous narrative, the task of tracing his sources is difficult, but here I would like to suggest that the anonymous author was more probably drawing from a fluid pool of *dawla* narratives rather than having al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* as his direct source. It could also be that the author of the *Akhbār al-'Abbās* received al-Madā'inī's material secondhand through, for example, al-Balādhurī, who had a great influence on the form of the *Akhbār al-'Abbās*, which has a genealogical focus similar to al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*.⁵⁸ It should also be noted that the modern edition of the *Akhbār al-'Abbās* ends at the appearance of Abū l-'Abbās in al-Kūfa (132/749), whereas al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* continued to 137/755 (see the next section). This is possibly because the unique manuscript in which the *Akhbār al-'Abbās* survives seems to be incomplete at the end (Daniel 1982: 420).

Of late, there has been an erroneous identification, proffered by Ali Bahramian (2008), regarding the author of the *Akhbār al-'Abbās*. This is based on a couple of misunderstandings and it should be rejected. Bahramian's interpretation is that Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī was the author of the *Akhbār al-'Abbās*. This is argued on the basis of the fact that al-Sahmī mentions one Abū Muḥammad al-Kūfī al-Khaṭīb as writing a *kitāb fī akhbār walad (or wuld) al-'Abbās*, “a book on the accounts of the offspring of al-'Abbās” (al-Sahmī, *Ta'rikh Jurjān*: 217–218). But there

57 See Appendix I, nos. 4, 9, 10, 14, 16.

58 al-Balādhurī is cited, by name, twelve times in the work; see Daniel 1982: 421.

is no basis for identifying this figure with Ibn A'tham since the latter never carries, in other sources, the byname al-Khaṭīb and the name Abū Muḥammad al-Kūfī itself are too general to warrant the identification.⁵⁹ What is more, Bahramian's comparison of Ibn A'tham's *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* and the *Akḥbār al-'Abbās*, purportedly showing that Ibn A'tham wrote both works, is very superficial. A more thorough comparison, undertaken during this study, shows that Ibn A'tham and the author of the *Akḥbār al-'Abbās* had different sources and different aims. The author of the *Akḥbār al-'Abbās* thus remains unknown at the present state of scholarship. What is rather clear, however, is that he is *not* Ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ (discussed above), *nor* Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, but some other person or persons.

- **Al-Ṭabarī's** (d. 310/923) *Ta'riḥ* is the secondmost significant work for al-Madā'inī's *dawla* material, containing many quotations that seem to be quite intact. As mentioned above, Rotter based his reconstruction of al-Madā'inī's works, including the *Kitāb al-Dawla*, solely on it, which will be shown to be perfunctory. Al-Ṭabarī's quotations of al-Madā'inī's material differ in wording from those of Ibn A'tham, although they often overlap a great deal, sometimes agreeing verbatim. Al-Ṭabarī's al-Madā'inī quotations for the 'Abbāsīd revolution seem to be in the recension of Aḥmad b. Abī Khaythama Zuhayr, who is an important transmitter of al-Madā'inī's material to al-Ṭabarī.⁶⁰ It is very helpful that al-Ṭabarī gives rather complete *isnāds* for al-Madā'inī's *dawla* narratives. Without him, we would not be able to discuss the provenance of al-Madā'inī's material to any extent.
- The *Ta'riḥ al-Mawṣil* of **al-Azdī** (d. 334/945–946) is important since, in addition to using sources like al-Ṭabarī (Robinson 2008), al-Azdī received some of al-Madā'inī's material from Aḥmad b. al-Ḥārith, al-Madā'inī's student, all of whose works have been lost. Al-Madā'inī's *dawla* narratives are, however, rather scant in the *Ta'riḥ al-Mawṣil* and stem mostly from authors whose works are extant to us, namely, Khalīfa b. Khayyāt and al-Ṭabarī. In the detailed analysis given in Appendix I, I will suggest that he most likely did not have access to al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*.⁶¹
- **Al-Mas'ūdī's** (d. 345/956) *Murūj al-Dhahab* is not very helpful, thanks to his haphazard use of the *isnād*.⁶² While the *Murūj* adds one otherwise lost item which could stem from the *Kitāb al-Dawla*, this is not certain at all (al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* IV: 92–93). In most cases, it seems fairly clear that al-Mas'ūdī received al-Madā'inī's material secondhand (Appendix I, nos. 7, 19).

This is the list of works I have found useful for the comparison of the *Kitāb al-Dawla* citations and for the investigation of it. Other sources have been perused but found unhelpful. On the basis of the *Aghānī* and other works of Abū l-Faraj (d. 356/967), it appears that he did not have access to al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, but the *Aghānī* sometimes supplies *khbars* that provide interesting variants. They could be from other works of al-Madā'inī. The anonymous *Kitāb al-'Uyūn wa-l-Ḥadā'iq* or al-Dhahabī's *Ta'riḥ al-Islām* can be cited as examples of

59 For his names, see Lindstedt 2014: 118–123; 2017; cf. Conrad 2015.

60 He is mentioned in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḥ* III: 41, 51, 99, but presumably other quotations are through him as well. See Rotter 1974: 129–130.

61 Appendix I, no. 35. Mehdy Shaddel (pers. comm.) has informed me that al-Azdī quotes al-Haytham b. 'Adī extensively for his *dawla* narrative and could have used al-Haytham's *Kitāb al-Dawla* as his source. I am very grateful to him for this remark.

62 The “nature of his presentation [...] aims at an individual style and integrated narrative, thus making it difficult to undertake any fruitful textual comparisons” (Shboul 1979: 100). Cf. Khalidi 1975: 22.

books that use the *isnād* and seem to be quoting al-Madā'inī, whereas in fact they only quote al-Balādhurī or al-Ṭabarī. The anonymous *Ta'rīkh al-Khulafā'* (composed in the fifth/eleventh century) relies on the *Akhbār al-'Abbās*, although it gives some independent al-Madā'inī material; mostly it can be disregarded.⁶³ Yāqūt does not quote al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* in his *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, although he claims in his *Irshād* to have seen it. This lack of references is very unfortunate. As to *al-'Iqd al-Farīd*, it only quotes al-Haytham b. 'Adī for its *dawla* narrative (Nagel 1972: 13–25).⁶⁴

Ibn 'Asākir's (d. 571/1176) *Ta'rīkh Madīnat Dimashq* is an ample, rich source on which much work remains to be done. Ibn 'Asākir strove hard to give *isnāds* as completely as he could for the *khabars* he reused, and his work includes much material that is otherwise lost. Here, however, the *Ta'rīkh Madīnat Dimashq* has been found to quote only al-Madā'inī's *dawla* material that is extant to us in other sources, chiefly al-Ṭabarī and Khalīfa b. Khayyāt. This is not always so. Cobb (2001a: 115–119) has noticed that Ibn 'Asākir's work includes, for instance, an account of the rebellion of Abū l-Haydhām al-Murrī (d. 182/798) that stems from al-Madā'inī and does not survive in other sources. Ibn 'Asākir's immediate source for that passage was probably Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Rāzī's (d. 347/958) *Tasmiyat Umarā' Dimashq*, which is not extant (Conrad 1991: 34–35).

In the end, then, we have three main sources: al-Balādhurī, Ibn A'tham, and al-Ṭabarī. What is fortunate is that these three are completely or mostly independent of each other. It is possible that Ibn A'tham might have used al-Balādhurī as a minor source (Lindstedt 2014: 122), but apart from that it seems that the works of the three historians do not rely on one another. Al-Balādhurī is the earliest of these and is thus independent of Ibn A'tham and al-Ṭabarī. While Ibn A'tham might have known al-Balādhurī's work, as far as I can tell he did not know al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rīkh*. And al-Ṭabarī nowhere mentions – or, it seems, relies on – al-Balādhurī or Ibn A'tham (the writing of the latter's *Futūḥ* could, in any case, postdate al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rīkh*).

The outline of the *Kitāb al-Dawla*

If we rely solely on Ibn A'tham, the *Kitāb al-Dawla* seems to have started with the public appearance of Abū Muslim and the beginning of the revolution proper (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 159), that is, in the year AH 129 or a little earlier, although I must admit that it is really hard to say with any certainty where the *Kitāb al-Dawla* began, since Ibn A'tham could have simply dropped material from the beginning. While Rotter proposed that the accounts of early 'Abbāsīd activities and propaganda before the revolution were actually part of the *Kitāb al-Dawla*, this does not seem to hold true, at least for those events that occurred in the years AH 106–109 and 117–120, that is, during the governorship of Asad b. 'Abdallāh al-Qasrī. These accounts could, however, derive from another work of al-Madā'inī, namely, *Kitāb Wilāyat Asad b. 'Abdallāh al-Qasrī*.⁶⁵ The *khabars* attributed to al-Madā'inī under those years in al-Ṭabarī (Rotter's sole

63 When this study had been written, Mehdy Shaddel, to whom I am grateful, sent me the pdf of a Leiden manuscript of another anonymous work, *Dhikr Banī al-'Abbās*, that relies also to some extent on the *Akhbār al-'Abbās* (Sharon 1983: 237). The *Dhikr Banī al-'Abbās* refers to al-Madā'inī on post-revolution matters (*Dhikr*: 50) that, in my estimation, fall outside his *Kitāb al-Dawla*.

64 The work does not quote al-Madā'inī's *dawla* narratives elsewhere either, although it quotes some poems that are found in al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*. But these could have reached Ibn 'Abd Rabbīhi through a different source than al-Madā'inī.

65 For this and other titles mentioned here, see Lindstedt 2012–2014, s.v.

source) form an organic whole: al-Madā'inī is mentioned 18 times there, and the accounts clearly deal with Asad b. 'Abdallāh rather than the 'Abbāsīd *da'wa*.

Further, it should be noted that, as Rotter also assumed, the *Kitāb al-Dawla* did not include narratives on the earlier history of the 'Abbāsīd family that are included, for instance, in the beginning of volume III of al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*. These were probably part of such works of al-Madā'inī as *Kitāb al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib*, *Kitāb 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās*, and *Kitāb 'Alī b. 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās*.

The *Kitāb al-Dawla* of al-Madā'inī probably also did not include a detailed discussion of the many Khārijī revolts which broke out in the last year of the Umayyad rule.⁶⁶ Rather, my tentative suggestion is that these were part of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Khawārij*.

The starting point of the *Kitāb al-Dawla* is problematic, however, because al-Ṭabarī's and Ibn A'tham's al-Madā'inī quotations up to the year AH 129 differ widely. From that point on, the quotations begin to follow the same course. For this reason, I see no other option than to suggest that al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* did not include much material before the open proclamation of the revolt (129/747). I take as my starting point the first explicit al-Madā'inī quotation that appears in Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 149; Appendix I, no. 1). There might have been some material before this, as there was in al-Haytham b. 'Adī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, but guessing what this could be is somewhat conjectural because we lack the mileposts. I will argue below that al-Haytham b. 'Adī was much more interested in the genealogical legitimation and the pre-revolution history of the 'Abbāsīds than al-Madā'inī. This also holds true if we take into account all the possible al-Madā'inī quotations, that is, even those that I do not count as being part of the *Kitāb al-Dawla*.

Where did the *Kitāb al-Dawla* end? The last mention of al-Madā'inī explicitly in the *isnāds* of the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* of Ibn A'tham (VIII: 218) occurs in connection with the killing of Ibn al-Muqaffa'. This is followed, however, by a rather long narrative on the demise of Abū Muslim at the hands of al-Manṣūr (137/755), interrupted by seven *qālas* without the name of the *rāwī*. Judging from the parallel passages in other sources, it can be said with certainty that the *khābars* of this cycle are indeed attributable to al-Madā'inī (see Appendix I, no. 37, for a detailed analysis). But after the killing of Abū Muslim, it seems, the work ends, as was already suggested by Rotter. This is because Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 229) moves to discuss totally new themes, and other sources do not indicate any continuation either. The *Kitāb al-Dawla*, then, probably dealt with the period from *circa* AH 129 or a few years earlier until the year AH 137. The ending from the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* is fascinating, and although we cannot be certain that Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 228–229) is quoting al-Madā'inī verbatim here, the passage would indeed make a good epilogue to a work:

The army (*ahl*) of Khurāsān calmed down and forgot Abū Muslim as if he never existed. The power became truly al-Manṣūr's after the killing of Abū Muslim, for there remained no one but he.

The list of contents of the *Kitāb al-Dawla*

To give an idea what items the *Kitāb al-Dawla* included, the following list is offered. The reader can also consult Appendix I for a more detailed analysis of the contents and a discussion of the problems of the reconstruction. The passages included with certainty in the *Kitāb al-Dawla* of

⁶⁶ See, for instance, al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* VII (ed. Damascus): 590–643, where al-Madā'inī is quoted rather often.

al-Madā'inī are bolded; this means those items that occur at least both in 1) Ibn A'tham and in 2a) al-Ṭabarī or 2b) al-Balādhurī, at least one of whom ascribes it to al-Madā'inī:

1. Date uncertain: The caliphate will come to the 'Abbāsids, not the Ḥasanids.
2. 124/741–742 or later: Bukayr b. Māhān is thrown into prison, where he meets Abū Muslim.
3. **129/746–747: Abū Muslim propagandizes in Khurāsān; the *da'wa* turns militant.**
4. **Abū Muslim and al-Kirmānī ally themselves. The people of Khurāsān adopt black color. Naṣr b. Sayyār suggests peace to al-Kirmānī; however, a battle ensues between them and al-Kirmānī is killed.**
5. Dhū l-Qa'da 129/July 747: Khāzim b. Khuzayma conquers Marwarrūdh.
6. c.129/747–Muḥarram 130/September 747: Shaybān b. Salama al-Ḥarūrī, 'Alī b. al-Kirmānī, Naṣr b. Sayyār and Abū Muslim try to woo each other to their own sides.
7. Correspondence between Naṣr b. Sayyār, Marwān II and Yazīd b. 'Umar b. Hubayra.
8. The killing of Shaybān b. Salama al-Ḥarūrī.
9. Naṣr b. Sayyār sends his son Tamīm to fight the forces of Abū Muslim.
10. c.130/747–8: Abū Muslim and 'Alī b. al-Kirmānī together fight Naṣr b. Sayyār. 'Alī b. al-Kirmānī kills Tamīm b. Naṣr b. Sayyār, and Naṣr's forces are routed.
11. **Abū Muslim and Naṣr b. Sayyār continue fighting. Abū Muslim tries to lure Naṣr to him, but Naṣr senses deceit and escapes. However, he dies at Qusṭāna, near al-Rayy.**
12. Ramaḍān–Shawwāl 130/May–June 748: Naṣr b. Sayyār writes to Yazīd b. 'Umar b. Hubayra (known as Ibn Hubayra) asking for troops; the latter imprisons the messengers. Naṣr then writes to Marwān II, who writes to Ibn Hubayra.
13. **Dhū l-Ḥijja 130: Qaḥṭaba b. Shabīb conquers Jurjān from Nubāta b. Ḥanzāla after exhorting his troops in a speech.**
14. Muḥarram–Rabī' I 131/September–November 748: Naṣr's final moments are described from another perspective.
15. The 'Abbāsīd forces advance toward Nihāwand. Abū Muslim moves from Marw to Naysābūr.
16. **Qaḥṭaba b. Shabīb takes Iṣfahān and Nihāwand. He defeats two Umayyad commanders: 'Āmir b. Ḍubāra, who is killed, and Mālik b. Adham, who chooses surrender.**
17. **Qaḥṭaba conquers Ḥulwān, whose governor decides to escape. Then Qaḥṭaba sends a detachment against Shahrazūr's Umayyad army commander, 'Uthmān b. Sufyān, who is killed. Qaḥṭaba moves to Iraq and makes ready for a fight against its governor, Ibn Hubayra. He camps at Awānā.**
18. **Muḥarram 132/August–September 749: Ibn Hubayra and Qaḥṭaba meet in battle at the banks of the Euphrates. Qaḥṭaba drowns during the fighting which lasts over-night. Ibn Hubayra's troops are routed.**
19. In al-Kūfa, Abū Salama does not want to disclose the identity of the Imām Abū l-'Abbās. The 'Abbāsīd partisans succeed in finding their Imām's hiding place, however.
20. **After Qaḥṭaba's death, the troops pledge allegiance to Qaḥṭaba's son al-Ḥasan. They go to al-Kūfa, where the vizier of the revolution, Abu Salama, calls Kufans to assemble in the main mosque.**

21. Al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba is sent to Wāsiṭ to fight Ibn Hubayra. Bassām b. Ibrāhīm b. Bassām is sent to Ahwāz.
22. The 12th of Rabī' I 132/20th of October 749: Abū Salama assembles the Kūfans at the main mosque, where Abū l-'Abbās preaches to the people. The people pledge allegiance to him.
23. **The 2nd of Jumādā II 132/16th of January 750: The battle of al-Zāb occurs, which seals the fate of the Umayyads.**
24. **Marwān flees. 'Abbāsīd troops conquer Damascus. Marwān reaches Egypt, where he is killed.**
25. Marwān's head tours Abū l-'Abbās's court and al-Kūfa. Some poems extolling and disparaging the Umayyads are quoted.
26. **Umayyads are massacred in al-Ḥijāz and Syria. In Damascus, the graves of the Umayyad family, with the exception of 'Umar II, are desecrated.**⁶⁷
27. Abū l-'Abbās disparages Syrian *shaykhs* for supporting the Umayyads.
28. The poet Sudayf b. Maymūn recites verses in front of Abū l-'Abbās, exhorting him to slaughter the remaining Umayyads.
29. The end of 132/July–August 750: Abū l-Ward Majza'a b al-Kawthar and Ḥabīb b. Murra al-Murrī put on white.
30. **Abū Ja'far goes to Khurāsān in order to get Abū Muslim's consent for the killing of Abū Salama.**
31. **Abū Ja'far does battle with Ibn Hubayra at Wāsiṭ. The latter surrenders on the condition that he receive a written *amān* 'quarter'.**
32. Two literary *khbars* about al-Sayyid b. Muḥammad al-Ḥimyarī and 'Abdallāh b. Sa'īd al-Sa'dī with Abū l-'Abbās al-Saffāh.
33. **Some further events toward the end of Abū l-'Abbās's reign: Muḥammad b. Ṣūl battles Musāfir b. Kathīr al-Khārijī in Armīniyya and Ādharbayjān and kills him; Abū Muslim comes to Iraq in order to visit Abū l-'Abbās and perform the pilgrimage.**
34. The *bay'a* is given to Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr.
35. **'Abdallāh b. 'Alī claims the caliphate after Abū l-'Abbās's death. Abū Muslim is sent to fight him.**
36. **Ibn al-Muqaffa' is killed.**
37. **The rancor between al-Manṣūr and Abū Muslim increases. Al-Manṣūr has Abū Muslim killed.**

Here, then, is what the *Kitāb al-Dawla* probably included. Accepting all the items is the maximalist reconstruction, while accepting only the items in bold is the minimum.

How the different recensions were reworked

Al-Ṭabarī and Ibn A'tham, it seems, did not have access to the exact same *dawla* traditions of al-Madā'inī. They might have used different versions or recensions of the *Kitāb al-Dawla* – that

⁶⁷ This is only hinted at in al-Ṭabarī, but it is definitely part of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* (see Appendix I, no. 26, for more details).

is, different versions composed by al-Madā'inī or different recensions transmitted and reworked by his students. It is also probable that al-Ṭabarī used other works of al-Madā'inī (for example, the *Kitāb Akhbār al-Khulafā' al-Kabīr* [Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* I: 102], to which Ibn A'tham, it seems, did not have access) and furnished additional information that way. Al-Balādhurī, who possibly received al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* firsthand by participating in al-Madā'inī's lectures (Lindstedt 2014: 108, n. 30), chose to reproduce in his *Ansāb* only bits and pieces of it.⁶⁸ Other authors, while offering some interesting variants, appear not to have had direct access to al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* but received short fragments through other authors, although it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between the two ways of receiving the text.⁶⁹

On the different recensions that circulated of the *Kitāb al-Dawla* of al-Madā'inī on which information is preserved for us, we can pinpoint only three: First, we have the al-Sukkarī 'an al-Ḥārith b. Abī Usāma recension, mentioned by Yāqūt.⁷⁰ Apart from Yāqūt's short description, it seems that no details of it survive. Of course, we have the unanswerable question of which recension Ibn A'tham was using. He could as well have been using that of al-Ḥārith b. Abī Usāma, but unfortunately no evidence for or against this survives. Second, we have Aḥmad b. Abī Khaythama Zuhayr's recension, which survives in al-Ṭabarī. Although the latter mentions Aḥmad only in a few places,⁷¹ we can assume that the whole of the *Kitāb al-Dawla* reached him in this recension. Ibn A'tham and al-Ṭabarī's quotations differ in such a way that it is inconceivable to think that Ibn A'tham could have used the same Aḥmad b. Abī Khaythama Zuhayr recension. Lastly, we have al-Balādhurī's recension, which he received firsthand from al-Madā'inī. Nevertheless, al-Balādhurī quotes material from the work only rarely as distinct items. More often, he includes al-Madā'inī's material in his anonymous/collective *qālū* accounts and reworks the material in the course.

Ibn A'tham

The fullest form of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* is transmitted by Ibn A'tham inasmuch as he opted to include even those parts that ran counter to the gathering consensus on the chronology and history of the 'Abbāsīd revolution current at the beginning of the fourth/tenth century. This means that he preserved such details from the *Kitāb al-Dawla* as Abū Salama's big role at the sermon in al-Kūfā, the intriguing possibility that Ibrāhīm al-Imām was still alive when allegiance was pledged to Abū l-'Abbās, which later historical writing (probably rightly) denied (Lindstedt 2014), and Abū Muslim's *amān* (Appendix I, no. 37). Ibn A'tham's *Kitāb al-Dawla* quotations form a somewhat larger but less detailed corpus than can be found in other sources. It must be borne in mind that Ibn A'tham reworked the material, making it more uncomplicated by greatly reducing the number of place and personal names, as well as other details occurring in the *Kitāb al-Dawla*.⁷² However, Ibn A'tham's *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, as it is available to us, itself rests on poor manuscript evidence, which further hampers the investigation of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*.

Ibn A'tham presents a continuous narration and removes the chains of transmission contained, in all likelihood, in the original *Kitāb al-Dawla*. This continuous narration is of

68 On al-Balādhurī's sources, see also Athamina 1984.

69 On the authors' handling of earlier material, see Athamina 2008; Lindstedt 2013.

70 See p. 74, above.

71 See fn. 60, above.

72 See the analysis in Appendix I, no. 37, "The Abū Muslim narrative in Ibn A'tham".

Ibn A'tham's own making: al-Balādhurī's and al-Ṭabarī's quotations from the *Kitāb al-Dawla* present an atomistic *khbar* structure. This also makes Ibn A'tham's quotations problematic for the reconstruction work.⁷³

For Ibn A'tham, the 'Abbāsīd revolution formed a logical continuation to the Muslim conquests of Khurāsān that had caused many Muslims to move to that area. The cause, significance, and legitimation of the *dawla* in his work are found in the sphere of *futūh* 'conquests' rather than theocracy or genealogy.

Al-Ṭabarī

Al-Ṭabarī had his own ideological tendencies. Hence, he decided to omit some parts that he considered to be insulting to the 'Abbāsīds, such as the massacre of the Umayyads (Appendix I, no. 26). Furthermore, he did not always follow al-Madā'inī as to the dating of the events (Lindstedt 2014: 112–117). He also left out poetry that was probably originally contained in the *Kitāb al-Dawla* of al-Madā'inī (Appendix I, no. 25). For al-Ṭabarī, history was mostly serious business.

However, al-Ṭabarī is invaluable in that when he quotes al-Madā'inī he leaves the prose text basically intact. Thanks to this, we are able to see that the *Kitāb al-Dawla* was very thorough in giving names and, for instance, discussing the composition of the 'Abbāsīd troops in detail. Furthermore, al-Ṭabarī does include some portions that are likely from the *Kitāb al-Dawla* but go unquoted by Ibn A'tham (e.g. Appendix I, nos. 5, 6, 8). Scholars of Islamic historiography have suggested rather often that al-Ṭabarī is faithful to his sources or even cites them verbatim. This claim seems to get corroboration from my analysis of how he works with al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*. Al-Ṭabarī is indeed, then, a good starting point for the reconstruction of earlier works. Nevertheless, al-Ṭabarī omits some accounts and cuts others into smaller pieces. Hence, his *Ta'rikh* alone is not sufficient for any investigation attempt. With al-Ṭabarī, we have to keep in mind all the time his strategies of omission and placement, which let him offer his interpretation of events even if he does not rework the material that he is extensively citing. Al-Ṭabarī, who followed a rather strict annalistic scheme, is responsible for the dating of many of the events contained in the *Kitāb al-Dawla* narratives. There is no evidence to suggest that al-Madā'inī adhered to such a model. Of course, sometimes al-Madā'inī himself gives dates for the events, but when he does not, it is to be assumed that it is al-Ṭabarī who placed the distinct pieces of the grand narrative under the years that they can be found in al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rikh*.

In al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rikh*, the 'Abbāsīd *dawla* is especially legitimized through theocracy (Donner 1998: 111) and genealogy (Donner 1998: 104–111): for him, the 'Abbāsīds represented the family of the Prophet, which had been decreed to rule by God (Donner 1998: 127–131, who notes, however, that the 'Abbāsīds are sometimes also portrayed in a negative light).

73 Landau-Tasseron (2004: 61–62) notes: "Generally speaking, in order to reconstruct lost works from later sources it is preferable to use material that is atomistically structured. Such material supposedly preserves the original form of the texts incorporated in it, whereas the continuous narrative reflects the reworking made by the later author." She adds, however, that this rule does not apply to, for example, al-Diyārbakrī's *Ta'rikh al-Khamīs*, in which "the atomistic structure results not from the piecing together of isolated original units, but from breaking up of former continuous narratives" (Landau-Tasseron 2004: 62).

Al-Balādhurī

Al-Balādhurī, as already stated, quotes al-Madā'inī haphazardly for his *dawla* narrative (indeed he uses all of his sources rather messily in the 'Abbāsīd part of his *Ansāb*). Besides combining the accounts into collective *khabars*, al-Balādhurī abridges the *isnāds* here and there (Lindstedt 2013: 49–50; Appendix I, no. 24). There are also a few cases where his *isnāds* seem suspect and possibly falsified on purpose (Appendix I, no. 37). Nonetheless, al-Balādhurī clearly had access to the *Kitāb al-Dawla*. He agrees more with al-Ṭabarī than with Ibn A'tham for the parts that he cites. His quotations show that the work indeed abounded in names. That is, the very different number of names occurring in the *Kitāb al-Dawla* citations in al-Ṭabarī and Ibn A'tham is due to the latter reducing their number (this can be especially seen in Appendix I, no. 37); al-Ṭabarī was not adding more detailed information to the *Kitāb al-Dawla* quotations from other sources.

Al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb* is historiography with a markedly genealogical outlook. The rule of the 'Abbāsīds, for him, was specifically genealogically justified. Note the order of the lineages treated in the *Ansāb*: 1) the Prophet, 2) 'Alī and the 'Alīds, 3) the 'Abbāsīds, 4) the Umayyads, 5) the rest of the Quraysh, and 6) other notable Arab tribes. This is a decreasing order of importance, where weight is given to the proximity in genealogy to the Prophet.

Al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb*'s 'Abbāsīd part (III: 1–282) can be read as a sort of *kitāb al-dawla* in itself. The whole narrative focuses on the revolution: The first 100 pages or so are dedicated to the preliminary and inception themes of the important early figures of the 'Abbāsīd family.⁷⁴ The next 150 pages deal with the revolution and its aftermath. Then the caliphate of al-Mahdī is discussed at relative length (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 252–277). Al-Mahdī's sons, the later caliphs al-Hādī and al-Rashīd, are treated very briefly (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 277–278). This closes the 'Abbāsīd section of al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb*. The question is, why did al-Balādhurī not deal with the reigns (and civil war) of al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn? The answer might not only lie in the problem that the *fitna* 'civil war' posed, but also in the idea of the *dawla* narrative that he inherited from earlier scholars. Haytham b. 'Adī and al-Madā'inī ended their *Kitāb al-Dawlas* with the discussion of the reigns of Abū l-'Abbās and al-Manṣūr, two caliphs whose time in power bore at least some messianistic undertones. Al-Balādhurī added a third one, al-Mahdī, whose title alone says enough. For al-Balādhurī, the narrative of the beginnings of the 'Abbāsīd rule was sacred history.

A comparison of a narrative from the three sources

I will reproduce here the passage on the escape and death of Naṣr b. Sayyār, since it is rather representative of how the *dawla* narrative appears to us in the sources and shows the problem of the reconstruction. This narrative is part of no. 11 in Appendix I.

74 For the different categories of themes in the *dawla* narratives, see below.

Table 1 The Naṣr b. Sayyār narrative in Ibn A'tham, al-Balādhurī, and al-Ṭabarī

Ibn A'tham, <i>Futūḥ</i> VIII: 168, l. 11–170, l. 3	Al-Balādhurī, <i>Ansāb</i> III: 130, l. 18–131, l. 6	Al-Ṭabarī, <i>Tārīkh</i> II: 1990, ll. 15–18
<p>قال: ودعا أبو مسلم بأربعة نفر من أصحابه منهم عامر بن إسماعيل الجرجاني وأخوه عمرو وسليمان بن كثير ولاهز بن قريظ. قال: سيروا إلى أرض نصر بن سيار فأقروا منه السلام وقولوا إن الأمير⁷⁵ يقول لك أن قد جاءنا كتاب من عند الإمام إبراهيم بن محمد بن علي بن عبد الله بن عباس وإنا نحب أن نعرضه عليك فصر إلينا أمنا مطمئنا.</p>	<p>[قالوا:] بعث [أبو مسلم] رسله إلى نصر بن سيار وقد أنسه وضمن له أن يكف عنه ويقوم بشأنه عند الإمام وأعلمه أن كتابا أتاه من عند الإمام يعده فيه ويمنيه ويضمن له الكرامة. وكان رسله لاهز بن قريظ وسليمان بن كثير وعمران بن إسماعيل وداود بن كراز. وقال لهم: أعلموه اني أريد مشافهته وقراءة كتاب الامام عليه.</p>	<p>[قال علي: وأخبرنا أبو الذيال والمفضل الضبي قال:] وأرسل أبو مسلم إلى نصر لاهز بن قريظ يدعو.</p>
<p>قال: فأقبل القوم فاستأذنوا على نصر بن سيار فأذن لهم فدخلوا وسلموا وبلغوا رسالة ابي مسلم.</p>	<p>فلما أتوه تلا لاهز قول الله عز وجل: «إن الملأ يأتمرون بك ليقتلوك» فتنبه نصر لما أراد من تحذيره فقال: أنا صائر معكم إلى الأمير ابي مسلم. ودخل بستانا له كأنه يريد أن يلبس ثيابه.</p>	<p>فقال لاهز: «إن الملأ يأتمرون بك ليقتلوك» فقرأ قبلها آيات. ففطن نصر وقال لغلامه: ضع لي وضوءا. وقام كأنه يريد الوضوء فدخل بستانا وخرج منه فركب وهرب.</p>
<p>قال: وجعل لاهز بن قريظ يقول: «ي موسى إن الملأ يأتمرون بك» فعرف نصر بن سيار أن أبا مسلم يدعو ليقته. فقال: نعم وكرامة ونعما عيني⁷⁶ أجيبيكم إلى ما أحببت⁷⁷ ولكن امهلوني الساعة حتى أنظر حاجة وأخرج اليكم. فجلس القوم ودخل نصر بن سيار بستانا له وذلك في جوف الليل وكانت ليلة مظلمة. ثم دعا بصاحب دوابه فقال: انتني ببرذوني الفلاني فاتاه فركب في ثلاثين غلاما وترك ماله قليله وكثيره وخرج من باب البستان هاربا على وجهه إلى ناحية نيسابور.</p>	<p>قال: وأبطأ عن الرسل فعملوا أنه قد هرب فرجعوا إلى ابي مسلم فخيروه بذلك. فقال أبو مسلم: ذروه الآن يمضي حيث يشاء ولكن ما الذي استراب منكم؟ فقالوا: والله ما لنا بذلك من علم ولكن تكلم هذا فقال «ي موسى إن الملأ يأتمرون بك» ولم يتم الآية⁷⁸ فقال: هذا الذي دعاه إلى الهرب.</p>	<p>ثم ركب دابته وهرب إلى الري فمات بقسطنطة. وسأل أبو مسلم عن نصر وهل أنذره أحد فأخبر بتلاوة لاهز الآية. فقال له: يا لاهز أعصيبة في الدين؟ قوما فاضربا عنقه. فضربت عنق لاهز.</p>
<p>قال: ثم قدم أبو مسلم لاهز بن قريظ فضرب عنقه. ثم أقبل إلى دار نصر بن سيار فانتهبها وأمر باحراقها. ثم استولى على جميع بلاد خراسان ووجه عماله إلى جميع البلاد فاحتوى عليها وجبى جميع خراجها. ومضى نصر بن سيار إلى نيسابور في غلمانه وأولاده وجميع من معه من بني تميم فمضى إلى الري ثم خرج منها يريد العراق حتى إذا صار على تسعة فراسخ من الري بموضع يقال له قسطنطة⁷⁹ توفي هنالك فدفن بها.</p>		

75 In the text appears *al-amr*, which is a mistake.

76 The text seems to be garbled. It should probably be amended to *fa-qāla na'man wa-karāmatan wa-na'ma 'aynī*.

77 Printed *ajbābtum*, which is nonsensical here.

78 The verse is Q. 28:20. "O Moses! the Chiefs are taking counsel together about thee, to slay thee so get thee away, for I do give thee sincere advice."

79 Printed FSTĀNA, which is a mistake.

From Table 1 above, we see that all the accounts, while sharing some features like the Qur'ānic quotation, diverge from each other. Hence, reconstructing the original wording of al-Madā'inī, if indeed we can talk about a single original text, is difficult or impossible. Only al-Ṭabarī explicitly says that he is citing al-Madā'inī, and his *khbar* is regrettably short.⁸⁰ Ibn A'tham, who is, as argued above, the best source for investigating al-Madā'inī's lost *Kitāb al-Dawla*, most probably also used other sources for this passage or reworked it in other ways. The reader who would like to know more about the in-depth problems related to the constitution of the *Kitāb al-Dawla* should refer to Appendix I.

To conclude the discussion on the transmission of the lost *Kitāb al-Dawla* of al-Madā'inī, the following Figure 1 will illustrate the known routes of transmission of that work:

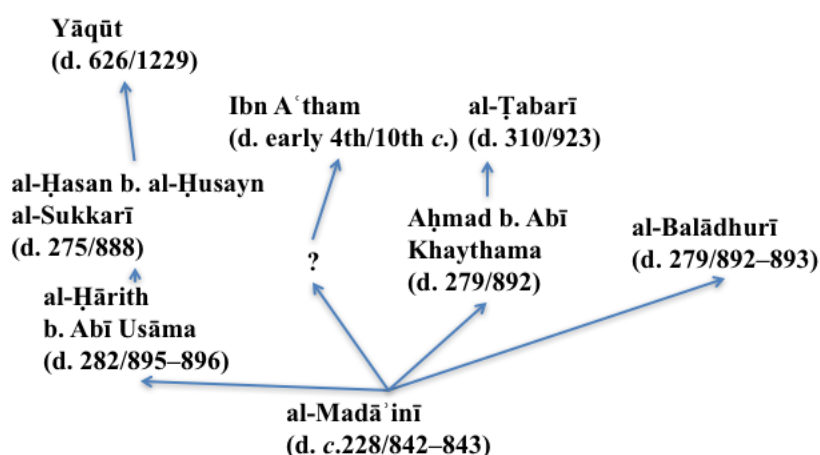


Figure 1 The known transmission routes of Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*

AL-MADĀ'INĪ AND THE NARRATIVES OF THE *DAWLA*

Al-Madā'inī's own role in the composition of the *Kitāb al-Dawla* has been all but ignored above. This and the next sections will analyze his *dawla* narrative and compare it to other known *Kitāb al-Dawlas* and further works that dealt with the 'Abbāsīd revolution. The main objects of comparison are al-Haytham b. 'Adī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb*, and the anonymous *Akhbār al-'Abbās*, although other works will be consulted and discussed, too. But first we have to say a few words on al-Madā'inī's sources to better grasp al-Madā'inī's own role in composing or compiling the *Kitāb al-Dawla*

Al-Madā'inī's sources

Al-Madā'inī's sources, as given in the chains of transmission, are identified and discussed at more length in Appendix II. Here I will give some general remarks about the provenance of his

80 As to al-Ṭabarī, he seems to have moved some of the material, found already here in Ibn A'tham, to *Ta'rikh* II: 1992–1995 (the *isnād* is decidedly ambivalent: *wa-qāla ghayru man dhakartu qawlahu fī amr Naṣr wa-Ibn al-Kirmānī wa-Shaybān al-Ḥarūrī*).

material. From the immediate outset of the 'Abbāsīd revolution, there must have been diverse accounts that we can call, in general, oral lore in circulation.

It seems that, with the possible exception of al-Haytham b. 'Adī, al-Madā'inī did not use written sources, although he claims to quote a couple of documents here and there (the authenticity of which is doubtful). Rather, he collected material orally from:

1. Earlier *akhbārīs*, many of them rather unknown to us, although there are also some better known figures: for example, Abū l-Sarī al-Nu'mān al-Marwazī, Jabala b. Farrūkh, and al-Mufaḍḍal b. Muḥammad al-Ḍabbī.
2. 'Abbāsīd partisans and court figures: for example, Yazīd b. Asīd/Usayd al-Sulamī, Ismā'īl b. Abī Ismā'īl al-Thaqafī, and Ḥasan b. Rashīd al-Jūzjānī.
3. Umayyad sources, of which Khālīd b. al-Aṣḥab b. 'Abdallāh and perhaps Iyās b. Ṭalḥa are representatives.

The great number of informants from his hometown of al-Baṣra should be noted, as should al-Madā'inī's habit of quoting official documents, such as *amāns* and letters. All in all, I would be rather skeptical that these faithfully reproduce original documents.⁸¹ First of all, the content of some of these documents is suspect. This is the case, for example, with Abū Muslim's reply to al-Manṣūr's letter. Abū Muslim's reply seems to indicate that he abandoned the 'Abbāsīd cause already in the reign of the first caliph Abū l-'Abbās (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 223–224; Appendix I, no. 37). This is rather doubtful and the whole letter smacks of an 'Abbāsīd forgery composed to justify Abū Muslim's murder. Second, as suggested above, al-Madā'inī was only a minor guest at the 'Abbāsīd court (and only in the reign of al-Ma'mūn), so it is questionable how he could have gained access to these documents – and whether such official documents existed any longer in Baghdād at the time of al-Ma'mūn, in the post-civil war era. We can, of course, conjecture that al-Madā'inī saw some letters and other documents through his 'Abbāsīd contacts, but even in this case the documents could have been forged and showcased by the 'Abbāsīds to justify their power. The fact that al-Madā'inī also consulted informants that witnessed the events on the Umayyad side is interesting and shows that his *Kitāb al-Dawla* is not (just) an apologetic account written for the 'Abbāsīds.

The dates of al-Madā'inī's firsthand sources can give some indications of when the *Kitāb al-Dawla* was composed or, at least, when al-Madā'inī collected material for the work. The death dates (in the cases where they are known) of his sources range from al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbī's in c.164/780–781 to Sa'īd b. Aws's in 215/830–831 (see Appendix II). Thus, we can say that the *Kitāb al-Dawla* contained material that derived from his early studies around the 770s CE, when al-Madā'inī was perhaps in his 20s, but it also included material that he probably collected much later. Very tentatively, we can place the composition of the *Kitāb al-Dawla* to c.800–830 CE.

Some theoretical remarks

To analyze al-Madā'inī and other authors' *dawla* narratives, I have made use of the theoretical and methodological discussion in the work of Fred Donner (1998). He treats Arabic historiography in general, but I believe that the remarks can be also used, with some changes, in the study of the 'Abbāsīd revolution and its historiography.

⁸¹ Other scholars have been less suspicious. For example, Sharon (1990: 162) notes that a *bay'a* document cited on the authority of Abū l-Khaṭṭāb “appears to be” authentic.

Types of legitimation in Arabic historiography

In Donner's monograph on the Islamic historical narratives, I have found the following three modes of legitimation useful. They can also be used to analyze the historiography of the 'Abbāsīd revolution and will be referred to in this study:

1. *Genealogical legitimation*: "the mere fact of membership in a particular kinship or ethnic group accords legitimate claim to special status" (Donner 1998: 104). In the context of the 'Abbāsīds, genealogical legitimation is twofold: First of all, the 'Abbāsīds belong to the Prophet's family, since they are the descendants of the Prophet's uncle, al-'Abbās, who is raised to a great position in the apologetic accounts (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 2–6). Second, the 'Abbāsīds belong to the Shī'a since they received the testament of Abū Hāshim b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya (d. c.98/716–717).⁸² The 'Abbāsīds, then, were the true inheritors of the Prophet and 'Alī.
2. *Theocratic legitimation*: "God wants it that way" (Donner 1998: 111). This is especially clear during the revolutionary phase of the *dawla* narratives. In the accounts of the military clashes between the 'Abbāsīd and Umayyad armies, the reader is reminded that God is on the side of the 'Abbāsīds, whereas the Umayyads are those that have burned "the House and the Book of God" (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 135).
3. *Historicizing legitimation*: "legitimation by means of narratives about the past" (Donner 1998: 112). The whole idea of compiling and composing narratives of the beginnings of the 'Abbāsīd rule is an act that aimed at historicizing legitimation. This mode of legitimation reached its culmination in such fourth/tenth-century authors as al-Ṭabarī and Ibn A'tham when they included the *dawla* narrative in their longer history. For the former, the 'Abbāsīd revolution and rule was a central part of his grand view of the history of the Muslim community; for the latter, the *dawla* meant that the Islamic conquest of the east had finally been consolidated.

The different themes

The writings on the 'Abbāsīd *dawla*, including al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, can be understood through four different categories of themes:

1. *Themes of preparation* function as an overall introduction and anticipate the *inception* themes (Donner 1998: 142–143). In the narratives of the *dawla*, one example of these is the Prophet's promise and his and early Muslims' prophecies that the reign will come to the 'Abbāsīds. The discussion of the Prophet's uncle al-'Abbās and the latter's son

⁸² This was an important subject of al-Haytham's *Kitāb al-Dawla*; see Nagel 1972: 13–25, 37–38. Also, modern scholars often note that the early 'Abbāsīds should be understood in the context of the Shī'a; for example, see Daniel 1979: 26: "the Abbasid movement began as a relatively minor and obscure shī'ī sect". For a modern discussion of the testament of the Abū Hāshim episode, see, e.g., Daniel 1979: 28–29; Lassner 1986: 6–8, 55–71; Haider 2011. Sharon (1983: 126) discusses the episode as a historical fact; I would be more skeptical. It is probably the case that the narratives on the testament were just one way the 'Abbāsīds endeavored to legitimize their rule, even though Sharon (1983: 125) is correct in noting that, according to the sources, Abū Hāshim did not have male children, which could have been the motive for the transmission of the sacred authority from the 'Alid line to the 'Abbāsīds. Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila has informed me (pers. comm.) that this could be interpreted in other ways, too: because it was known that Abū Hāshim did not father male heirs, it was easy to invent a narrative about the testament. On the other hand, Mehdy Shaddel has remarked (pers. comm.) that Abū Hāshim did have closer kin who could have been his successor. This is ignored by the pro-'Abbāsīd narratives.

also belongs to the themes of preparation since it is not overtly related to the 'Abbāsīd revolution but forms the background for the idea that the 'Abbāsīds propagated, that the 'Abbāsīds are a sacred family and their blood is inviolable.

2. *Themes of inception* form “the retrospective origination point of the community” (Donner 1998: 142). The stories on how the 'Abbāsīd propagandists were sent to Khurāsān and elsewhere to conduct *da'wa* form the *inception* of the *dawla* narratives. Al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* does not dwell on these two themes (preparation and inception), but they receive more space in, for example, the anonymous *Akhhbār al-'Abbās*. They are also perceivable in the *Ansāb* of al-Balādhurī (namely, in vol. III of the modern edition). Jacob Lassner (1986) has written an important modern study on what we can call the *preparation* and *inception* themes of the 'Abbāsīd historiography.
3. The revolution itself, that is, the military phase following the *da'wa*, is an example of a *boundary theme*. *Boundary themes* work on many levels. Within the wider Muslim community, the *dawla* was “a decisive turn by the community away from the oppression of the Umayyad dynasty” (Donner 1998: 143). On the other hand, boundaries are also drawn in other ways in the narratives of the *dawla*: one must especially note the 'Abbāsīds' disavowal of the 'Alīds, which happened during and through the revolution.
4. The last type of theme I call *themes of aftermath and future*. This represents the concluding part of the *dawla* narratives. These themes come into play by the appearance of Abū l-'Abbās as the first 'Abbāsīd caliph in al-Kūfa in 132/749, or the narrative might continue further, also mentioning the second caliph al-Manṣūr and the many political murders instigated by him (Abū Salama, Ibn al-Muqaffa', Abū Muslim). This is where al-Madā'inī in all likelihood ended his *Kitāb al-Dawla*. The narratives on the murders, which might seem at first glance unflattering to the 'Abbāsīds or simply a weird way to end a work, receive their justification from the role that they play in the grand narrative of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*. At the end, the reader/hearer observes the 'Abbāsīds firmly in power, with no enemies left alive.⁸³

The theme of *future* is only suggested in the different *dawla* narratives, but the implication is clear enough: the 'Abbāsīd rule was there to stay, perhaps till the beginning of the eschatological events. There are, however, no clear apocalyptic overtones in al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*.

AL-MADĀ'INĪ'S NARRATIVE IN COMPARISON TO OTHERS

We will start with the size. Al-Haytham b. 'Adī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, possibly the first such book composed, seems to have been rather short, and it would probably make up a few dozen pages in a modern edition if a manuscript were to be found (Nagel 1972: 13–25). Al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, which was to some extent based on the idea of a *dawla* work that he possibly received from al-Haytham, was already longer, it seems. The most important source to reproduce it is Ibn A'tham, in whose work the *dawla* narrative stemming from al-Madā'inī is some seventy pages long in the modern edition (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 159–229). This gives some idea of the length of al-Madā'inī's lost *Kitāb al-Dawla*.

To continue with works that are extant, we see that in al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb*, the *dawla* narrative is already over two hundred pages long (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 1–224), although this is of

⁸³ Al-Madā'inī disseminated his works mainly by lecturing; see Lindstedt 2013. Hence, the word “reader” is not very fortunate.

course to some extent due to a different approach: al-Balādhurī recorded everything he knew of the 'Abbāsīd family and did not just concentrate on the revolution. The anonymous author of the *Akhbār al-'Abbās* had a similar, maximalist approach. Indeed, al-Balādhurī is one of his sources, so al-Balādhurī's concept of the importance of the whole 'Abbāsīd family and its lore probably influenced him directly. The work is over four hundred pages long in the modern edition.

Themes of preparation

These themes are not very important in al-Madā'inī's narrative (only Appendix I, no. 1, represents them). The fact that al-Madā'inī did not have much to do with the 'Abbāsīd court might be a factor in his downplaying of the supernatural and the themes of preparation and inception in his *dawla* narrative. Based on quotations of al-Madā'inī's *akhbār* on al-'Abbās that stem, most probably, from works other than his *Kitāb al-Dawla*, it can be seen that his narratives are much more matter of fact and mundane in nature than those of other authors (see, e.g., al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 16–18, 50). For al-Madā'inī, al-'Abbās was not a sacred figure. As for al-Haytham b. 'Adī, who frequented the 'Abbāsīd caliphs from al-Manṣūr to al-Rashīd (Pellat 1971), themes of preparation were much more important to him, as far as we can judge from Nagel's reconstruction.

In his *Kitāb al-Dawla*, al-Haytham b. 'Adī emphasized the significance of Abū Hāshim b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya's testament for the 'Abbāsīds (Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *al-'Iqd al-Farīd* IV: 475–476).⁸⁴ For him, the role of al-'Abbās as the Prophet's uncle was not yet an important factor for the genealogical legitimation of the 'Abbāsīds. In al-Haytham's narrative, the 'Abbāsīds were, then, the true inheritors of the Shī'a even without the sacredness of al-'Abbās, which later became an important theme (Nagel 1972: 37–38). According to al-Haytham, the “secret *bay'a* and the clandestine *da'wa*” (Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *al-'Iqd al-Farīd* IV: 475) were carried out by the Hāshimites since the killing of al-Ḥusayn. His narrative, then, links the advent of the 'Abbāsīds with the wider context of the Shī'a. Al-Madā'inī also reports the narrative of Abū Hāshim's testament in one form (Haider 2011: 56–58), but as my investigation of his *Kitāb al-Dawla* in Appendix I shows, I do not consider it part of that work since it is not included in Ibn A'tham's or al-Ṭabarī's works with an attribution to him.

In al-Haytham b. 'Adī's narrative, the testament of Abū Hāshim foretells that the first two 'Abbāsīd caliphs (Abū l-'Abbās and al-Manṣūr) will both be *ṣāhib hādihā l-amr*, “possessor of this authority/cause” (Lassner 1986: 57–58). Ibrāhīm al-Imām is overlooked, probably showing embarrassment at his fate, an untimely death in Ḥarrān at the hands of Marwān.⁸⁵

It is only with the passing of some time and the appearance of such works as al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb* and the *Akhbār al-'Abbās* that the role of al-'Abbās as the uncle of the Prophet becomes highlighted.⁸⁶ This is probably because during the time of al-Balādhurī and the anonymous author, the 'Abbāsīds were no longer seen as the inheritors of the Shī'a. Rather, they were seen – and wanted to be seen – as the enemies of the heretical Shī'a.⁸⁷ While the *Ansāb* and the *Akhbār*

84 For an analysis of the different versions of the narrative, see Lassner 1986: 55–71; Haider 2011.

85 On the accounts of Ibrāhīm al-Imām's demise, see Lindstedt 2014.

86 See also Sharon (1983: 82–99) on the image of al-'Abbās and the early 'Abbāsīds.

87 The rift should probably be dated to the reign of al-Manṣūr, as in the following account: “He (al-Manṣūr) caused a split between the descendants of 'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and the family of Abū Ṭālib; prior to this their cause was common” (Sharon 1983: 90, n. 41, quoting al-Mas'ūdī).

al-'Abbās also record the will of Abū Hāshim b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 80), in both texts the will is not the main source that makes the 'Abbāsids sacred.

Al-Balādhurī quoted many *akhbār* that belong to the themes of preparation (for the most part from authorities other than al-Madā'inī) in his *Ansāb*. He was especially concerned with exonerating the reputation of al-'Abbās, who, in a number of other narratives, appeared to be a late convert to Islam who fought against the Prophet in the battle of Badr. In the narratives cited by al-Balādhurī, al-'Abbās is said to have converted to Islam early on but was afraid of the Quraysh so he hid the fact (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 2–6). Interestingly, in a year of drought, 18/639–640, an *istisqā'* 'prayer for rain' does not at first yield anything when it is said in the name of the Prophet (who is dead). When it is said in the name of al-'Abbās (who is still alive), however, rain abounds (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 8). To some, the 'Abbāsids carried true, living religious charisma. The account is not commenting on the early Islamic community or the role of al-'Abbās in it. It is rather part of early 'Abbāsīd propaganda and a comment on the contemporary situation: the 'Abbāsīd family and caliphs are sacred and, indeed, the source of rain and fertility. The 'Abbāsīd caliphs were drawing on an older motif already in use by the Umayyads and their panegyrists: the rain that makes the earth bountiful is one form of the caliph's munificence (Crone & Hinds 1986: 8–9, 35–37, 82, 101).

However, overwhelming evidence seems to suggest that al-'Abbās was a late convert to Islam and "his relations with Muḥammad were more correct than warm" (Daniel 1979: 27). To counter the 'Abbāsīd portrayals of al-'Abbās, the uncle of Muḥammad, the Shī'a later expounded the idea that the Prophet actually loved his uncle Abū Ṭālib more than his other uncles (Sharon 1983: 45; Donner 1987). They also noted that Abū Ṭālib was Muḥammad's full uncle, whereas al-'Abbās shared only the same father with 'Abdallāh (Muḥammad's father) but not the mother. The *Akhhār al-'Abbās* (165–166, translation adopted from Sharon 1983: 86, with some changes) tells us that it was the idea of the third 'Abbāsīd caliph, al-Mahdī, to reduce the importance of Abū Hāshim b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya's testament to the 'Abbāsids and emphasize the importance of al-'Abbās as the inheritor of the Prophet himself:

The *Kaysāniyya* believed in the *imāma* of Muḥammad b. 'Alī [i.e. Ibn al-Ḥanafīyya] and asserted that his father [the fourth caliph 'Alī] had appointed him as his successor. The *Kaysāniyya* were associated with Mukhtār b. Abī 'Ubayd, otherwise known as Kaysān, who was the first to believe in the *imāma* of Muḥammad b. 'Alī [Ibn al-Ḥanafīyya]. This view was held (also) by 'Alī b. 'Abdallāh [b. al-'Abbās] and his descendants down to the time of al-Mahdī. The organization of the 'Abbāsīd Shī'a originated in Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya, and on this Abū Muslim based his propaganda. This went on until the time of al-Mahdī. Al-Mahdī bade them, however, to establish the *imāma* in the name of al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, telling them: "The *imāma* belonged to al-'Abbās, the Prophet's paternal uncle [...] since he was the most worthy of all men to succeed him and was his nearest kinsman. After him, the *imāma* passed on to 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās, after him to 'Alī b. 'Abdallāh, after him to Muḥammad b. 'Alī, after him to Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad, after him to Abū al-'Abbās, after him to Abū Ja'far, and after him to al-Mahdī.

Al-'Abbās's son, 'Abdallāh, is an even more sacred and central figure in al-Balādhurī's narrative. 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās is shown, for instance, talking with Archangel Gabriel, who brings 'Abdallāh wisdom (*al-ḥikma*). 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās is shown to have contacts with the Shī'a (broadly understood), such as al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī. In a narrative, 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās suggests

(to al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī) that al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī should battle Mu'āwiya (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 51).⁸⁸ Furthermore, 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās had contacts with Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 53). When 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās dies, an invisible supernatural voice recites the Qur'ān, verses 89:28–30, at his funeral. These stories were, in the passage of time, developed further. In a work by a late author, Ibn Ṭabātabā, the Prophet himself grants the *imāma* to 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās, whom he calls “the father of the kings” (quoted in Lassner 1986: 27–28).

Another son of al-'Abbās, Qutham, is said to have looked like the Prophet and been the foster brother of al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 65). Clearly the whole 'Abbāsīd family was sacred and belonged to the *ahl al-bayt*, family of the Prophet,⁸⁹ resembling him outwardly and inwardly. They were also pious wagers of the *jihād*, such as Qutham b. al-'Abbās, for example, dying as a martyr at Samarqand and his brother Ma'bad in Ifrīqiyya (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 65–66). Al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 158–159) also quotes an account noting that the 'Abbāsīds were the inheritors of the Prophet's mantle (*burd*), literally.⁹⁰

The *Akḥbār al-'Abbās* is awash with similar stories. Sharon (1983: 83) notes that the author of the *Akḥbār* “devoted most of the opening hundred pages, or nearly a quarter of his book, to 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās' biography”. In one of the most noteworthy accounts, 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās foretells that prophethood and caliphate will be conjoined in a member of the Prophet's family (the Banū Hāshim). This king and *mahdī* will then “fill the world with justice” (*Akḥbār al-'Abbās*: 52). This account might have something to do with the very early, indeed contemporary, conception (later reinterpreted) that the first caliph, Abū l-'Abbās, already held the regnal title al-Mahdī (al-Jbour 2001).

In the sources, 'Alī b. 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās is not as interesting a figure as his father and grandfather.⁹¹ Lassner (1986: 53) is probably right in describing 'Alī b. 'Abdallāh as having “little impact, if any, on the revolutionary movement”. However, there are stories to the effect that he was named after or by 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and, hence, was an inheritor of the latter's spiritual authority (Sharon 1983: 122; Lassner 1986: 39–40).

Themes of preparation, where they appear, are often fictitious from a modern historian's point of view. They were part of later 'Abbāsīd propaganda to legitimize their rule from a theocratic and genealogical standpoint. They are an intrinsic part of, for example, the pro-'Abbāsīd *Akḥbār al-'Abbās*, but they do not feature prominently at all in al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*. While al-Madā'inī wrote other works that dealt with the earlier history of the 'Abbāsīd family, surviving quotations show that even in these narratives of al-Madā'inī, al-'Abbās did not appear as a holy figure.

88 Once again, other material points at an opposite picture. 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās seems to have been on good terms with Mu'āwiya and other Umayyad caliphs, “a fact of some embarrassment to later partisans of his family” (Daniel 1979: 27). In fact, the 'Abbāsīd family had contacts with the Umayyad caliphs up to the reign of Hishām (105/724–125/743); see Sharon 1983: 124.

89 For the term *ahl al-bayt* and its different uses, see Sharon 1983: 75–82. The concept of *ahl al-bayt*, being the family of the Prophet, was very important for the early 'Abbāsīds, which can also be seen in the fact that the early coins issued by the 'Abbāsīds contained Q. 42:23: “No reward do I ask of you for this except the love of those near of kin” (*lā as'alukum 'alayhi ajran illā l-mawadda fī l-qurbā*). It does not require much imagination to conclude that by *al-qurbā* the 'Abbāsīds meant themselves, the kin of the Prophet. On these issues, see Sharon 1990: 123, with references.

90 In many accounts, the Prophet bestows the community of Muslims on the 'Abbāsīds; see Lassner 1986: 22–24.

91 On the accounts concerning him, see Lassner 1986: 39–54.

Themes of inception

The themes of inception also seem to be more or less lacking in al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* (see, however, Appendix I, nos. 2 and 3). The most important theme of inception in other *dawla* narratives is the sending of the 'Abbāsīd propagandists (*du'āt*) to Khurāsān. Another significant one is the figure of Abū Muslim and the accounts of his background.

In al-Haytham's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, the sending of the *du'āt* is placed in the year AH 100 (Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *al-'Iqd al-Farīd* IV: 477), a date that has clear apocalyptic undertones. In the same year, it is said, the 'Abbāsīd *mahdī*, the first caliph Abū l-'Abbās, is born. The birth of a rival *mahdī*, the Ḥasanid Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh (also known as al-Nafs al-Zakiyya), is also said to have occurred in the year AH 100 (Nagel 1972: 62–63). But the audience and readership of al-Haytham's *Kitāb al-Dawla* already knew that Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh's (d. 145/762) revolt in al-Ḥijāz was a failure. Indeed, it seems that al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* also began with a narrative that proved the 'Abbāsīds' supremacy over the Ḥasanids to be true (and, one may suspect, at the same time of the 'Abbāsīds' supremacy over the other lineages of the family of the Prophet as well) (Appendix I, no. 1). In the story that takes place in the Umayyad era, 'Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan, al-Nafs al-Zakiyya's father, says that it is not yet the time for his sons to revolt. However, the 'Abbāsīd 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī says that if the Ḥasanids do not revolt, he will snatch power from the Umayyads. This, of course, turns out to be true later in the *dawla* narrative; Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh's revolt was a minor affair, easily crushed by the 'Abbāsīd Caliph al-Manṣūr. However, as far as I know, the narratives of Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh's revolt did not form a part of any *Kitāb al-Dawla*, although, as has been said, Ibn al-Naṭṭāh's work with that title probably continued at least until the year AH 145 and therefore could have included an account of the rebellion as a sort of aftermath theme.

The accounts of the origins of Abū Muslim also belong to the themes of inception, since it is only with his help that the 'Abbāsīd *da'wa* really starts to gain sway in Khurāsān. Al-Madā'inī only briefly refers to Abū Muslim becoming part of the 'Abbāsīd cause (Appendix I, no. 2, if my reconstruction is correct). Al-Madā'inī does not discuss the background of Abū Muslim at length, but other authors did. Al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 118–120), for one, inserts into his work a rather long account of Abū Muslim's descent. Needless to say, modern scholars have also been intrigued, even obsessed, by the shadowy figure of Abū Muslim (Moscati 1960; Sharon 1983: index; Lassner 1984; Agha 2000a).

So, al-Haytham notes that the 'Abbāsīd propagandists were sent to Khurāsān, dating this to the year 100/718–719. But it is only when Abū Muslim becomes their leader that they are truly able to plant a seed for the 'Abbāsīd cause in the province. When the *fitna* between the Muḍar and the Yaman begins, the 'Abbāsīd propagandists understand that the moment of the *dawla* has drawn close (Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *al-'Iqd al-Farīd* IV: 477). The *fitna* or *'aṣabiyya* as a sign for the preparation for the militant phase of the revolution is also found in al-Madā'inī's narrative (Appendix I, no. 3), although, it seems, it made up an even more important part in Abū l-Khaṭṭāb's (earlier) accounts of the *dawla* (Sharon 1990: 116–118).⁹²

Themes of inception, like preparation, are part of the 'Abbāsīd sacred history. The narratives representing these themes cannot be accepted at face value. What is more, the accounts are in some cases demonstrably *later* than the accounts of the later events, although they of course feign to be *older*. This conclusion can be reached by two different ways of reasoning: 1) it is

92 For the *'aṣabiyya* clashes preceding the 'Abbāsīd revolution, see Daniel 1979: 43–45.

clear from many narratives presenting the themes of inception and preparation that they propagate a view that only became predominant after the revolution, namely, that the whole family of the 'Abbāsīds, al-'Abbās included, was sacred. The idea is not yet present in the works of al-Haytham and al-Madā'inī; and 2) when al-Haytham and al-Madā'inī and early *dawla* authors began to collect the accounts of the revolution, which we can place approximately in 800 CE, there were still people alive that had themselves witnessed the revolution. If the chains of transmission are of any value, al-Haytham and al-Madā'inī consulted these individuals. In my opinion, the chains of transmission seem to be, for the most part, reliable in terms of the first link of the chain before al-Madā'inī (see Appendix II for his sources). However, there were fewer people alive who would have experienced the *da'wa* phase (730–740s CE), let alone the earlier deeds of the 'Abbāsīd family. Al-Madā'inī, for one, ascribes the narratives on these events to unknown or badly known *rāwīs*, most of whom were probably not eyewitnesses to the revolution (e.g. Appendix I, nos. 1–3). Other modern scholars have also noticed that the reports on the early history of the *da'wa* are full of inconsistencies (Daniel 1979: 29).

Boundary themes

Boundary themes in the *dawla* literature consist particularly of the violent revolution itself, the overthrow of the Umayyads by the 'Abbāsīd armies, and the massacre of the surviving members of the Umayyad family. This is the true *dawla*, the end of the impious Umayyad era and the beginning of a new one, marked by the coming to power of the family of the Prophet, represented by the 'Abbāsīds (and the 'Abbāsīds only). These were very important themes in al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, and the main bulk of the work dealt with the battles, clashes, and massacres by means of which the 'Abbāsīds drew (or were portrayed to have drawn) the boundary between themselves and the Umayyads (Appendix I, nos. 4–26).

According to Nagel (1972: 9–12), in the early narratives, and especially in al-Haytham's use, the word *dawla* receives almost messianistic overtones. It could be noted that it was not only the 'Abbāsīds who were awaiting such a *dawla*: similar expectations were ascribed to other Shī'ī movements as well (Bayhom-Daou 2003–2004: 46, n. 101). The *dawla*, then, was a *dawlat al-mahdī*, a transition from an ungodly reign to the reign of the righteous leader, with *al-mahdī* being not only the title of a messianistic figure but also the regnal title which the first 'Abbāsīd caliph, Abū l-'Abbās, seems to have adopted (Elad 2010: 39–43). Because his reign was cut short by his early death, the title was forgotten and replaced by a less messianistic but even more violent al-Saffāḥ, often and probably correctly translated as 'the bloodshedder'. The title al-Mahdī was later given to the third 'Abbāsīd caliph but, as is so often the case, even his reign did not provoke eschatological events.⁹³

It is interesting to note that al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* also included accounts describing the views and feelings of the other side, namely, that of the Umayyads (e.g. Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 160–168). His *dawla* narrative is not, then, told only from the 'Abbāsīd point of view. The central character on the Umayyad side is the governor Naṣr b. Sayyār. In particular, his and his companions' escape from the 'Abbāsīds is told in a sympathetic manner (Appendix I, no. 11). This is probably because his informant was a pro-Umayyad figure, a certain Ṭalḥa b. Iyās, whose father was a *qāḍī* of al-Yamāma for the Umayyads (see Appendix II, s.v. Ṭalḥa b. Iyās).

93 See Bacharach 1993 and Bates 2003 for the numismatic record. Al-Mahdī received the title before assuming office.

Even though al-Madā'inī also consulted informants who had witnessed the events of the revolution from the other side, it is of course the 'Abbāsīd side whose narrative dominates and which al-Madā'inī, in the end, related to. From the battle narratives, it appears rather frequently that God is on the side of the 'Abbāsīd armies. Thus, these narratives served a purpose related to theocratic legitimation. Sharon (1990: 190) is of the opinion, probably correctly, that al-Madā'inī's narratives were often "stylized to fit into a more or less stereotyped battle description".

In a fascinating account traceable back to al-Madā'inī, the 'Abbāsīd commander Qaḥṭaba b. Shabīb is said to have attached a Qur'ānic manuscript (*muṣḥaf*) to a lance before a battle against the Umayyads (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 172), evoking the events (or the narratives of the events) of the first *fitna* 'civil war'. The irony is clear: in the first *fitna* it was the Umayyads (i.e. Mu'āwīya's side) that tied copies of the Qur'ān to spears, and now it is the 'Abbāsīds who emerge victorious against the Umayyads (Daniel 1979: 77). The legacy of the Prophet⁹⁴ and divine favor clearly belong to the 'Abbāsīds, not the Umayyads.

According to al-Madā'inī, when the defeat becomes clear to Marwān II after many losses to the 'Abbāsīd armies on the battlefield, he is shown as a pitiful, frail man who has lost all his supporters. He even contemplates escaping to the Byzantine Empire, which is clearly a disgraceful idea (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 180–181).

Some narratives belonging to this category and stemming from al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* have been analyzed elsewhere; one can point to the death of Ibrāhīm al-Imām and the *bay'a* of Abū l-'Abbās (Lindstedt 2014), as well as the death of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān II (Lindstedt 2013: 48–54). For the 'Abbāsīds, the most awkward aspect in the imprisonment and demise of Ibrāhīm al-Imām was that he was the leader that the 'Abbāsīds probably planned to enthrone. This becomes clear in al-Madā'inī's narrative (Lindstedt 2014: 117). The death of the caliph-to-be, Ibrāhīm al-Imām, was something that other authors also found problematic. Al-Balādhurī quoted some (non-al-Madā'inī) *khābars* to solve this problem, as well as the fact that the man given the *bay'a*, Abū l-'Abbās, was not intended to be the caliph in the first place. In one report, it is emphasized that Abū l-'Abbās was the one who most resembled Ibrāhīm al-Imām (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 122). The awkward change of the caliph thus becomes smoother.

There are yet other (non-al-Madā'inī) accounts that connect the 'Abbāsīd *da'wa* and *dawla* to the different Shī'ī uprisings of the last years of the Umayyads. They are sometimes adorned with poetic embellishments, such as the poetry of Sudayf b. Maymūn, that link the killings of al-Ḥusayn (called *sibt aḥmad*, 'the grandson of Aḥmad [the Prophet]'), Zayd b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, his son Yaḥyā b. Zayd,⁹⁵ and Ibrāhīm al-Imām all together (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 126, 162). The 'Abbāsīds are in this way connected to the Shī'a, broadly understood, and are seen as avengers of the deaths of the earlier Shī'ī figures (Sharon 1990: 135–137); Daniel (1979: 39) remarks: "As always, the Abbasids capitalized on the strength of other movements by assimilating them with their own." As for Ibrāhīm al-Imām, he becomes a paradigmatic Shī'ī martyr. Moreover, Abū l-'Abbās is transformed into the first real, legitimate caliph that the Muslim community has had since 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.⁹⁶ Because of the 'Alī connection and

94 *Mīrāth Aḥmad*, appearing in a poem in Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 185).

95 On the revolts and killings of Zayd b. 'Alī and Yaḥyā b. Zayd, see Daniel 1979: 38–39; Sharon 1983: 174–183; 1990: 117, n. 49.

96 Dāwūd b. 'Alī's inauguration speech in al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 140–141). This shows that the early 'Abbāsīds did not yet espouse the idea of the four *rāshidūn* caliphs. 'Alī was accepted, of course, because he belonged to the Prophet's clan, Banū Hāshim, and, more particularly, the *ahl al-bayt*. On this speech, see also Sharon 1983: 106–107.

other similar features of the 'Abbāsīd historiography that link the 'Abbāsīds to the early history of Islam, Lassner (1986: xii) has noted:

The victory of the Banū 'Abbās is embellished with apocalyptic symbols and heralded as a return to the halcyon days of early Islam. Seen from this perspective, the great upheaval occasioned by the 'Abbāsīd revolution was actually a restorative process.

In al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, the killings of Zayd b. 'Alī and Yaḥyā b. Zayd also play a significant role in the 'Abbāsīd propaganda. It said that donning the color black – the official color of the 'Abbāsīds, especially during the 'Abbāsīd revolution – was a sign that they were mourning the two figures (al-Madā'inī in Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 160).⁹⁷ In a non-al-Madā'inī tradition recounted in the *Akḥbār al-'Abbās*, when the Khurāsānīs address Ibrāhīm al-Imām, they note that Zayd b. 'Alī and Yaḥyā b. Zayd are *ahl baytika*, 'people of your house' (Sharon 1983: 147, n. 176, referring to the *Akḥbār al-'Abbās*: 241). In the same work, one of the 'Abbāsīd agents asks rhetorically in the presence of Ibrāhīm al-Imām: "How long will the birds eat the flesh of your family and how long will their blood be shed? We left Zayd crucified at al-Kunāsa [in al-Kūfa] and his son [Yaḥyā] driven in flight to the province [Khurāsān]. Fear has enveloped you while the evil house [of the Umayyads] continues beyond the point of toleration" (*Akḥbār al-Dawla*: 241, translation from Lassner 1986: 94).

The 'Abbāsīd historiography, then, showed the 'Abbāsīds drawing legitimacy from three different Shī'ī sources: 1) through a testament from Abū Hāshim ← Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya ← 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (the latter's father); 2) al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, by avenging his killing; and 3) Zayd b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī and his son Yaḥyā b. Zayd, by avenging their killings. No wonder, then, that according to al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* the people in al-Kūfa expected the Khurāsānī troops to proclaim an 'Alid as caliph (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 177, the last line). Analyzing the *Kitāb Sulaym b. Qays*, Patricia Crone (2005) has suggested that this Shī'ī work was composed in an environment just after the 'Abbāsīd revolution, when the Shī'a still viewed the revolution as a fulfillment for the 'Alids. Needless to say, many of them later became disappointed.

The massacres of the Umayyads form an interesting cycle in al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* (see Robinson 2010 for these events). They are quoted at the greatest length by Ibn A'tham, where they appear as a direct command of Abū l-'Abbās to 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī to kill all Umayyads that he can get his hands on (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 193–194, 196, 199–201, 204–205). Al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'rīkh* III: 51) only hints at this, saying that seventy-two Umayyads were slaughtered by 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī at Abū Fuṭrus.⁹⁸ According to al-Madā'inī, Umayyads were massacred in al-Ḥijāz (quoted by Ibn A'tham and al-Balādhurī), Abū Fuṭrus (al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī), and al-Shām (Ibn A'tham and al-Balādhurī). Furthermore, the bodies of the Umayyad caliphs, save for 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, were dug out of their graves in Damascus and the tombs burned (Ibn A'tham, al-Azdī, and al-Balādhurī; see Appendix I, nos. 26–28). This was clearly a widespread program designed to annihilate the whole of the Umayyad family – not a petty affair.

The most macabre episode of the massacres in al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* is clearly the dinner party thrown by Abū l-'Abbās (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 199–200). Inspired by the inciteful poetry of Sudayf b. Maymūn, Abū l-'Abbās commands maces, called by the Persian name *kāfir-kūbāt* 'unbeliever-smashers', to be brought. Eighty or more Umayyads who are

97 For the meaning of the color black, see Daniel 1979: 66–67, nn. 87–88; Athamina 1989; Sharon 1990: 79–86.

98 Interestingly, the Abū Fuṭrus (or Nahr Abī Fuṭrus) massacre narratives lived on in Arabic apocalyptic narratives. In them, the *mahdī* slays the Dajjāl there (Cook 2002: 103).

present are beaten to death. Only three Umayyads are spared by Abū l-'Abbās. Tables are then brought and placed over the bodies, and Abū l-'Abbās orders the 'Abbāsids and 'Alids who are present to partake in a meal, even while some half-dead Umayyads are still moving and wailing in agony under the tables.

The local historian of al-Mawṣil, al-Azdī, has quite a number of interesting stories about the massacres in that town. These are independent of al-Madā'inī and, indeed, any other source. It seems that al-Azdī had local information at hand. His descriptions of the massacres appear to be based on eyewitness narratives, deriving both from the side of the 'Abbāsids who perpetrated the killings and local Mawṣilīs who witnessed them.⁹⁹ The accounts given by al-Azdī strengthen the impression that the massacres were a huge event that not only targeted the Umayyads but also people who were somehow deemed to be sympathetic to them. Of course, they should be to some extent viewed in tandem with the general pillaging and looting that took place during and after the revolution.

Narratives of boundary themes, like those of aftermath and future (see below), seem to contain more historical facts than those of preparation and inception, although literary embellishments abound, as is the case with the dinner party just described.

Themes of aftermath and future

The narratives representing these themes were important in al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* (Appendix I, nos. 30, 34–37). The accounts form a story of how the 'Abbāsids, once in power, cleansed their political base of figures that were no longer needed or that were dangerous to the new dynasty in the post-revolutionary reality. For al-Haytham, these themes were not so central. According to Nagel's reconstruction, his *Kitāb al-Dawla* appears to virtually end with the *bay'a* to Abū l-'Abbās in the year 132/749. The reign of al-Manṣūr and the murders of Abū Salama and Abū Muslim are only briefly hinted at (Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *al-Iqd al-Farīd* IV: 482; Nagel 1972: 11). To al-Haytham, the culmination of the *dawla* is the enthronement of Abū l-'Abbās in al-Kūfa.

Al-Madā'inī continued the story to the first years of the second 'Abbāsīd caliph, al-Manṣūr, who is indeed the principal figure in the political murders. In al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, the aftermath consists of four different narratives:

1. The murder of Abū Salama, which takes place in the reign of Abū l-'Abbās; here al-Manṣūr is a central player (Appendix I, no. 30).¹⁰⁰
2. The death of Abū l-'Abbās (136/754) and the *bay'a* of al-Manṣūr. However, on the former's death, 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī also proclaims himself caliph, which leads al-Manṣūr to send Abū Muslim to fight him. 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī is defeated but not killed (Appendix I, nos. 34–35; Lindstedt 2013: 54–59).
3. Ibn al-Muqaffa' drafts a foolproof *amān* for 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī. This irks al-Manṣūr, who wants to have Ibn al-Muqaffa' killed. The murder is carried out by Sufyān b. Mu'āwiya al-Muhallabī, who also had a personal grudge (Appendix I, no. 36).

99 The episode is analyzed in Robinson 2000: 131–164 and Robinson 2010.

100 For a modern interpretation of the killing of Abū Salama, see Daniel 1979: 107–109.

4. The ending and the culmination of the *Kitāb al-Dawla* is the murder of Abū Muslim at the hands of al-Manṣūr. The leading figure in the revolutionary phase is done away with and the rule belongs completely to al-Manṣūr (Appendix I, no. 37).

Al-Haytham b. 'Adī (writing in all likelihood before al-Madā'inī) does not mention Ibn al-Muqaffā' in his *Kitāb al-Dawla*, as far as it can be reconstructed. To add the killing of Ibn al-Muqaffā' (c.139/756–757) to those of Abū Salama and Abū Muslim is then an innovation of al-Madā'inī. It is interesting to note that Ibn al-Muqaffā' is not mentioned elsewhere in al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, but clearly al-Madā'inī saw him as an important figure in the early 'Abbāsīd caliphate, even if Ibn al-Muqaffā' did not have any role to play in the revolution itself. It seems that al-Madā'inī was alone among the early composers of the *dawla* narratives in inserting Ibn al-Muqaffā''s killing into the context of the 'Abbāsīd revolution and its aftermath. Perhaps because of this, most modern scholarly literature does not mention Ibn al-Muqaffā''s murder as part of the events of the revolution. Significantly, al-Madā'inī was later followed by al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 218–224), who also places Ibn al-Muqaffā''s killing after that of Abū Muslim.

Abū Muslim's murder is justified in the *dawla* literature in numerous ways (see also Lassner 1986: 111–117). Al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 184) quotes “al-Haytham and someone other than him” for an account that relates how, during Abū l-'Abbās's caliphate, Abū Muslim wanted the caliph dead so that he could himself rise to a leading position. Indeed, al-Madā'inī included in his *Kitāb al-Dawla* a letter of Abū Muslim to al-Manṣūr saying that he (Abū Muslim) withdrew from the 'Abbāsīd cause already during Abū l-'Abbās's caliphate. As discussed above, the correspondence is of dubious authenticity. Furthermore, Abū Muslim is said to have been tardy in giving the *bay'a* to al-Manṣūr after the death of the first caliph (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 185). According to al-Madā'inī (*apud* Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 220), Abū Muslim also spoke ill of al-Manṣūr.

It must be noted that all the murdered persons were outside the 'Abbāsīd family. 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī certainly tried to claim the caliphate for himself and thus revolted against al-Manṣūr, but, according to al-Madā'inī, he was not killed but only put under house arrest for this. Other authorities claimed that 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī was indeed murdered by the 'Abbāsīds, but there is reason to believe that this is not based on fact (despite being stated as such by Borrut 2014: 54). Indeed, Lassner (1977; 1980: 39–57) has rather convincingly suggested that the blood of the 'Abbāsīd family was considered sacrosanct at the time.

These narratives are part of boundary themes since they draw a line between the 'Abbāsīds and the earlier, revolution-phase figures, especially Abū Salama and Abū Muslim. Abū Salama is portrayed as a schemer who tried to transfer the caliphate to the Shī'a and hence betrayed the 'Abbāsīds even before they had come to power. Abū Muslim, on the other hand, is depicted as being disloyal to the 'Abbāsīd family and cause during the latter part of Abū l-'Abbās's caliphate and, especially, the beginning of al-Manṣūr's. Both paid the price with their lives for these (factual or imagined) schemes. Other narrators add a couple of murders to the three listed by al-Madā'inī. It is said, for example, that Abū l-Jahm b. 'Aṭīyya, an early supporter of the 'Abbāsīds (Agha 2003: 337), was poisoned by al-Manṣūr, although the reason for his murder is not revealed (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 190–191).

Interestingly, al-Madā'inī's narrative does not comment much on the many revolts that followed the coming to power of the 'Abbāsīds (only Appendix I, nos. 29, 33; for the revolts, see Daniel 1979: 86–92; Cobb 2001b). For him, the threat to the 'Abbāsīds, for the first years of their power, was internal, not external. The “future” aspect is only implied by al-Madā'inī. But the implication is clear enough. As noted already, his *Kitāb al-Dawla* might have ended with

the following words: “The power became truly al-Manṣūr’s after the killing of Abū Muslim, for there remained no one but he” (Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 228–229). This is why al-Madā'inī decided to narrate these events from al-Manṣūr’s reign in detail, while the earlier al-Haytham only alluded to them: al-Madā'inī wanted to show that through these actions, however brutal or controversial they might have seemed to contemporaries at the time and to people in al-Madā'inī’s era, the 'Abbāsīd revolution was brought to a close.

RECENT STUDIES ON THE 'ABBĀSĪD REVOLUTION

In the last fifty years or so, some fascinating books on the 'Abbāsīd revolution have been published (in addition to the works already cited in this study, see Frye 1952; Cahen 1963; Grabar 1963; Blankinship 1988; Crone 1989; Zakeri 1993; Amabe 1995; Elad 1995; Borrut 2011). The most important are surely those by Elton Daniel (1979), Moshe Sharon (1983; 1990), Jacob Lassner (1986), and Saleh Said Agha (2003).

I take issue with some aspects of Agha’s work. His overreaching argument is that the Iranian ethnic element was the dominant one in the 'Abbāsīd movement. In this, he echoes early European scholarship (like van Vloten 1890) that interpreted the revolution in nativistic terms. His prosopographical Appendix I, ostensibly proving this, is indeed very valuable (Agha 2003: 327–379). But he is not able to establish the dominating Iranian element without some legerdemain. The conclusions he draws based on his quantitative data are not convincing, since he chooses to interpret the unclear cases in his prosopographical corpus in a way that suits his argument:

An Arab tribal affiliation does not betoken an ethnic Arab identity, unless it is so proven. Therefore, appreciating the absence of any positive signs to the contrary, this study incorporates all the members, whose ethnic origins could not be determined, whether or not they are tribally-identified, into the non-Arab Group.¹⁰¹ (Agha 2003: 254)

So, instead of concluding that out of the 401 members that are mentioned in relation to the 'Abbāsīd movement the sources identify 63 as Arabs and 89 as non-Arabs, while 249 are of undetermined ethnic descent (Agha 2003: 239–240), Agha claims that most of the 249 unclear cases can be safely identified as non-Arabs. A conservative and methodologically more rigorous calculation would have noted that, of the individuals that were part of the 'Abbāsīd movement and can be identified, some 41.4% were Arabs and 58.6% non-Arabs. With his legerdemain, however, Agha (2003: 255) is able to reach the following figures: the movement was only 18.45% Arab and 81.55% non-Arab. Agha’s prosopographical and quantitative studies are impressive and surely beneficial to scholarship, but the percentages that he arrives at cannot be accepted. Earlier, Daniel (1979: 33–34) has also warned that drawing conclusions about ethnicity based on an onomasticon has its problems.

Agha’s work also lacks a theoretical discussion of what is meant by Arab or non-Arab. Is the first language of a given individual the main criterion? Or the ethnic identity, however it may be perceived? Can one become an Arab?¹⁰² How long would that take? What would Agha say

¹⁰¹ This is in no way justifiable, I might note.

¹⁰² For the ethnogenesis of the Arabs, see Webb 2016. He dates the formation of ethnic Arab identity well into the Islamic period. Indeed, it could actually postdate the 'Abbāsīd revolution. This would be rather damaging to Agha’s thesis, since he, following 19th–20th-century scholarship such as that of Wellhausen, imagines that ethnic appellations such as “Arabs”, “Iranians”, and “Turk(ic)s” were clear categories that were similarly understood from both emic and etic perspectives. This is probably not the case.

about al-Madā'inī, whose first language, it seems, was Arabic but who was ultimately of Iranian descent? It is probable that al-Madā'inī's forefathers, when taken as captives to the heartlands of the Muslim caliphate, had already adopted the Arabic language. Despite this, I have a feeling that Agha would classify al-Madā'inī as a non-Arab without any qualms. Not only does Agha not comment on ethnicity from a modern scholarly point of view, but he nowhere discusses how Arabness or non-Arabness was viewed in medieval Islamic culture. It has to be remembered that a significant part of the Muslims before and after the 'Abbāsīd revolution were of mixed parentage. What is more, Arabic-speaking people, especially in Khurāsān, learned and knew Persian, while many ethnic Iranians surely learned Arabic, which became the lingua franca of the Islamic caliphate. This being the case, the language that individuals are said to have spoken is not proof of their ethnic identity.

Incidentally, it is interesting to note that al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* included some dialogue in Persian (e.g. Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 188; Lindstedt 2013: 49). But there are only a few phrases, and, what is more, the Umayyad side, namely, the (supposedly ethnically Arab) governor Naṣr b. Sayyār, is also shown to know Persian (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 164; Daniel 1979: 44). Thus, this tells us next to nothing of the ethnic composition of the 'Abbāsīd movement. Perhaps we should stick to the earlier opinion of Elton Daniel, who noted that even though the 'Abbāsīds clearly had many Iranian supporters, "no one group, racial or otherwise, dominated the *da'wa*" (Daniel 1979: 36; see, most recently, de la Vaissiere, forthcoming).

It is also problematic in Agha's work that those parts of his book where he proposes totally new interpretations of the course of events, sifting through what he calls the 'Abbāsīd propagandist *riwāya* 'narrative', are all but devoid of references to the primary sources.¹⁰³ Of course, the reason for this is simple: none of the sources really support his analysis, which is often fanciful.¹⁰⁴ Agha's study is a highly revisionist one, based on the idea that 'Abbāsīd propaganda permeates the *dawla* narratives. But as I have tried to show in the course of this study, al-Madā'inī, for one, was not a sycophant of the 'Abbāsīds and his *Kitāb al-Dawla* was not written at the behest of the caliph. To the contrary, although al-Madā'inī certainly believed in the legitimacy of the 'Abbāsīd rule, his *dawla* narrative is rather neutral. He did not shun Umayyad informants, and he also cited accounts that were sympathetic to the previous dynasty. With this in mind, it is the value of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* for the modern study of the history of the 'Abbāsīd revolution and early 'Abbāsīd dynasty that we have to discuss next.

The value of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*

What can be said about the significance of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* as a source for the 'Abbāsīd revolution? Modern scholars have often praised al-Madā'inī as an early, reliable source, while at the same time they have disparaged Ibn A'tham (and therefore, unknowingly, al-Madā'inī), stating that he is confused on many points and better information can be gleaned from other authorities. A good example is Moshe Sharon (1983: 238, n. 17), who has stated: "Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī's *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* [...], while it is an important source for the study of Khurāsān under early Islam, is of minor importance for the history of the 'Abbāsīd movement." Farouk Omar (1969: 26) also criticizes Ibn A'tham, saying: "His accounts on the early 'Abbāsīd *da'wa*

103 See, for instance, Agha 2003: 129–135 ("Exposing the 'Abbāsīd *Riwāyah* and Reconstructing a Plausible Scenario"), which does not refer to *any* primary sources.

104 For further criticism of Agha's arguments, see Elad 2000: 301–311.

are biased and must be treated with extreme caution". In a way, both Sharon and Omar are right in criticizing Ibn A'tham, since his *dawla* narrative is devoid of details such as personal names. This was not a feature in al-Madā'inī's original *Kitāb al-Dawla*. As can be seen from the *Kitāb al-Dawla apud* al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī, the opposite is the case. However, if in general the scholars have judged al-Madā'inī positively (and with good reason, in my opinion), it follows that we also have to value Ibn A'tham to some extent. There are intriguing details in al-Madā'inī *apud* Ibn A'tham that cannot be dismissed. For example, the rather widespread Umayyad massacres are recounted at length only in Ibn A'tham.

Al-Madā'inī, as compared to al-Haytham b. 'Adī, for instance, did not concentrate so much on the earlier, sacred history of the 'Abbāsīd family. Rather, his focus was on the revolution itself and its aftermath, and on these, it can be said, he provided much reliable information. One important factor in all this was surely that al-Madā'inī, in contrast to al-Haytham, was not sponsored by the 'Abbāsīds.

One theme to consider could be the *shūrā* before the *bay'a* to the first 'Abbāsīd caliph, which, according to Agha (2003: 124), lasted months and were "much wider than reported". If we are to believe al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, and in this case I think we should, Agha's claim is unfounded. This is because al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* does not describe these consultations as having taken place (Lindstedt 2014). According to Elton Daniel (1982: 426), al-Madā'inī "systematically deemphasized the Shi'ite dimensions of the da'wa and incidents of Abbasid-'Alid cooperation". This might be so, but another possibility also springs to mind: that other authors gave too much weight to the Shi'ite dimension. To be borne in mind here is the context of most of these accounts, namely, the death of Ibrāhīm al-Imām and the uncertainty about whom the *bay'a* would then be given to. At this point, it is related that Abū Salama carried out extensive discussions with the leading Shi'ī figures. While some of these accounts may have had a basis in fact, they seem to be a sort of prologue to what happened later: Abū Salama was murdered by the 'Abbāsīds once they were in power. What better way would there be to justify this than to claim that Abū Salama betrayed the 'Abbāsīd cause even before the *bay'a* to Abū l-'Abbās?¹⁰⁵

In Daniel's view, the description of the consultations was part of the second/eighth-century Abū l-Khaṭṭāb's early and authentic narrative of the 'Abbāsīd revolution. However, it was suppressed during the reigns of al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī, who struggled with 'Alid rebellions. In the age of al-Ma'mūn, this pro-'Alid aspect of the revolution was once again acceptable, and it became increasingly so during the era of the Būyids (Daniel 1982: 427). While this reconstruction is possible, I still feel that most of these accounts are not pro-'Alid as such, but anti-Abū Salama, and they must be read in that context. Furthermore, although the 'Abbāsīds were certainly keen to claim that both the 'Abbāsīds and 'Alids were the Prophet's family and part of the larger Hāshimite faction,¹⁰⁶ it is clear at least from al-Madā'inī's narrative that they never intended to give the 'Alids any real power or influence in the new dynasty.

105 Mehdy Shaddel remarked to me (pers. comm.) that it is indeed possible to view Abū Salama as a "big-tent" Shi'ī who wanted to hold a *shūrā* involving the whole *ahl al-bayt*. If this is the case, it is easy to see why he was murdered.

106 For an interesting study on the "Hāshimī Shi'ism" before the 'Abbāsīd revolution based on the poetry of al-Kumayt (d. 126/743) and other poets, see Madelung 1989. For the term "Hāshimīyya" and its origins, see the differing opinions of Daniel 1979: 28–29; Sharon 1983: 103–151; Lassner 1986: 25–30; Agha 2003: 101–106. I am inclined to think that Hāshimīyya referred to both the Banū Hāshim and Abū Hāshim, depending on the speaker and the context. This difference became murky with time.

One ironic fact should be noted: al-Madā'inī's *dawla* narratives (considered anti-'Alid by Daniel) survive, at greatest length, in the work of Ibn A'tham, whom Daniel (1982: 434, n. 48) calls "a conspicuously pro-'Alid source". It is also possible that al-Madā'inī may have entertained Shī'ī sympathies (Lindstedt 2012–2014: 241). Clearly the matter of 'Abbāsīd–'Alid connections is not simple, and I cannot claim to have given a definite solution.

It must be noted that I am not claiming that the 'Abbāsīds did not have anything to do with other Shī'ī movements; rather, I am stating that if we base our study on the evidence at hand, there is no proof that the 'Abbāsīds at any point had a plan to give the caliphate or real power to non-'Abbāsīds.¹⁰⁷ The literary evidence clearly shows that the 'Abbāsīds cooperated with and wooed other Shī'ī factions, but they were always the ones pulling the strings at the end of the day. It is remarkable, for example, that Ibn A'tham quotes al-Madā'inī as saying that Abū Muslim ordered black to be worn as a sign of mourning for the killings of Zayd b. 'Alī and Yaḥyā b. Zayd (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 160),¹⁰⁸ but this was probably just one of the ploys of the 'Abbāsīds to entice the larger Shī'ī/Banū Hāshim community and the people supporting their cause. For the study of the question of what the connection of the 'Abbāsīd *da'wa* with other Shī'ī movements was,¹⁰⁹ we should not, then, gloss over such a "marginal" source as Ibn A'tham.

As mentioned above, Saleh Said Agha's main claim is that the 'Abbāsīd revolutionary army was ethnically predominantly Iranian.¹¹⁰ One of the accounts he quotes from the Arabic literary evidence to prove this point is the famous speech given by Qaḥṭaba b. Shabīb upon facing the enemy in Jurjān (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* II: 2004–2005; Sharon 1990: 187–188; Agha 2003: 199). This speech – probably fictitious – stems from al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* (Appendix I, no. 13). However, there are two versions of the speech, one given by al-Ṭabarī, the other by Ibn A'tham. The al-Ṭabarī version seems to reveal that many of the fighters for the 'Abbāsīd cause were of Iranian descent. However, because of the text of Ibn A'tham, one might also think otherwise. I will give here the translation of the latter version:

O people, do you know who you are fighting? You are fighting against an enemy (*qawm*) who has burned the Book of God,¹¹¹ changed His religion and deviated from His cause (*amrihi*). This land used to belong to their ancient fathers [i.e. early Arab conquerors?],¹¹² who defeated their enemy because of their justice and rightness. Then they changed, altered, and did wrong, so God became angry at them, snatched the power from them, and gave power over them to the most despicable nation (*umma*) to walk the Earth. (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 170: 15–171: 4)

107 This could naturally be because of 'Abbāsīd propaganda and narrative, as noted to me by Mehdy Shaddel.

108 For the significance of black, see Athamina (1989: 314), who says: "The color black [...] emphasized the legitimacy of the desire for revenge on the one hand, and, on the other, expressed the desire to undo the wrong that had been done."

109 For this, see Omar 1975; Daniel 1979: 38–39; Sharon 1983: 176–179; Jafri 2000: 265–267. Lassner (1986: 96–97) argues that, at the time, the 'Abbāsīds did nothing to support the revolt of Zayd b. 'Alī. This is probable. Referring to *Akhhbār al-'Abbās*: 231–232, Sharon (1983: 145) notes that when "the abortive Shī'ite rising of Zayd b. 'Alī broke out in Kūfah in 122/739–740, one tradition relates that the leaders of the 'Abbāsīd movement left Kūfah for Ḥīrah, where the loyal Syrian troops of the Umayyads were stationed, solely in order to avoid becoming implicated in the rising, even unintentionally." Only later did the 'Abbāsīds act like they were exacting blood revenge for Zayd and Yaḥyā.

110 This has been a much debated issue in scholarship. See Wellhausen 1927: 492–498, 558; Sharon 1983; Athamina 1986: 185–189; Daniel 1996; 1997; Crone 1998; 2000; Agha 1999; 2000a; 2000b; 2001; 2003; Elad 2000.

111 This probably refers to the deeds of the third caliph, 'Uthmān, who was from the Umayyad family. He standardized the Qur'ān and ordered editions other than his to be burned. The *qawm* mentioned in this passage, then, refers to the Umayyads, not the Arabs.

112 Al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'rīkh* II: 2005) reads "your fathers", referring to the fighters for the 'Abbāsīd cause, which, then, seem to have been of Persian origin.

The possessive suffix throughout the text is *-hum*, not *-kum*, as in al-Ṭabarī. Thus, we have two choices: “This land used to belong to their (Ibn A‘tham) / your (al-Ṭabarī) ancient fathers”, and so on with other nouns. This is rather interesting, and it leads me to suggest that the intended meaning of the suffix in Ibn A‘tham’s version is the early Muslims, although they are not mentioned explicitly. According to this interpretation, the word *umma* would refer only to the Umayyads, not Arabs in general, as noted by Elad (2000: 268). I can offer no clue as to which of the versions (the anti-Umayyad *-hum* or the anti-Arab *-kum*) is older or more original. Either way, the passage is problematic and defies definitive interpretation.

While I would probably say that Agha is right to conclude that the Iranian element was far from negligible, I do not believe that the figure given by him (that the revolutionaries were 81.55% non-Arab) is credible. Furthermore, as demonstrated here, the literary evidence he cites as proof is often far from straightforward to interpret. And, as a last note, it seems that the sources themselves and probably the contemporaries that witnessed the events were not at all as interested in the ethnic element of the revolution as many modern scholars have been. The ethnic or nativist interpretation of the revolution is a modern bias, therefore, not something that really emerges from the sources.

In my opinion, the most prominent value of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* lies, in any case, in the accounts of the Umayyad massacres that the 'Abbāsīds perpetrated. They form an interesting narrative cycle in al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*. No other early *akhbārī*, it seems, reported the massacres at the same length as al-Madā'inī. That al-Madā'inī chose to narrate accounts of these acts that were seen by many as rather disgraceful to the 'Abbāsīds tells something about his integrity as an at least somewhat objective *akhbārī*.¹¹³ These accounts can be claimed to contain real historical information. This is not to say that everything reported in al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* about the massacres is true. Some aspects of the narrative cycle (for example, the dinner party episode; see above) are probably literary elaborations and, from a modern historian's point of view, untrue as such.

Was the 'Abbāsīd *dawla* a revolution?

As a sort of detour, it is worth considering how to conceptualize the 'Abbāsīd *dawla*. It has become rather in vogue for scholars to say that the 'Abbāsīd revolution was not really a revolution (e.g. Humphreys 1991: 104–127; Borrut 2014). These scholars emphasize that many of the structures remained the same before and after the (so-called) revolution (see also Goitein 1968: 225–227; Bligh-Abramski 1988). Steven Judd (2014: esp. 137–140), for example, has recently convincingly shown that many religious scholars that served the Umayyads survived the revolution unscathed and were even able to get positions in the new 'Abbāsīd environment.

But denying the revolutionary nature of the events of 747–750 (or 755) CE surely misses the point. The 'Abbāsīd *dawla* can be called a revolution because it was a mass movement that overthrew the previous dynasty through a series of violent clashes between the Umayyad and 'Abbāsīd armies.¹¹⁴ Because of the length of this conflict – three years – what happened cannot be described merely as a coup d'état. The 'Abbāsīds endeavored to root out the whole Umayyad

113 After listing many misdeeds of the 'Abbāsīds, Al-Maqrīzī (*Nizā'*: 65) comments: “How is this tyranny and corruption compatible with the justice of the Muḥammadan *sharī'a* and the conduct of the imāms of the guidance?”

114 For example, Daniel (1979: 9) calls it a “mass revolt” in which the 'Abbāsīds were able to use to their advantage “the traditional antagonism between the Khurāsānī peasant and feudal classes”.

dynasty and kill all the surviving members of that family in a systematic way.¹¹⁵ To al-Madā'inī, these were very important narratives that he chose to recount at length in his work (Appendix I, nos. 4–26). There does not seem to be much reason to doubt their general historical reliability.

The *dawla* resulted in profound and rather immediate political and ideological changes in the Islamic caliphate and Muslim community, the most important of which was the emergence of the *mawlās*, Muslims of non-Arabian descent, on an equal footing with their Arabian peers. Furthermore, there was a change in the geographical balance of the caliphate: the 'Abbāsīds did not rule from Syria, the former center of the Umayyad state, but built their capitals (al-Hāshimiyya, Baghdād, Sāmarrā') in Iraq. As to the running of the state, there were several not unimportant changes, the most significant perhaps being the rise of the *wazīr*. That there was a centralizing tendency in the collection of taxes and other aspects of government can be seen from papyrological evidence dated to the reign of al-Manṣūr (Khan 2005).

All revolutions leave some structures in place, and new powers to be often rely on individuals employed by the previous rulers. No leadership that has come to power through a revolution starts with a completely clean slate. This does not, however, signify in any way that they are not revolutions, properly speaking.

Antoine Borrut (2014) argues that if we accept that the events of the years 747–750 CE were really a revolution, then we also have to accept a periodization (pious *rāshidūn*–impious Umayyads–pious 'Abbāsīds), which was basically an 'Abbāsīd construct to justify their power. But this is, of course, not true. We can certainly call the 'Abbāsīd revolution a revolution and still keep in mind that there was more continuity in the history of the first two centuries of Islam than the – often tendentious – Arabic sources sometimes avow. The early 'Abbāsīds tried their best to show their rise to power as the great *dawla*, a turn of fortune and change in dynasty, that reinstated the pious rule of the early caliphs. We do not, however, have to believe this. Indeed, many of the propagandist narratives have been deconstructed in the course of this study. That said, understanding that the 'Abbāsīd narrative is in some respects biased does not mean that the modern historian would be justified in claiming that the events of 747–750 CE were not of utmost importance.

Accepting the 'Abbāsīd revolution as a revolution does not necessarily mean that we have to take it as a watershed in our periodization. In any case, periodization is an analytical tool, an interpretation (Donner 2014: 36), and not a fact, while it is very much a fact that the 'Abbāsīds overthrew the Umayyads during the years 747–750 CE. Of course, the overthrow (which I am ready to call a revolution) has to be viewed in the context of the crumbling Umayyad state and the problems that the early 'Abbāsīds faced. I would not oppose giving longer dates for the 'Abbāsīd revolution – say 744–755 CE (from the beginning of the third *fitna* until the killing of Abū Muslim) – and interpreting it in the framework of the third *fitna*, or even starting with the revolt of Zayd b. 'Alī (740 CE) and ending with that of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya (762 CE). But this is a matter of periodization, in which, in any case, we should not be too rigid but rather allow for multiple, overlapping periods (Donner 2014: 25). Furthermore, periodization should not blind our eyes to the fact that, in the end, what the 'Abbāsīds and their supporters carried out was indeed a revolution.

115 There were probably also atrocities connected to the first clashes between the 'Abbāsīds and Umayyads near Marw; see Agha 2000a: 344–346.

CONCLUDING NOTES

It has been shown in the current study that the late second and early third centuries AH were a period when interest in and cultivation of the historical memory of the 'Abbāsīd revolution were rather intense. This concern spawned different *dawla* works that concentrated on the events. All of these early works are now lost, but we can get a basic idea of their narrative arcs from later citations.

I have endeavored to tentatively reconstruct al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* on the basis of quotations in al-Balādhurī, al-Ṭabarī, and Ibn A'tham. I have argued that al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* is an important source for the historical events of the 'Abbāsīd revolution – which, I believe, really should be called a revolution. Al-Haytham b. 'Adī's work with the same title was a much more apologetic account of the events. Since al-Madā'inī was not directly sponsored by the 'Abbāsīd dynasty, he was not constrained to be a spokesperson for the ruling house's propaganda needs. Al-Madā'inī's work focused on the revolution itself and its aftermath, providing valuable information. He adduces an important narrative about the massacres of Umayyads during the revolution and the purges after it that did away with Abū Salama, Abū Muslim, and Ibn al-Muqaffa'.

I will end with some general rules concerning al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* and, perhaps, early Arabic historical writing in general:

1. Speeches given in Arabic historical and literary sources are *probably* fictitious. They are literary devices that are intended to make the text more colorful and enjoyable (Noth 1994: 87–96). They can be presumed to be based on factual speeches only in very few cases and only if there is strong evidence for this, such as the author declaring that he himself heard the speech and took notes on it.
2. Letters (Noth 1994: 76–87) and official documents (such as *amāns*, Noth 1994: 63–76) are *often* fictitious. This can be said to be the case particularly in al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, since it seems that al-Madā'inī would not have had access to such documents. In some cases, the fabricated nature of the letters can be rather easily suspected, such as in the al-Manšūr-Abū Muslim correspondence (see above).
3. The prose narrative of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* contains *real historical information* amidst all the literary embellishments. Some of the dates and other pieces of information can be compared with documentary evidence, such as epigraphy and coinage. Analysis of the *isnāds* of the work also shows that al-Madā'inī not only consulted the 'Abbāsīd side but also Umayyad informants, which gives some impartiality to his narrative. As has been shown when comparing al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* to that of al-Haytham and other *dawla* literature, al-Madā'inī's work was not particularly focused on the sacred aspects of the 'Abbāsīd movement, revolution, and reign. However, al-Madā'inī often uses literary devices, such as eyewitness narration, which should be taken with a grain of salt (Lindstedt 2013: 49–50).

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APPENDIX I: AL-MADĀ'INĪ'S *KITĀB AL-DAWLA* RECONSTRUCTED

My aim in Appendix I is to outline in detail the contents of the *Kitāb al-Dawla*: what it could have included and what the problems of the reconstruction in a given passage are. I present parallels for the passages and look for possible misattributions. Although I give variant passages (with the note “cf.”) in addition to the main sources, this does not mean that I am certain that all their authors were drawing directly on al-Madā'inī. This is the case, for example, with Abū l-Faraj, who sometimes has material that parallels what was found in the *Kitāb al-Dawla* but who probably did not have access to that work.

No reconstruction of the exact wording of the work is tried here, since the variant quotations differ rather considerably. Al-Madā'inī's students-cum-transmitters probably redacted the text and so did the writers of the texts extant to us, who did not, with the exception of al-Balādhurī, obtain the material directly. The probability of the existence of different versions of the same text should also be taken into account, as has been stated elsewhere in this study. Indeed, we cannot say whether such a work as *Kitāb al-Dawla* existed during al-Madā'inī's time, or whether it was compiled by his students on the basis of different kinds of *dawla* material lectured on by their teacher. The oral/aural transmission of the texts and its possible effect on their form and contents should not be forgotten.¹¹⁶

Here follows a discussion of the elements of the *Kitāb al-Dawla*. The dates given are approximate. An indicative chronological order based especially on Ibn A'tham and al-Ṭabarī is pursued here, although it is not completely certain that the *Kitāb al-Dawla* adhered to such a scheme. The division into different items is mine, and it does not necessarily follow the *qālas* in the Arabic sources. For the sources of al-Madā'inī, see Appendix II.

1. *Date uncertain: the caliphate will come to the 'Abbāsids, not the Ḥasanids.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 159–160 (al-Madā'inī ← Abū l-Ḥasan b. al-Furāt).

This is where al-Madā'inī's name first appears in Ibn A'tham and, hence, it is taken as the probable starting point of the *Kitāb al-Dawla*. The *khābar* (not found in other sources) is a short prediction in which the first-person narrator Abū l-Ḥasan b. al-Furāt says that he was walking with 'Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī and the 'Abbāsīd 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī when Dāwūd b. 'Alī asked why the children of 'Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan do not claim the caliphate. 'Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan says that the time is yet to come, but 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī says that he will kill the Umayyads and take power from them.

2. *124/741–742 or later: Bukayr b. Māhān is thrown into prison, where he meets Abū Muslim.*

Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* II: 1726 (al-Madā'inī ← Ḥamza b. Ṭalḥa al-Sulamī ← his father).

Following Rotter, I am inclined to believe that the *Kitāb al-Dawla* available to al-Ṭabarī included some accounts of the early 'Abbāsīd propagandists in Khurāsān, although these are not included in Ibn A'tham's *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*. However, of Rotter's suggestions (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* II: 1501–1503, 1589–1591, 1726, 1840–1841),¹¹⁷ I would tentatively accept only this one. Other *khābars* were probably from other works of al-Madā'inī. The crux of the matter here

116 For more on this, see Leder 1988; Landau-Tasseron 2004; Toorawa 2005; Schoeler 2006; 2009; Lindstedt 2013.

117 As mentioned above, the accounts *sub annis* 106–109 and 117–120 (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* II: 1501–1503, 1589–1591) are more likely from *Kitāb Wilāyat Asad b. 'Abdallāh al-Qasrī*. The last reference, al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ* II: 1840–1841), on the other hand, has nothing to do with the 'Abbāsīds.

is how Abū Muslim becomes connected with the movement. The account tells how Bukayr b. Māhān goes to al-Kūfa, where he is imprisoned because some rumors begin to circulate about him and the other 'Abbāsīd activists (*wa-ghumiza bihim*).¹¹⁸ In prison, he meets 'Īsā b. Ma'qil, whom Abū Muslim belongs to as a slave; Abū Muslim's descent is not discussed.¹¹⁹ Bukayr buys Abū Muslim from 'Īsā and sends him to Ibrāhīm al-Imām. How the *khbar* ends – *thumma šāra [Abū Muslim] ilā an ikhtalafa ilā Khurāsān* – is important because the ending ties it smoothly to the next quotation from what seems to be al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ* II: 1949): *lam yazal Abū Muslim yakhtalifu ilā Khurāsān ḥattā waqa 'at al-'aṣabiyya bi-hā*.

3. *129/746–747: Abū Muslim propagandizes in Khurāsān; the da'wa turns militant.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 156, ll. 3–5 (*qāla*); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* II: 1949, l. 14–1953, l. 1 (al-Madā'inī ← *shuyūkhīhi*); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 129, ll. 3–4 (*qālū*).

The account in al-Ṭabarī, not exactly paralleled in other sources, tells how Abū Muslim visits Khurāsān, where he meets 'Abbāsīd *du'āt* like Usayd/Asad b. 'Abdallāh.¹²⁰ Some of the propagandists have been exposed and imprisoned. Abū Muslim continues to convert people to the 'Abbāsīd cause and in Marw he makes known Ibrāhīm al-Imām's letter proclaiming that Abū Muslim should propagate the *da'wa* with haste and that the time has come. People are drawn to Abū Muslim, and he begins fighting and wins the first victories.¹²¹

The question of the beginning of the *Kitāb al-Dawla* is problematic because al-Ṭabarī and Ibn A'tham do not quote much of the same material. This affects nos. 1–3 in this appendix, which are not necessarily all from the *Kitāb al-Dawla* or not in that order. What is more, there might have been, before these items, some material that is hard to detect.

4. *Abū Muslim and al-Kirmānī ally themselves. The people of Khurāsān adopt black color. Naṣr b. Sayyār suggests peace to al-Kirmānī; however, a battle ensues between them and al-Kirmānī is killed.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 160: l. 3–166, l. 14 (*qāla, qāla al-Madā'inī*); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* II: 1975, ll. 6–17 (anonymous); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 132, l. 15–133, l. 4 (*qāla Abū Mas'ūd wa-ghayruhu*).¹²² Cf. *Akhbār al-'Abbās*: 313, l. 4–314, l. 2 (anonymous).

The passage in Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 164, ll. 8–13) that says that al-Ḥārith b. Surayj killed al-Kirmānī is perhaps garbled.¹²³ Al-Ḥārith b. Surayj seems to have been killed by al-Kirmānī already in AH 128,¹²⁴ whereas al-Kirmānī's death occurred in AH 129. As can be seen from al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ* II: 1975, l. 15), the text should probably read as Ibn al-Ḥārith b. Surayj and not as referring to his father. Al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 129) adds another possibility, however:

118 The date of Bukayr's imprisonment is discussed in Lassner (1986: 91–94).

119 For the origins and biography of this mysterious character, see, e.g., Moscati 1960; Daniel 1979: 100–124; Sharon 1983: 203–226; Lassner 1984.

120 He was an 'Abbāsīd agent in Nasā; see *Akhbār al-'Abbās*: 218, 220; Crone 1980: 175–176. The reading of the name is uncertain.

121 For the battles during the revolution, see Sharon 1990.

122 According to the index of al-Balādhurī, Abū Mas'ūd b. Qattāt al-Kūfī. He is unknown to me, but quite a few *khbars* that are similar to those of al-Madā'inī appear; cf. items nos. 25, 30, 37 below. He could, then, be an informant (or perhaps transmitter) of al-Madā'inī, but this is uncertain.

123 The power politics between Al-Ḥārith b. Surayj, al-Kirmānī, and Naṣr b. Sayyār before the public appearance of Abū Muslim are described in Daniel (1979: 43–45); Sharon (1990: 33–45, 112–116, 145–146, 173–175).

124 al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* II: 1932–1934 (note especially II: 1933: *qāla 'Alī [al-Madā'inī]*).

that it was indeed al-Ḥārith who killed al-Kirmānī and not the other way around, and al-Ḥārith was killed later by 'Alī b. al-Kirmānī.¹²⁵

5. *Dhū l-Qa'da 129/July 747: Khāzim b. Khuzayma conquers Marwarrūdh.*

Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* II: 1959–1960 (al-Madā'inī ← Abū l-Ḥasan al-Jushamī, Zuhayr b. Hunayd, and al-Ḥasan b. Rashīd).

This short *khbar* tells how Khāzim attacks Marwarrūdh by night and kills its governor. It is not found in other sources.

6. *c.129/747–Muḥarram 130/September 747: Shaybān b. Salama al-Ḥarūrī, 'Alī b. al-Kirmānī, Naṣr b. Sayyār and Abū Muslim try to woo each other to their own sides.*

Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* II: 1965, l. 6–1967, l. 17 (al-Madā'inī ← al-Ṣabbāḥ the *mawlā* of Jibrīl ← Maslama b. Yaḥyā); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 123, l. 6 (*qālū*).

Abū Muslim's forces gain momentum, which shakes the earlier power structure of Khurāsān. This account could actually stem from another *kitāb*,¹²⁶ so I only hesitantly add it here. At the end of the *khbar* a date is given: the 5th of Muḥarram AH 130. This was when Abū Muslim entered Ibn al-Kirmānī's camp after joining forces with him against Naṣr. Whether this date is due to al-Madā'inī, his students, or al-Ṭabarī is difficult to say, but al-Madā'inī already seems to have been interested in giving exact dates for the events in his traditions. The next passage proposed by Rotter (1974: 129) to stem from the *Kitāb al-Dawla* is the revolt of 'Abdallāh b. Mu'āwiya al-Ja'farī (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* II: 1976–1981). However, it is perhaps more likely that this is from the *Kitāb 'Abdallāh b. Mu'āwiya* instead.¹²⁷ Furthermore, 'Abdallāh b. Mu'āwiya is not mentioned by Ibn A'tham.

7. *Correspondence between Naṣr b. Sayyār, Marwān II, and Yazīd b. 'Umar b. Hubayra.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 156–159 (anonymous); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* II: 1973–1974 (anonymous?);¹²⁸ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 133–134 (*qālū*). Cf. al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* IV: 79, 81–82 (anonymous).

Nowhere in the sources is this description of the correspondence attributed to al-Madā'inī. Its positioning, however, strongly suggests that it should be; in both Ibn A'tham and al-Ṭabarī, it is found in the *dawla* narrative of al-Madā'inī. In Ibn A'tham, the correspondence is described in the most complete fashion; other sources mostly only quote the poems.

8. *The killing of Shaybān b. Salama al-Ḥarūrī.*

Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* II: 1996: 7–1997, l. 2¹²⁹ (al-Madā'inī ← Abū Ḥafṣ, Ḥasan b. Rashīd, Abū l-Dhayyāl [Zuhayr b. Hunayd]; al-Madā'inī ← al-Mufaḍḍal [al-Ḍabbī]).

125 See also Daniel 1979: 55–56.

126 It is, of course, completely possible that the *khbar(s)* could have been included in many different works by al-Madā'inī in the same or a modified form. This possibility makes the reconstruction even more difficult.

127 See Lindstedt 2012–2014: Bibliography; for the revolt, see Daniel 1979: 42–43, 80–81; Tucker 1980; Lassner 1986: 96–97; Sharon 1990: 127–142; Bernheimer 2006.

128 The previous authority mentioned is Abū l-Khaṭṭāb (*Ta'rikh* II: 1967). The correspondence appears to form another item, however.

129 There are lacunae in ed. Leiden. The missing parts are supplied by ed. Cairo (*Ta'rikh* VII: 385).

Shaybān does not want to renew the truce between himself and Abū Muslim. The latter sends Bassām b. Ibrāhīm¹³⁰ to fight Shaybān, who is killed.

9. *Naṣr b. Sayyār sends his son Tamīm to fight the forces of Abū Muslim.*

Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* II: 2000, l. 11–2001, l. 2 (al-Madā'inī ← Abū l-Dhayyāl [Zuhayr b. Hunayd], Ḥasan b. Rashīd, Abū l-Ḥasan al-Jushamī). Cf. *Akḥbār al-'Abbās*: 323, ll. 1–6 (anonymous).

After Shaybān b. Salama's death, his forces join Naṣr b. Sayyār. The latter sends his son to fight Qaḥṭaba b. Shabīb (Agha 2001) and what seems to be a minor battle ensues at Kubādqān, an unknown location somewhere inside the triangle of Sarakhs, Abīward, and Ṭūs. This and the previous item are not found in Ibn A'tham. It is, then, possible that they are not from the *Kitāb al-Dawla* but some other work of al-Madā'inī.

10. *c.130/747–748: Abū Muslim and 'Alī b. al-Kirmānī together fight Naṣr b. Sayyār. 'Alī b. al-Kirmānī kills Tamīm b. Naṣr b. Sayyār; and Naṣr's forces are routed.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 166, l. 15–167, l. 17 (*qāla*); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 134, l. 9 (*qālū*). Cf. *Akḥbār al-'Abbās*: 326, ll. 11–12, 314, l. 4 (anonymous).

The *khbar* is not explicitly attributed to al-Madā'inī in any sources. Because of its positioning in the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* of Ibn A'tham, it seems rather safe to deem it to be from al-Madā'inī, since he is the last mentioned authority. Indeed, most of the *dawla* narrative in the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* has just a simple *qāla* as the *isnād*.

The account in Ibn A'tham concerning the killing of Tamīm b. Naṣr b. Sayyār does not get support from other sources. Without naming his sources, al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ* II: 1997–2003) relates that Tamīm was killed by Qaḥṭaba b. Shabīb only after Abū Muslim had had his former allies 'Alī and 'Uthmān b. al-Kirmānī killed.¹³¹

11. *Abū Muslim and Naṣr b. Sayyār continue fighting. Abū Muslim tries to lure Naṣr to him, but Naṣr senses deceit and escapes. However, he dies at Qusṭāna,¹³² near al-Rayy.¹³³*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 168, l. 1–170, l. 5 (*qāla*); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* II: 1989, l. 10–1992, l. 2 (al-Madā'inī ← al-Ṣabbāḥ the *mawlā* of Jibrīl ← Maslama b. Yaḥyā; al-Madā'inī ← Abū l-Dhayyāl [Zuhayr b. Hunayd] and al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbī; al-Madā'inī ← Abū l-Dhayyāl ← Iyās b. Ṭalḥa b. Ṭalḥa [correct: Iyās b. Ṭalḥa b. Iyās?]); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 130, l. 18–131, l. 6 (*qālū*). Cf. Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Ta'riḫ*: 390, ll. 9–11 (anonymous).

It seems that Ibn A'tham was utilizing other sources here alongside al-Madā'inī. This is the impression one gets when comparing this passage to that in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ* II: 1992–1995), attributed explicitly to someone other than al-Madā'inī. They display similar characteristics: for instance, Abū Muslim kills Lāhiz b. Qurayz, an 'Abbāsīd *naqīb* who, for some reason, tips off Naṣr. Al-Balādhurī's account, which is very close to Ibn A'tham's exposition, has the *isnād qālū*, so al-Balādhurī was likely also using many sources. This further corroborates that while

130 A *mawlā* of Banū Layth, he commanded some collection of 'Abbāsīd troops. Not much is known about him. See Agha 2003: 344.

131 See also *Akḥbār al-'Abbās*: 323–326; *Ta'riḫ al-Khulafā'*: 548.

132 Or Qisṭāna, see Yāqūt (*Mu'jam*, s.v). The text (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 170, l. 2) reads FSTĀNA, which is incorrect.

133 For these events, see Sharon 1990: 156–159.

al-Madā'inī was probably among Ibn A'tham's sources for this passage, he did have other sources at hand, too.

As noted above, al-Ṭabarī here shares similarities with Ibn A'tham. He starts by describing Abū Muslim's administrative appointments. He depicts the rapprochement of Abū Muslim and Ibn al-Kirmānī from Naṣr b. Sayyār's perspective; it is Naṣr who first sends a delegation to Abū Muslim in order to make a truce with him, and only after that does Abū Muslim try to lure him into the trap. The passage continues by describing in much greater detail than Ibn A'tham the flight of Naṣr. It is not found elsewhere. This is done in a way that is rather sympathetic to the ousted governor and his Umayyad companions. This is a rather remarkable trait in al-Madā'inī, and indeed among his cited informants for the history of the *dawla* is Khālid b. al-Aṣfaḥ b. 'Abdallāh, who served as the governor of Wāsiṭ under the Umayyads and witnessed the revolution from the Umayyad side.¹³⁴ His father had been the governor of Sistān.

The poem (rhyme *-nā*), only the *maṭla'* of which appears in Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 168, l. 6), is found *in toto* in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'rīkh* II: 1575–1576). There, however, it occurs *sub anno* 117, connected with other events. The reciter, Naṣr b. Sayyār, is the same. The quoted authority seems to be al-Madā'inī, since he is mentioned in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'rīkh* II: 1574).

All the accounts, while sharing some features like the Qur'ānic quotation, diverge substantially. Only al-Ṭabarī explicitly says that he is citing al-Madā'inī, and his *khbar* is regrettably short. Ibn A'tham, who is, as argued above, the best source for the investigation of al-Madā'inī's lost *Kitāb al-Dawla*, most probably also used other sources for this passage or reworked it in other ways. As to al-Ṭabarī, he seems to have moved some of the material, found here already in Ibn A'tham, to al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'rīkh* II: 1992–1995) (the *isnād* is decidedly ambivalent: *wa-qāla ghayru man dhakartu qawlahu fī amr Naṣr wa-Ibn al-Kirmānī wa-Shaybān al-Ḥarūrī*). Compare this item with number 14, below.

12. *Ramaḍān–Shawwāl 130/May–June 748: Naṣr b. Sayyār writes to Yazīd b. 'Umar b. Hubayra (known as Ibn Hubayra) asking for troops; the latter imprisons the messengers. Naṣr then writes to Marwān II, who writes to Ibn Hubayra.*

Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* II: 2016, l. 11–2017, l. 13 (al-Madā'inī ← Abū l-Dhayyāl, Ḥasan b. Rashīd, Abū l-Ḥasan al-Jushamī).

The *khbar* is in a rather strange place in al-Ṭabarī, located after the death of Naṣr (see the previous item). It is not found elsewhere, and it could be that it is rather from al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb Wilāyat Naṣr b. Sayyār*.

13. *Dhū l-Ḥijja 130: Qaḥṭaba b. Shabīb conquers Jurjān from Nubāta b. Ḥanzāla after exhorting his troops in a speech.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 170, l. 6–172, l. 6 (*qāla*); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* II: 2004, l. 6–2006, l. 1 (al-Madā'inī ← Zuhayr b. Hunayd, Abū l-Ḥasan al-Jushamī, Jabala b. Farrūkh, and Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Isbahānī).

After hearing of Naṣr b. Sayyār's death, Abū Muslim sends Qaḥṭaba b. Shabīb to conquer Jurjān and the areas around it. He first takes Naysābūr and collects the taxes from it (*jabā kharājahā*). In the battle, which is described as fierce, Nubāta b. Ḥanzāla, the Umayyad governor of Jurjān,

134 He is quoted in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'rīkh* II: 1251; III: 15).

is killed. The battle is said to have begun on Friday the 1st of Dhū l-Ḥijja in the year AH 130.¹³⁵ The overlapping of the passages in Ibn A'tham and al-Ṭabarī shows that their source material is very similar in many places.

14. *Muḥarram–Rabī' I 131/September–November 748: Naṣr's final moments are described from yet another perspective. This time he dies at Sāwa (or Sāwah).*

Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* III: 1, l. 3–2, l. 13 (al-Madā'inī ← Zuhayr b. Hunayd, Ḥasan b. Rashīd, Jabala b. Farrūkh al-Tājī); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 131, ll. 6–7 (*yuqālu*). Cf. *Akhbār al-'Abbās*: 334, ll. 3–5 (anonymous).

Here Al-Ṭabarī gives, on the authority of al-Madā'inī, another account of the last moments of Naṣr. The *isnād* is a bit different from that in item no. 11 above. It could be argued that the *khbar* is indeed from the same work, the *Kitāb al-Dawla*, and al-Madā'inī just wanted to give two different versions of the same event. Nevertheless, we cannot exclude the possibility that al-Ṭabarī had some other work as a source for this account, namely, that one account was taken from, for instance, the *Kitāb Wilāyat Naṣr b. Sayyār*, the other from the *Kitāb al-Dawla*.¹³⁶

15. *The 'Abbāsīd forces advance toward Nihāwand. Abū Muslim moves from Marw to Naysābūr.*

Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* III: 2, l. 16–4, l. 1 (probably the same *isnād* as in item 14).

Not found in other sources. Its inclusion in the *Kitāb al-Dawla* is thus suspect.

16. *Qaḥṭaba b. Shabīb takes Iṣfahān and Nihāwand. He defeats two Umayyad commanders: 'Āmir b. Ḍubāra, who is killed, and Mālik b. Adham, who chooses surrender.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 172, l. 7–173, l. 17 (no *isnād*); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* III: 4, l. 10–7, l. 14, 8, l. 11–9, l. 5 (al-Madā'inī ← Abū l-Sarī al-Marwazī, Abū l-Ḥasan al-Jushamī, Ḥasan b. Rashīd, Jabala b. Farrūkh, Ḥafṣ b. Shabīb; al-Madā'inī ← Abū l-Dhayyāl; al-Madā'inī ← al-Mufaḍḍal b. Muḥammad al-Ḍabbī; al-Madā'inī ← Ḥafṣ ← an eyewitness; al-Madā'inī ← Ḥasan b. Rashīd, Zuhayr b. Hunayd; al-Madā'inī ← Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥakam al-Hamadhanī ← his *mawlā*; al-Madā'inī ← Muḥriz b. Ibrāhīm). Cf. *Akhbār al-'Abbās*: 336–343.

Al-Ṭabarī's exposition is richer in detail and greater in size than Ibn A'tham's. Whereas above it seemed that al-Ṭabarī and Ibn A'tham might have been using different sources, from now on their al-Madā'inī quotations are rather similar. Here Ibn A'tham was probably modifying al-Madā'inī's account by making it simpler in style, as was his wont. As for al-Ṭabarī, it is possible that he incorporated other sources into al-Madā'inī's *khbars* without informing the reader of this. Also, the *Akhbār al-'Abbās* displays similar characteristics to al-Madā'inī's narrative quoted in Ibn A'tham and al-Ṭabarī. For instance, Qaḥṭaba's call to the Umayyad troops to adhere to the Qur'ān before the battle of Nihāwand (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 172, ll. 7–9; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* III: 5, ll. 9–10) is echoed in the call of Qutayba, the scribe of 'Āmir b. Ismā'il, before the battle of Iṣfahān (*Akhbār al-'Abbās*: 340, ll. 16–18). How the author of the *Akhbār al-'Abbās* received this material is unclear, but at least here it probably was not through al-Balādhurī's work.

135 This was actually a Thursday. The date could be a pious guess. However, *Akhbār al-'Abbās*: 330 corroborates the date by saying that the 'Abbāsids won the fight on Saturday the 3rd of Dhū l-Ḥijja.

136 For the works of al-Madā'inī, see Lindstedt 2012–2014: Bibliography.

17. *Qaḥṭaba conquers Ḥulwān, whose governor decides to escape. Then Qaḥṭaba sends a detachment against Shahrazūr's Umayyad army commander, 'Uthmān b. Sufyān, who is killed. Qaḥṭaba moves into Iraq and makes ready for a fight against its governor, Ibn Hubayra. He camps at Awānā.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 173, l. 18–175, l. 11 (*qāla*); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* III: 9, ll. 1–2, ll. 8–15; 12, ll. 3–13 (al-Madā'inī ← Abū l-Ḥasan al-Khurāsānī, Jabala b. Farrūkh; al-Madā'inī ← Abū l-Ḥasan, Jabala b. Farrūkh; *dhukira*; al-Madā'inī ← Zuhayr b. Hunayd, Jabala b. Farrūkh, Ismā'īl b. Abī Ismā'īl, al-Ḥasan b. Rashīd); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 137, ll. 9–13 (*qālū*).

The conquest of Ḥulwān is related differently in Ibn A'tham and al-Ṭabarī. Ibn A'tham recounts, at greater length, how its governor, 'Abdallāh b. al-'Alā' al-Kindī,¹³⁷ saw Qaḥṭaba's horsemen coming and, “knowing Qaḥṭaba's story” (*fa-khabura bi-khabar Qaḥṭaba* – perhaps a reference to his habit of massacring the surviving Umayyad partisans), decided to flee. As for al-Ṭabarī, he notes dryly: “[Qaḥṭaba] sent Khāzim b. Khuzayma to Ḥulwān, of which 'Abdallāh b. al-'Alā' al-Kindī was in charge. [The latter] fled from Ḥulwān, leaving it exposed (*wa-khallāhā*).” It seems that here al-Ṭabarī was simplifying the more colorful narrative of the original. He also got from somewhere the knowledge that it was not Qaḥṭaba in person who conquered the town but Khāzim b. Khuzayma – a piece of information he probably introduced into al-Madā'inī's account from other sources. Al-Balādhurī's exposition, here as in the next passage, is very terse. He seems to be abbreviating the *khabars* into a few lines. What is also irritating is that many of his al-Madā'inī quotations are in composite *khabar* passages with the *isnād qālū*.

Next, Qaḥṭaba sends Abū 'Awn 'Abd al-Malik b. Yazīd to Shahrazūr against 'Uthmān b. Sufyān. The accounts in our two main sources are a bit different, but they also overlap a great deal. Both agree on details: the fight took place two *farsakhs* from the town and during it 'Uthmān b. Sufyān was killed. Al-Ṭabarī gives a date when the battle occurred: the 20th of Dhū l-Ḥijja 131/10th of August 749. Then, Qaḥṭaba makes ready for war against the Umayyad governor of Iraq, Ibn Hubayra. A certain Khalaf b. Muwarri' shows to Qaḥṭaba's troops a route to al-Kūfa that keeps his approach somewhat of a secret from Ibn Hubayra, who is also moving toward that city. In al-Ṭabarī, the course of the troops is recounted in more detail.

We can see from the sources mentioned in the *isnād* in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'rīkh* III: 12, ll. 8–9) that among al-Madā'inī's informants was a certain Ismā'īl b. Abī Ismā'īl al-Thaqafī, who later served as a governor of al-Kūfa. (See Appendix II, s.v.) We can note that it seems obvious that al-Madā'inī, who had at least some contacts with the 'Abbāsīd court and family, was influenced by the 'Abbāsīd interpretation of the revolution, although to al-Madā'inī's credit it must be said that he also consulted Umayyad informants (e.g. Khālid b. al-Aṣṣaf b. 'Abdallāh) and included in his *Kitāb al-Dawla* stories about the cruel massacres that the 'Abbāsīds carried out against the Umayyads – something that al-Ṭabarī, for one, chose not to recount (see below, no. 26).

18. *Muḥarram 132/August–September 749: Ibn Hubayra and Qaḥṭaba meet in battle on the banks of Euphrates. Qaḥṭaba drowns during the fighting, which lasts overnight. Ibn Hubayra's troops are routed.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 175, l. 12–176, l. 11 (*qāla*); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* III: 13, ll. 9–14 (al-Madā'inī ← al-Ḥasan b. Rashīd, Jabala b. Farrūkh).

137 In al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 137) as well as in *Akhbār al-'Abbās*: 354, 357, he is called 'Ubaydallāh b. al-'Abbās al-Kindī.

Here Ibn A'tham's tendency to discard the names of the characters that are not of utmost importance is seen again. In al-Ṭabarī's version, al-Ḥawthara b. Suhayl and "the worthies of the Syrian army" give advice to Ibn Hubayra at the beginning of the *khbar*, while in Ibn A'tham no name is given. The remainder of al-Ṭabarī's account (*Ta'riḫ* III: 13, l. 14–14, l. 13)¹³⁸ is very dissimilar to Ibn A'tham's narrative: the latter is more matter of fact, which is probably due to Ibn A'tham's simplifying exposition. It should be compared to the brief anonymous (composite) passage in al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 137, ll. 15–18) and to the *Akhbār al-'Abbās* (369, l. 10–371, l. 8). As has been hinted at above, similarities and overlapping in al-Ṭabarī and the *Akhbār al-'Abbās* show that the anonymous author of the latter work had al-Madā'inī's material at hand, either directly or indirectly.

19. *In al-Kūfa, Abū Salama does not want to disclose the identity of Imām Abū l-'Abbās. The 'Abbāsīd partisans nonetheless succeed in finding their Imām's hiding place.*

Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 27, l. 13–29, l. 1 (al-Madā'inī ← Jabala b. Farrūkh, Abū l-Sarī and others; [al-Madā'inī?] ← 'Umāra *mawlā* Jibrīl b. Yaḥyā, Abū 'Abdallāh al-Sulamī). Cf. al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 139–140 (anonymous); al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarā'*: 86–87 (anonymous); al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* IV: 98–99 (anonymous).

The passage is not found in Ibn A'tham, but sources other than al-Ṭabarī also include it with some changes. Because al-Madā'inī's sources are given in al-Ṭabarī as the same individuals that recur in the *dawla* material preserved in al-Ṭabarī, it is well grounded to assume that this passage also stems from the *Kitāb al-Dawla*.

20. *After Qaḥṭaba's death, the troops pledge allegiance to Qaḥṭaba's son al-Ḥasan. They go to al-Kūfa, where the vizier of the revolution, Abu Salama, calls Kufans to assemble in the main mosque.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 176, l. 12–177, l. 9 (*qāla*);¹³⁹ al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 15, ll. 7–16; 16, ll. 3–14; 20, ll. 4–16 (al-Madā'inī ← Khālīd b. al-Aṣḥab, Abū l-Dhayyāl; al-Madā'inī ← 'Abdallāh b. Badr; al-Madā'inī ← 'Umāra *mawlā* Jibrīl b. Yaḥyā); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 138, ll. 4–10 (*qālū*).

Ibn A'tham's exposition is once again simpler, omitting names included in al-Ṭabarī. For instance, al-Ṭabarī informs us that Qaḥṭaba's troops first pledged allegiance to Qaḥṭaba's son Ḥumayd because al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba was in Shāhī, a village near Qādisiyya; only after al-Ḥasan came did they pledge allegiance to him. This is the sort of detail Ibn A'tham is prone to eliminate from his smooth, straightforward exposition. In al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ* III: 16, ll. 3–14), a *khbar* intervenes, telling of Qaḥṭaba's demise from another perspective and naming the killer; cf. al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 138, ll. 3–4 (*za'amū*, 'they claim', indicating doubt on al-Balādhurī's part).

138 In the *isnād* of the latter part of the account, Ibn Shihāb al-'Abdī is given as al-Madā'inī's informant. The former is quoted twice in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ* III: 14, 15), both times through al-Madā'inī. Could he be identical with Shihāb b. 'Abdallāh, who is mentioned in al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 120) as an informant of al-Madā'inī? However, he is also unknown. In al-Mizzī (*Tahdhīb* XII: 571–576), two different individuals with a rather similar name (Shihāb b. 'Abbād al-'Abdī) are mentioned.

139 Notice how often the *isnād qāla* recurs in the beginning of this short passage, perhaps a hint that Ibn A'tham was shortening the narrative from longer units.

21. *Al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba is sent to Wāsiṭ to fight Ibn Hubayra. Bassām b. Ibrāhīm b. Bassām is sent to Ahwāz.*

Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 20: 1. 16–21, 1. 13 (al-Madā'inī ← Jabala b. Farrūkh, Abū Šāliḥ al-Marwazī, 'Umāra *mawlā* Jibrīl, Abū l-Sarī [al-Marwazī] *wa-ghayruhum mimman qad adraka awwal da'wat Banī l-'Abbās*);¹⁴⁰ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 138, ll. 12–17 (*qālū*).

This rather complicated *khbar* is full of names, which is probably why Ibn A'tham chose to exclude it from his narrative.

22. *The 12th of Rabī' I 132/20th of October 749:*¹⁴¹ *Abū Salama assembles the Kūfans at the main mosque, where Abū l-'Abbās preaches to the people. The people pledge allegiance to him.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 177, 1. 12–180, 1. 4 (*qāla*).

In Ibn A'tham's account, the crowd to whom Abū Salama first preaches and unveils the identity of the *imām* is described as greatly excited: "The people shouted from every direction: 'We are pleased/give our consent [with/to the *imām*]'"¹⁴² (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 177, ll. 14–15). Abū l-'Abbās then enters, riding a dark mule humbly as a Messiah-like figure.¹⁴² Abū l-'Abbās's sermon is rather short and, interestingly, devoid of Qur'ānic quotations.¹⁴³

Al-Ṭabarī's exposition (*Ta'riḫ* III: 29–33) follows an unnamed source (*dhukira*). It does not show similarities with the one in Ibn A'tham which probably derives from al-Madā'inī. Perhaps al-Ṭabarī chose to overlook al-Madā'inī as a source for the *bay'a* because in his version the speech of Abū l-'Abbās is not pious enough. Moreover, in Ibn A'tham's version the speakers are Abū Salama and Abū l-'Abbās, whereas in al-Ṭabarī they are Abū l-'Abbās and Dāwūd b. 'Alī. The big role that Abū Salama has in Ibn A'tham was, of course, awkward for the 'Abbāsīd grand narrative.¹⁴⁴ Authors other than al-Ṭabarī (Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *Ta'riḫ*: 409; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 140–143; al-Azdī, *Ta'riḫ al-Mawṣil*: 314–315; al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* IV: 99–100) do not have much in common with Ibn A'tham either.

23. *The 2nd of Jumādā II 132/16th of January 750: here occurs the battle of al-Zāb, which sealed the fate of the Umayyads.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 180, 1. 7–185, 1. 15 (*qāla*); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 38, 1. 4–42, 1. 6 (al-Madā'inī ← Abū l-Sarī, Jabala b. Farrūkh, al-Ḥasan b. Rashīd, Abū Šāliḥ al-Marwazī *wa-ghayruhum*; al-Madā'inī ← *shaykh min ahl Khurāsān*; Aḥmad b. Zuhayr ← al-Madā'inī ← 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Umayya); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* VII (ed. Damascus): 649, 1. 3–653, 1. 1 (*qālū*).

Here we can see again that Ibn A'tham, although he employs a mere *qāla*, was using al-Madā'inī as his main source for the *dawla* narrative. Al-Balādhurī, who uses a vague *qālū*, also had al-Madā'inī as what seems to be his only source here. Al-Balādhurī's version agrees, in many places verbatim, with al-Ṭabarī's exposition.

140 This is an interesting remark which shows that the persons in al-Madā'inī's *isnāds* were not necessarily well known. Whether the remark is by al-Madā'inī or al-Ṭabarī does not change this.

141 This was a Wednesday. One expects a Friday as the day of the sermon and indeed in some sources Friday is mentioned (e.g. al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* IV: 99: Friday the 12th of Rabī' II). However, al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 141) ('an Hishām b. al-Kalbī), seems to corroborate the date, explicitly saying that this was a Wednesday.

142 Usually he is made to ride a beautiful horse, Khalīfa b. Khayyāt (*Ta'riḫ*: 409); al-Ṭabarī, (*Ta'riḫ* III: 29).

143 For these events, see Lindstedt 2014.

144 See also Elad 1986: 61–64.

Ibn A‘tham starts with a short detour, depicting a scene between Marwān II and Ismā‘īl b. ‘Abdallāh al-Qasrī. Marwān II says that he has decided to go to Byzantium and seek refuge there. Ismā‘īl advises against that, but Marwān has already made up his mind. First, however, he wants to battle the ‘Abbāsīd troops once and see what happens. This prelude was probably omitted by al-Ṭabarī because it was somewhat disgraceful for a Muslim caliph to contemplate going over to Byzantium. As for al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* VII, ed. Damascus: 652, l. 16–653, l. 10), he ties together a passage that combines what seems to be the original *khabar* by al-Madā’inī and a description of what Marwān actually did after the battle of al-Zāb.

The difference between Ibn A‘tham and al-Ṭabarī’s expositions can be gauged from the number of individuals named in their accounts, which are of similar length. Ibn A‘tham’s passage has only eight names – and this includes three mentioned only in the prelude, which is not contained in al-Ṭabarī. In al-Ṭabarī, no less than 23 names are featured. Al-Balādhurī, who has pretty much the same narrative as al-Ṭabarī, has 16 names. This is rather remarkable, and even more so when we note that here, perhaps more than in other places, Ibn A‘tham and al-Ṭabarī agree to a great extent. The difference in the number of names given means that al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī have more detailed descriptions of the composition and leadership of the ‘Abbāsīd and Umayyad sides. One of the leaders of the ‘Abbāsīd troops was a certain al-Mukhāriq b. Ghifār. Al-Ṭabarī and al-Balādhurī tell an interesting story about how he was imprisoned by the Umayyads but because he was so lean,¹⁴⁵ it was possible for him to pose as a slave of the ‘Abbāsīds and say that al-Mukhāriq had already been killed, thus succeeding in escaping his captors. Ibn A‘tham, to whom this individual was probably not well known, decided not to mention his name and, hence, he was unable to tell this piquant story.

The description of the battle of al-Zāb shows remarkably well how our three main authors worked with their material. Ibn A‘tham purged his narration of all but the most important names, thus making it easier to read. His use of *isnāds* is rather annoying, repeating the same *qāla* over and over again. Al-Ṭabarī, fortunately, preserved an *isnād* which not only mentions al-Madā’inī, confirming the ascription, but also his informants and his transmitter Aḥmad b. Zuhayr, in whose recension the whole of the *Kitāb al-Dawla* could have reached al-Ṭabarī. Al-Ṭabarī, however, chose not to quote the part that reports Marwān contemplating the possibility of fleeing to Byzantium. These kinds of omissions seem to be rather typical of his style, probably arising out of ideological considerations. As for al-Balādhurī, he reproduces al-Madā’inī’s material at length, which, as has been seen, is not characteristic of him in the *dawla* narration. For some reason that is unclear to me, his volume on the ‘Abbāsīds is very short and the *khabars* are more or less abridgements. This is rather unexpected, since in the other parts (for instance, the ones dealing with the Umayyads (in which the passage dealt with here is located)), it would seem that he quotes his sources more faithfully. Notice that al-Balādhurī’s use of *isnāds* is, more often than not, vague. Here he has *qālū*, although he does not appear to have any sources other than al-Madā’inī. It could be argued that here *qālū* means “some, more unreliable sources say”, but this is unlikely since he does not give any variant narratives for the battle of al-Zāb.

One might note that al-Mas‘ūdī (*Murūj* IV: 92–93) has a *khabar* ascribed to al-Madā’inī “and others”, which is related to the battle of al-Zāb. It is not found in other sources; therefore, it is probably not from the *Kitāb al-Dawla*.

145 This could be a literary motif, part of the ‘Abbāsīds’ attempt to portray themselves as more pious and modest than the Umayyads.

24. *Marwān flees. The 'Abbāsīd troops conquer Damascus. Marwān reaches Egypt, where he is killed.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 186, l. 3–190, l. 4 (*qāla*); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* III: 47, l. 6–51, l. 6 (al-Madā'inī ← *ashyākhihi*; al-Madā'inī ← Ismā'īl b. al-Ḥasan ← 'Āmir b. Ismā'īl; al-Madā'inī ← Abū Ṭālib al-Anṣārī; al-Madā'inī ← Abū l-Ḥasan al-Khurāsānī ← *shaykh min Bakr b. Wā'il*; al-Madā'inī ← al-Kinānī); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* VII (ed. Damascus): 654, l. 8–656, l. 7 (al-Madā'inī ← *ba'd ashayākhihi*; (al-Madā'inī ←?) 'Āmir b. Ismā'īl; al-Madā'inī). Cf. Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *Ta'rīkh*: 404, ll. 5–9 (Abū l-Dhayyāl [Zuhayr b. Hunayd]).

There is not much to comment on here: all three sources are rather similar. The first-person narration on the killing of Marwān, told by 'Āmir b. Ismā'īl, shows how interested al-Madā'inī was in recounting eyewitness narration. Of course, it can be claimed that, especially in this case, the first-person narration is just a literary device, the point of which is to give a “ring of authenticity” to the story.

We have here two diverging dates for the killing of Marwān II. Al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'rīkh* III: 50) has the 27th of Dhū l-Hijja 132/6th of August 750, whereas Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 190) gives the 4th of Dhū l-Qa'da/14th of June 750. I am unable to find any date in al-Balādhurī. Although both of the dates seem to stem from al-Madā'inī (in Ibn A'tham implicitly, in al-Ṭabarī explicitly), one of them should be considered an interpolation to the al-Madā'inī material if we do not think that they are two variant dates given by al-Madā'inī, which is rather unlikely here, since neither of the sources give them both. As can be seen from al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'rīkh* III: 51), he seems to have had other sources for the dates of Marwān II and he repeats the date of death here. This leads me to suggest that al-Ṭabarī inserted the date into al-Madā'inī's *khbar* from other sources without stating this openly.

At the end, Ibn A'tham quotes a poem not found in other sources; in general, he is rather keen on quoting poems, while al-Ṭabarī omits them or just quotes a few verses. My suggestion is that they were part of al-Madā'inī's original work, although this cannot be determined with certainty. Ibn A'tham also includes a letter from 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī to Abū l-'Abbās, stating that the “Pharaoh” has been slain.¹⁴⁶

25. *Marwān's head tours Abū l-'Abbās's court and al-Kūfa. Some poems extolling and disparaging the Umayyads are quoted.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 190, l. 4–193, l. 5 (al-Madā'inī); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 164, l. 15–165, l. 4 ([Abū Mas'ūd] b. Qattāt [al-Kūfī]). Cf. Abū l-Faraj, *Aghānī* XVII: 250, ll. 3–13 (al-Ḥasan [b. Muḥammad]¹⁴⁷ ← Aḥmad b. al-Ḥārith ← al-Madā'inī); al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh al-Mawṣil*: 141, ll. 12–15 (anonymous).

Rather remarkably, Ibn A'tham mentions al-Madā'inī four times in his *isnāds* here. This could lead one to suspect that the earlier *khbars*, prefixed by mere *qālas*, stem from another source. But as has been argued above, this is not the case. That Ibn A'tham had sources other than al-Madā'inī for his *dawla* narrative is probable. Nonetheless, al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* is by far his most important one.

146 For these events, see Wellhausen 1927: 547–550; Omar 1969: 124–127; Kennedy 1981: 46–48; Hawting 1986: 115–118; Schick 1995: 90.

147 An uncle of Abū l-Faraj, on whom see Fleischhammer 2004: 48–49.

It could be, nevertheless, that, for instance, the poems of Abū l-'Aṭā' al-Sindī stem from another work of al-Madā'inī; see Abū l-Faraj, *Aghānī* XVII: 245–257 for the entry of Abū l-'Aṭā' where al-Madā'inī is quoted *passim* (cf. item 28, below). Al-Ṭabarī, who in general does not give much space to poetry, does not quote these poems at all.

26. *Umayyads are massacred in al-Hijāz and Syria. In Damascus, the graves of the Umayyad family, with the exception of 'Umar II, are desecrated.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 193, l. 6–195, l. 6 (no *isnād*);¹⁴⁸ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* VII (ed. Damascus): 660: l. 3–661, l. 13; 662, ll. 10–19; 663, l. 17–664, l. 2 (al-Madā'inī *wa-ghayruhu*; al-Madā'inī ← Abū 'Aṣim al-Zabādī; al-Madā'inī); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 104, ll. 11–17 (anonymous). Cf. al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh al-Mawṣil*: 138, l. 8–139, l. 2 (Khalīfa¹⁴⁹ ← [al-Madā'inī?]) ← Abu l-Dhayyāl [Zuhayr b. Hunayd]); Abū l-Faraj, *Aghānī* IV: 349, l. 17–355, l. 9 (numerous *isnāds*, but no al-Madā'inī, although some *khabars* are somewhat similar to his material).

Al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'rīkh* III: 51) only hints at the Umayyad massacres and says that 72 men were killed by 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī at the river Abū Fuṭrus. As has been suggested, he felt the need to omit some (for instance, embarrassing) events from the history of Arabic-Islamic civilization.¹⁵⁰

27. *Abū l-'Abbās disparages Syrian shaykhs for supporting the Umayyads.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 195, l. 7–196, l. 3 (al-Madā'inī ← Abū l-'Abbās al-Filasṭīnī).¹⁵¹ Cf. al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 159, l. 21–160, l. 4 ('Abbās b. Hishām al-Kalbī ← his father).

The variant stories, although they stem from different authorities according to the *isnāds*, overlap a great deal. Nonetheless, they differ in their details. Of course, one may be a bit doubtful whether the *isnāds* should be trusted here or whether al-Balādhurī introduced material from al-Madā'inī into his account without saying so. Note how the style of the exposition changes from matter of fact for the rest of the *Kitāb al-Dawla* to belletristic, even frivolous, here (the same holds true for items 25 and 28).

28. *The poet Sudayf b. Maymūn recites verses in front of Abū l-'Abbās, exhorting him to slaughter the remaining Umayyads.*¹⁵²

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 196, l. 7–201, l. 20 (al-Madā'inī). Cf. al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 161, l. 15–163, l. 14 (Ḥafṣ b. 'Umar ← al-Haytham b. 'Adī); Abū l-Faraj, *Aghānī* IV: 346, l. 9–349, l. 15 (numerous *isnāds*, but al-Madā'inī is not mentioned).

Although the beginning of the item (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 196, ll. 7–14) ties it to the overall narrative of the Umayyad massacres, the style is rather different. It has been hinted that items 25, 27, and this one (and 32, below) might stem from another work of al-Madā'inī. For instance, the *Kitāb Akhbār al-Saffāh* comes to mind (see Lindstedt 2012–2014: 247). In addition to the change in style, observe how often the *isnād* "al-Madā'inī has said" occurs in items 25, 27, 28 and 32 whereas in the rest of Ibn A'tham's *dawla* narrative his name rarely occurs at all, notwithstanding the fact that it clearly stems from him, as has been demonstrated. The explicit mention of al-Madā'inī could mean that Ibn A'tham has switched from his main source

148 The authority mentioned just six lines above is al-Madā'inī.

149 I am unable to find this passage in the printed edition of Khalīfa b. Khayyāt's *Ta'rīkh*.

150 For these events, see Wellhausen 1927: 551–552; Moscati 1950; Robinson 2010.

151 The *isnād* continues: *wa-kāna min ghalabat ahl al-'ilm fī 'aṣrihi*.

152 On Sudayf, see El Acheche 1997.

(al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*) to another of al-Madā'inī's works. Of course, it is not impossible that al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* included this kind of interlude at some point.

Al-Balādhurī's exposition (especially in III: 163) is rather similar and sometimes agrees verbatim with Ibn A'tham's. It is possible that the former was also using al-Madā'inī as his source, although he only gives al-Haytham b. 'Adī.

29. *The end of 132/July–August 750: Abū l-Ward Majza'a b al-Kawthar and Ḥabīb b. Murra al-Murrī put on white.*

Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 54, l. 14–56, l. 2 (al-Madā'inī ← Abū l-Sarī al-Nu'mān, Jabala b. Farrūkh, Sulaymān b. Dāwūd, Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Marwazī; al-Madā'inī 'an shuyūkhīhi); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 170: ll. 12–16 (*qālū*).

The revolt of these diehard Umayyads is only rather briefly mentioned by al-Madā'inī; hence, al-Ṭabarī also uses other sources to tell their stories. It is unclear why Ibn A'tham decided to omit the narrative on Abū l-Ward and Ḥabīb b. Murra; perhaps he thought they were too marginal to deserve a mention.¹⁵³

30. *Abū Ja'far goes to Khurāsān in order to get Abū Muslim's consent for the killing of Abū Salama.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 207, l. 16–209, l. 14 (al-Madā'inī); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 58, l. 14–59, l. 21 (al-Madā'inī ← Jabala b. Farrūkh ← Yazīd b. Asīd ← Abū Ja'far [the future al-Manṣūr]; al-Madā'inī ← a *shaykh* of the Banū Sulaym ← Sallām [b. Sulaym]); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 154, l. 16–155, l. 11 ([Abū Mas'ūd] Ibn al-Qattāt ← al-Manṣūr).

The first *isnād* given in al-Ṭabarī is quite fascinating. It goes through an 'Abbāsīd governor to the future caliph Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr, who is the first-person narrator of the story (likewise in al-Balādhurī). It is impossible, however, to tell whether the *khabar* was actually transmitted through that chain of individuals to al-Madā'inī – it could be a fictitious construction. Note that in Ibn A'tham a similar account is told in the third person, which is probably Ibn A'tham's innovation. He aimed for a continuous story, and a long first-person *khabar* would have been an anomaly in his *dawla* narrative.

The al-Madā'inī quotations in al-Ṭabarī/al-Balādhurī and Ibn A'tham differ to some extent, although they also show similarities: Abū Ja'far and Abū Muslim meet two *farsakhs* out of Marw and some of the same phrases occur. However, in al-Ṭabarī/al-Balādhurī it is related how Abū Muslim himself immediately organized the murder of Abū Salama, whereas Ibn A'tham only hints at the actual killing. Ibn A'tham's exposition ends with a reference to the increasing dissatisfaction in Abū Ja'far and Abū l-'Abbās's minds toward Abū Muslim, with Abū Ja'far saying to the caliph: "I deem [Abū Muslim] a tyrant! The caliphate will not be completely yours (*lā taṣfū laka*) as long as he lives!" (Cf. item no. 37 below.)

Notice that in al-Balādhurī, the chain of transmission is less "dignified", going through an unknown *rāwī*, Abū Mas'ūd b. al-Qattāt al-Kūfī (who does not feature in the *History* of al-Ṭabarī at all), while in al-Ṭabarī we have a "court *isnād*". It is not clear whether al-Balādhurī received the narrative through al-Madā'inī, as he is not mentioned in the chain of transmission.

153 On these counterrevolutionary attempts, see Cobb 2001b: 46–48, 76–78.

31. *Abū Ja'far does battle with Ibn Hubayra at Wāsiṭ. The latter surrenders on the condition that he receive a written amān 'quarter'.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 202, l. 1–205, l. 4 (al-Madā'inī); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* III: 61, l. 20–66, l. 7 (al-Madā'inī ← Abū 'Abdallāh al-Sulamī ← 'Abdallāh b. Badr, Zuhayr b. Hunayd, Bishr b. 'Isā, Abū l-Sarī).

Al-Ṭabarī's narrative is different from Ibn A'tham's to such an extent that one wonders if he was using some other work by al-Madā'inī as a source here (for instance, *Kitāb Maqtal Yazīd b. 'Umar b. Hubayra*). Furthermore, al-Ṭabarī does not quote the *amān* document of Ibn Hubayra.¹⁵⁴ The narrative in Ibn A'tham is very terse. He completely glosses over the role of al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba, who had besieged Wāsiṭ from the beginning of the year 132 (see item no. 21 above). However, because he includes the *amān* document, Ibn A'tham is very important and also shows the significance of al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*. (Cf. 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī's *amān*, dealt with in no. 35 below.) Ibn A'tham/al-Madā'inī's account does not include any reference to Ibn Hubayra's contact with the 'Alīds. Rather, Ibn Hubayra is murdered because he covertly conspired against the 'Abbāsids.¹⁵⁵

32. *Two literary khabars about al-Sayyid b. Muḥammad al-Ḥimyarī¹⁵⁶ and 'Abdallāh b. Sa'id al-Sa'dī¹⁵⁷ with Abū l-'Abbās al-Saffāḥ.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 205, l. 6–207, l. 13 (al-Madā'inī ← Abū l-'Abbās al-Filasīnī; al-Madā'inī). Cf. Abū l-Faraj, *Aghānī* VII: 234, ll. 2–13.

This item should be compared with items nos. 25, 27, and 28 above. It is literary in style, and hence it could be, like the other items mentioned, from a work other than the *Kitāb al-Dawla*. Notice how often the phrase *jā'iza saniyya* 'magnificent reward' occurs in these *khabars*.¹⁵⁸ It leads one to think that the accounts are from the same work. Whether this was the *Kitāb al-Dawla* or some other work I am unable to tell for certain, but they somehow fit ill with the otherwise matter-of-fact tone of the *Kitāb al-Dawla*. Of course, early *ta'rīkh-cum-adab* texts could include very heterogeneous material. Here I think of such works as Ibn Qutayba's *Kitāb al-Ma'arīf*, al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb*, or even Ibn Ishāq/Ibn Hishām's *Sīra*.

33. *Some further events toward the end of Abū l-'Abbās's reign: Muḥammad b. Ṣūl battles Musāfir b. Kathīr al-Khārījī¹⁵⁹ in Armīniyya and Ādharbayjān and kills him; Abū Muslim comes to Iraq in order to visit Abū l-'Abbās and perform the pilgrimage.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 210, l. 2–211, l. 6 (*qāla*); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* III: 84, l. 19–86, l. 5; 87, ll. 7–13 (al-Madā'inī ← al-Haytham b. 'Adī and al-Walīd b. Hishām ← his father; al-Madā'inī ← al-Walīd b. Hishām ← his father).

154 Ps.-Ibn Qutayba (*al-Imāma wa-l-Siyāsa*: 301–303) also includes the *amān*. See Marsham & Robinson (2007: 275–281) for a comparison of the two versions. Marsham and Robinson deal mostly with 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī's *amān*, but the findings are also of interest here.

155 For the siege of Wāsiṭ, see Elad 1986.

156 On whom, see Abū l-Faraj, *Aghānī* VII: 224–269; Kadi 1997.

157 Judging from the passage in question, he was an orator. He is otherwise unknown to me.

158 For example, Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 198, l. 1, 12; 205, l. 10.

159 He was from Baylaqān. He started his rebellion in the reign of Marwān II, moving to Ardabīl to gain supporters. The Umayyads were fighting him but soon had more urgent business when the 'Abbāsīd revolt began to gain sway. See Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 142–145; Daniel 1979: 41–42.

Apart from Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 211, ll. 1–6 = al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 84, l. 19–85, l. 12, the two sources are so dissimilar that it is probably the case that Ibn A'tham was using some other sources. This passage is followed in Ibn A'tham by a rather long hiatus (VIII: 211, l. 7–214, l. 3) of al-Madā'inī material, which is explicitly stated by the *isnāds*. This is rather interesting, since otherwise Ibn A'tham relies on al-Madā'inī as his only or at least main source for this period. Ibn A'tham/al-Madā'inī's text on the 'Abbāsids' campaign against Musāfir is found in an abbreviated form in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*: 209, ll. 18–21 (anonymous).

34. *The bay'a is given to Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr.*

Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 89, ll. 1–9; 89, l. 12–90, l. 3; 90, l. 13–91, l. 4 (al-Madā'inī ← al-Haytham b. 'Adī ← 'Abdallāh b. 'Ayyāsh;¹⁶⁰ al-Madā'inī ← al-Walīd b. Hishām ← his father; al-Madā'inī). Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 213, l. 8–214, l. 3) does not agree with al-Ṭabarī here. The former has an *isnād*: *qāla wa-qāla Yaḥyā b. 'Abdallāh al-Hāshimī*, which could be interpreted so that the first *qāla* actually refers to Ibn A'tham's *dawla* narrative's main source, al-Madā'inī. This finds corroboration in the fact that, according to the bio-bibliographical literature, this Yaḥyā b. 'Abdallāh was a source of al-Madā'inī.¹⁶¹ The *khbar* describes how Abū Muslim allegedly plotted to give the *bay'a* to 'Īsā b. Mūsā instead, which is not found in al-Ṭabarī or in al-Balādhurī.

As for al-Madā'inī *apud* al-Ṭabarī, his *bay'a* narrative seems to show up here and there in al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 182–189), which, besides having mostly explicit non-al-Madā'inī *isnāds*, also has some *khbars* prefixed with such formulas as *qālū*. Notice the *isnād* in al-Ṭabarī: al-Madā'inī ← al-Haytham b. 'Adī ← 'Abdallāh b. 'Ayyāsh. It reveals that the *khbar* is part of what could be called court historiography. Both men (al-Haytham and his teacher 'Abdallāh b. 'Ayyāsh) frequented al-Manṣūr's court; hence, the narrative on the succession of the caliphate is seen here from a particular angle. As Lassner has demonstrated, al-Manṣūr's claim to the caliphate was in no way better than 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī's claim (see next item). (Lassner 1980: 24–34)

35. *'Abdallāh b. 'Alī claims the caliphate after Abū l-'Abbās's death. Abū Muslim is sent to fight him.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 214, l. 6–218, l. 8 (*qāla*); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 92, l. 9–98, l. 14 (al-Madā'inī ← al-Walīd b. Hishām ← his father; al-Haytham b. 'Adī; al-Madā'inī ← Hishām b. 'Amr al-Taghlibī); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 105, l. 7–107, l. 3; 108, l. 5–108, l. 23; 111, ll. 1–4, 19–22 (al-Madā'inī; *qālū*; *qāla al-Madā'inī fī ba'd riwāyatihī*; *qālū*).

This is an interesting, long narrative cycle.¹⁶² We can examine the passage in some detail here, taking as the basis of our scrutiny the text of al-Ṭabarī and then mentioning the major divergences between Ibn A'tham and al-Balādhurī. The historical frame of reference is the succession of the first 'Abbāsīd caliph, Abū l-'Abbās al-Saffāh. It is not certain whether Abū l-'Abbās had nominated Abū Ja'far as his successor or not. (Nöldeke 1892: 116; cf. Lassner 1980: 22–23)

160 Abū l-Jarrāh 'Abdallāh b. 'Ayyāsh al-Hamdānī al-Kūfī, known as al-Mantūf, was a Kūfan *akhbārī*, genealogist, and transmitter of poetry. He lived in Baghdād and spent time at al-Manṣūr's court. See al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi* XVII: 393–394.

161 His full name was Yaḥyā b. 'Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan al-Hāshimī al-'Alawī. He was a half-brother of al-Nafīs al-Zakiyya. He revolted in al-Daylam in 176/792–793. Al-Madā'inī is mentioned as his transmitter – indeed the only one to be named. See Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ* IX: 161–162; for the revolt, see al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 612–24, 669–672.

162 For these events, see Omar 1969: 183–192; Tuqan 1969; Lassner 1977; 1980: 19–38, Kennedy 1981: 58–61; Bonner 1996: 53–55; Lindstedt 2013: 54–59.

Hence, on receiving news of the death of Abū l-'Abbās, 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī, a veteran officer in the service of the nascent 'Abbāsīd state, made his bid for the caliphate.

Al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ* III: 92–93) starts by stating that 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī was in the border region of Byzantium, in a place called Dulūk (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 106: *bayna Dulūk wa-Ra'bān*), when he heard that Abū l-'Abbās was dead and Abū Ja'far the new caliph. 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī, however, claimed the caliphate for himself, saying that “Abū l-'Abbās sent me against Marwān on the understanding that I will succeed in power (*al-amr*) after him”.¹⁶³ After receiving the *bay'a* from his entourage at Tall Muḥammad,¹⁶⁴ 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī moves toward Ḥarrān, conquering it. Now, whereas al-Ṭabarī and al-Balādhurī agree to a great extent, containing many of the same names and basically preserving the same story-line, it is remarkable to see how different Ibn A'tham's exposition is. We have no reason on the basis of the *isnāds* to suppose that it does not stem from al-Madā'inī: it is prefixed by a *qāla*, with the immediately preceding *isnād* being *qāla wa-qāla Yahyā b. 'Abdallāh al-Hāshimī*, where the first *qāla* seems to be al-Madā'inī, as argued above. Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 214–215) tells us that 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī is in al-Shām when he hears the news of Abū l-'Abbās's death. This could be just a simplification by Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 215, ll. 1–2): instead of specifying that 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī is in the *thughūr* region of northern Syria, a vaguer al-Shām suffices. 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī then claims the caliphate, “and people rushed to [pledge] the *bay'a* to him, until a great many of the people of al-Shām had pledged allegiance to him and he was called the caliph in the *minbars* of [al-Shām]”. This would indicate that 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī's “counter-caliphate” was more widespread and lasted longer than other sources acknowledge. It is interesting that here 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī takes al-Raqqā as his headquarters, although in other sources the place is mentioned only in passing (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 106, 108; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 94), his base being in Ḥarrān. Again, Ibn A'tham does not include most of the many names included in al-Ṭabarī and al-Balādhurī; it should be noted that, in fact, al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 105–108) includes even more information and names than al-Ṭabarī and was perhaps using sources other than al-Madā'inī without saying so. Ibn A'tham also includes another account, a dialogue between Abū Muslim and al-Manṣūr. As in other sources, al-Manṣūr sends Abū Muslim to fight 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī. But Abū Muslim says that he has one condition: before or after fighting 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī, he wants to get rid of others who may possibly pose dangers to the 'Abbāsīds (or Abū Muslim!) as well, such as Khālid b. Barmak. Al-Manṣūr gets angry at this proposition and Abū Muslim abandons his plans. The same dialogue is placed later on by al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ* III: 100–101; see item 37 below).

Al-Ṭabarī continues (*Ta'riḫ* III: 93–94) by depicting Abū Muslim as going to fight 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī. Al-Manṣūr says to him: “It is either me or you (who must go and fight him).” Abū Muslim moves toward Ḥarrān. Then al-Ṭabarī quotes al-Haytham b. 'Adī and describes in detail the siege of Ḥarrān by 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī against the governor al-Muqātil b. al-'Akkī, even though this has already been recounted briefly by al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ* III: 93, ll. 9–11). The al-Haytham passage is a long one (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 94, l. 3–96, l. 15), and it is fair to ask whether it is from the *Kitāb al-Dawla* of al-Madā'inī and al-Haytham b. 'Adī could thus be al-Madā'inī's source here. The answer seems to be negative. The passage deals, *inter alia*, with

163 As al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 105, ll. 11) formulates it. Basically the same line is found in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ* III: 92, l. 20–93, l. 3); Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 214, ll. 11–13). Here one can once again perceive how much our three sources disagree with each other in wording, despite the fact that they were using the same source (in different recensions). Nevertheless, the content of 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī's speech is essentially the same.

164 An unidentified place not found in al-Balādhurī or Ibn A'tham.

Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba, who starts on 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī's side but whom the latter wants killed for an unspecified reason. This is briefly mentioned by al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 106, ll. 14–15), with the *isnād* stating that the source is al-Madā'inī.

Finally, we have the battle proper, including its aftermath, in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ* III: 95, l. 15–98, l. 14). The first part of it (*Ta'riḫ* III: 95, l. 15–96, l. 15) still has al-Haytham b. 'Adī as the source. That the *isnād* in al-Ṭabarī cannot be understood as al-Madā'inī ← al-Haytham b. 'Adī seems to be the case here. At this juncture, we should deal with Ibn A'tham and al-Balādhurī's passages about the preparation for the battle. Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 215, l. 16–216, l. 5) is rather brief. He says that Abū Muslim had with him 40,000 men (a figure not found elsewhere). 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī is in al-Raqqā with 50,000 Syrian and Mesopotamian troops. He decides to go to Ḥarrān, leaving in al-Raqqā his possessions and supplies, which Abū Muslim moves to take. In al-Haytham b. 'Adī/al-Ṭabarī's version, 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī was camping at Naṣībīn, but his troops wanted to go to Syria and left the camp exposed to Abū Muslim; in other words, the same event occurs at a different place. Al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 107, l. 18–108, l. 5, *qālū*) agrees with al-Ṭabarī, and thus he seems to be using Ibn 'Adī as his source. However, from the following line onwards, he begins to cite al-Madā'inī.

Then comes the battle. It is only briefly discussed in Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 216, ll. 5–8), but at length in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ* III: 96, l. 15–98, l. 9, explicitly al-Madā'inī). Again, al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 108, ll. 6–17, *qālū*, *yuqālu*) constructs a composite *ḵabar* from many pieces. Ibn A'tham and al-Balādhurī agree on the length of the battle; on the other hand, al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī quote the same *rajaz* poem composed by Abū Muslim and agree on some other circumstances as well. Al-Ṭabarī is the only one to quote a date for the battle, although admittedly it is a very confused one: "Tuesday or Wednesday the 7th of Jumādā II in the year 136 or 137". As has been seen above, it is not surprising that al-Ṭabarī quotes a detailed description of the battle at the expense of other information (for instance, the aftermath of the battle, which we will take up next).

What came about after the fight is found briefly in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ* III: 98, ll. 9–14), at length in Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 216, l. 9–218, l. 8), and in a scattered form in al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 108, ll. 19–23; 111, ll. 1–4; 111, ll. 19–22; at first explicitly al-Madā'inī, then *qālū*). We will leave al-Ṭabarī aside here, because he does not give any remarkable information, and only deal with the other two sources. Ibn A'tham narrates that many Syrian troops started to desert. Noting how desperate his situation is, 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī also decides to flee. When his troops see this, they ask for safe-conduct from Abū Muslim, who grants it. Al-Manṣūr sends Abū Muslim to pursue 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī, "wherever he may be". 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī's brother, 'Abd al-Ṣamad, takes refuge in al-Ruṣāfa, while 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī himself goes first to al-Shām (Damascus?), then to Mecca, and at last seeks protection in al-Baṣra from another of his brothers, Sulaymān b. 'Alī. Sulaymān writes to al-Manṣūr, asking for an *amān* for his brother. When the latter consents, still another brother of 'Abdallāh, 'Īsā b. 'Alī, asks his secretary, Ibn al-Muqaffā', to write the *amān* document for 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī. The document is so ingeniously written, guaranteeing the safety of 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī so well, that al-Manṣūr becomes angry and decides to kill Ibn al-Muqaffā' (see the next item).

Al-Balādhurī's account agrees with Ibn A'tham in outline. However, the detailed route of 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī's flight, for instance, is not mentioned. Indeed, Ibn A'tham is the only one to mention that 'Abdallāh escaped as far as Mecca. Al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 111, ll. 3–4) mentions that Sulaymān b. 'Alī asked not only an *amān* for 'Abdallāh from al-Manṣūr but also permis-

sion for 'Abdallāh to perform the *hajj*. But al-Balādhurī remarks that 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī did not perform the pilgrimage.

Now, it is also very interesting to see that al-Azdī (*Ta'riḫ al-Mawṣil*: 165, l. 10–170, l. 14, Muḥammad b. al-Mubārak al-'Askarī [← Aḥmad b. al-Ḥārith al-Kharrāz] ← al-Madā'inī) actually includes the *amān*, which, if we trust the *isnād*, stems from al-Madā'inī. It is not included in other works, although it somewhat resembles the *amān* of Ibn Hubayra, quoted by Ibn A'tham from al-Madā'inī (see above, no. 31).¹⁶⁵ In general, al-Azdī does not quote al-Madā'inī's *dawla khabars*. Here, however, he not only seems to be doing that but also specifies in which recension he received it. While I am wary of saying that al-Azdī had al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla* at hand, I would suggest that his quotations are from a work of Aḥmad b. al-Ḥārith. (Cf. Marsham & Robinson 2007: 258.)

Marsham and Robinson have studied this *amān* in depth. They deem it an authentic document composed by Ibn Muqaffa', although it includes an interpolation or two (Marsham & Robinson 2007: 261, 272). I would be more cautious about accepting its authenticity. Since both this and the Ibn Hubayra *amān* are quoted on the authority of al-Madā'inī, and since they are somewhat similar in style and content, there is the rather strong possibility, in my opinion, that they were composed by al-Madā'inī. One of them (the Ibn Hubayra *amān*) was then included in his *Kitāb al-Dawla* and the other (the one dealt with here) in some other work of his – possibly it was even composed by Aḥmad b. al-Ḥārith on the basis of Ibn Hubayra's *amān*. Of course, it is possible that one or both of the documents are authentic; in this case, the similarity can be explained from the fact that the *amāns* were following the usual style of such documents (as argued by Marsham & Robinson 2007: 271–273).

36. *Ibn al-Muqaffa' is killed.*¹⁶⁶

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 218, l. 10–219, l. 16 (al-Madā'inī); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 221, l. 17–222, l. 11; 223, ll. 12–20 (al-Madā'inī; 'Abdallāh b. Mālik al-Kātib¹⁶⁷ and al-Madā'inī; *qālū*).

This episode is not found in al-Ṭabarī. The reason for this is very clear-cut: he does not mention Ibn al-Muqaffa' at all in his *Ta'riḫ*, save for in one instance (II: 1979) where Ibn al-Muqaffa' appears as a *rāwī*. The story line is to a great extent the same in al-Balādhurī and Ibn A'tham. Sometimes they agree verbatim, as in some of the dialogue between Ibn al-Muqaffa' and Sufyān b. Mu'āwiya al-Muhallabī. For instance, Ibn al-Muqaffa' calls Sufyān “son of a lusty woman”. In al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 221, ll. 20–22), this is followed by what seems to me to be al-Balādhurī's own gloss, explaining Umm Sufyān's marriages (not found in Ibn A'tham). The horrid scene of Ibn al-Muqaffa' being thrown into an oven after his hands were cut off is included in both al-Balādhurī and Ibn A'tham, but the former (III: 222, ll. 6–9) also includes some additional information. Al-Balādhurī's *khabar* is explicitly composite.

165 The “*tawqī'*” to the *amān* is purportedly quoted in al-Jahshiyārī (*Wuzarā'*: 104). Its accuracy is “far from certain” (Marsham & Robinson 2007: 275).

166 It should be noted that many reasons probably lay behind Ibn al-Muqaffa's murder, of which two could be noted here. First, he was earlier the secretary for different Umayyad governors and officials. Al-Manṣūr was infamously suspicious of such figures, and indeed of figures who were loyal servants of the early 'Abbāsids, like Abū Salama and Abū Muslim. Second, he was associated with 'Isā b. 'Alī, one of the *'umūma* who were all, in a way, rivals to al-Manṣūr. For the episode of the killing of Ibn al-Muqaffa', see also al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarā'*: 104–107; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt* II: 151–155.

167 He is a rather prolific source in Volume III of al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb*, but he does not appear in other volumes, as a glance at the indices shows. I do not know who he is. For possible identifications, see Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ* V: 150–151; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* XIV: 440.

37. *The rancor between al-Manṣūr and Abū Muslim increases. Al-Manṣūr has Abū Muslim killed.*

Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 219, l. 18–229, l. 2 (*qāla*); al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* III: 99, ll. 5–17; 100, l. 4–103, l. 11; 105, l. 1–108, l. 10; 111, l. 21–114, l. 6; 117, l. 18–119, l. 1 (Aḥmad b. Zuhayr ← al-Madā'inī ← Maslama b. Muḥārib, Muslim b. al-Mughīra, Sa'īd b. Aws, Abū Ḥafṣ al-Azdī, al-Nu'mān Abū l-Sarī, Muḥriz b. Ibrāhīm *wa-ghayruhum*; al-Madā'inī ← Muslim b. al-Mughīra; al-Madā'inī ← Abū Ḥafṣ al-Azdī; al-Madā'inī ← Yazīd b. Asīd; al-Madā'inī ← Abū Ḥafṣ al-Azdī); al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 201, l. 15–202, l. 18; 203, l. 21–204, l. 14; 206, ll. 18–19; 208, ll. 7–14¹⁶⁸ (*qāla*; 'Abdallāh b. Šāliḥ¹⁶⁹ and al-Madā'inī; Abū Mas'ūd al-Kūfī).

This forms the last section in the *Kitāb al-Dawla* of al-Madā'inī.¹⁷⁰ After it, Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 229) moves on to discuss other matters, starting with the conquest of Armīniyya and Ādharbayjān by al-Manṣūr. As to the *isnāds* of Ibn A'tham's *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, they do not hint at any rupture here. Although al-Madā'inī is not named, he is not excluded either: the *isnād* continues to be a mere *qāla* until VIII: 237, where another authority is mentioned. However, comparison of this material (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 229–244) with al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī leads one to think that the text does not stem from al-Madā'inī. On the other hand, the Abū Muslim narrative in Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 219, l. 18–229, l. 2) definitely stems from al-Madā'inī, as will be seen, even if he possibly had some other sources as well.

Yet again, the al-Madā'inī passages on Abū Muslim's last moments quoted in our three sources agree verbatim and then widely diverge. This shows that they had a similar source (but probably not the same version of that source) and that they edited their material without qualms. I will go through the different episodes related to this narrative one source at a time, providing cross-references. The episodes will be numbered, with the number being preceded by a letter indicating the source (Ṭ = al-Ṭabarī; IA = Ibn A'tham; B = al-Balādhurī).

One rather interesting factor, which I will discuss in the footnotes, is the inclusion or omission of personal and place names by our sources. It seems that the *Kitāb al-Dawla* was rather rich in names but especially Ibn A'tham chose to reproduce only some of them. What is remarkable is that Ibn A'tham, who, as we have seen, generally dispenses with names, here includes many place names that are not found in al-Balādhurī or al-Ṭabarī. With personal names, he follows his usual course of omitting those he thought to be superfluous. On the other hand, al-Ṭabarī parades onto the stage many individuals that are not mentioned by Ibn A'tham or al-Balādhurī. Al-Balādhurī, for his part, does not have any name to add that would not be found in either Ibn A'tham or al-Ṭabarī. This is probably due to the terseness of his account.

168 Although this is followed (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 208, l. 15) by an al-Madā'inī *khābar*, it is not included in other sources and is probably from another work of al-Madā'inī.

169 'Abdallāh b. Šāliḥ b. Muslim al-'Ijlī al-Kūfī al-Muqri' was a Qur'ān reciter, different from another 'Abdallāh b. Šāliḥ and his contemporary, Abū Šāliḥ al-Miṣrī, known as Kātib al-Layth. 'Abdallāh b. Šāliḥ al-'Ijlī is not quoted in al-Ṭabarī, but he is quite widely cited in al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb*. He was born in 141/758–759 in al-Kūfa, but he lived in Baghdād where he taught Qur'ān recitation. He was a *qāḍī* of Shīrāz for some time. He died in 211/826–827, which would lead one to think that al-Balādhurī was too young to study under him, although al-Balādhurī is explicitly stated in the bio-bibliographical literature to be his transmitter. Perhaps al-Balādhurī transmitted by written means from some book of his own (none is known to us) or through an intermediary. See al-Khaṭīb, *Ta'rīkh* IX: 483–485; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh* V: 572–574.

170 On the murder of Abū Muslim, see Daniel 1979: 115–117; Lassner 1980: 63–67; 1986: 111–117. See also Meisami 2012: 35–42 on how the Persian chronicles discuss the murder.

The Abū Muslim narrative in al-Ṭabarī

Ṭ1 (*Ta'riḫ* III: 99–103): The origins of the ill will between Abū Muslim and al-Manṣūr are recounted:

- a) Abū Muslim does not congratulate al-Manṣūr on becoming caliph on the death of Abū l-'Abbās.
- b) al-Manṣūr sends Abū l-Khaṣīb Marzūq, his *mawlā*, to count the booty that Abū Muslim has gained after defeating 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī. Angered, Abū Muslim plans to kill Abū l-Khaṣīb but desists. (≈ B1a)
- c) Al-Manṣūr sends a letter to Abū Muslim with Yaqtīn b. Mūsā,¹⁷¹ saying that he has given Syria and Egypt, instead of Khurāsān, to Abū Muslim. (≈ B1c)

Ṭ2 (*Ta'riḫ* III: 105): Abū Muslim writes a letter to al-Manṣūr showing open defiance. Curiously enough, the letter disparages Ibrāhīm al-Imām and the 'Abbāsīds in general, but Abū l-'Abbās and al-Manṣūr are not named. (= IA3a, B3a)

Ṭ3 (*Ta'riḫ* III: 105–107): a) Abū Muslim starts off toward Khurāsān, taking the road to Ḥulwān.¹⁷² (≈ B2b, IA2d)

- b) Al-Manṣūr goes to al-Madā'in via al-Anbār.¹⁷³ (≈ B2a)
- c) Al-Manṣūr asks 'Īsā b. 'Alī and 'Īsā b. Mūsā to write to Abū Muslim nicely. He sends the letter with Abū Ḥumayd al-Marwarrūdhī, whom he urges to first speak favorably to Abū Muslim; if he does not relent, harsh words are in order.¹⁷⁴ Abū Ḥumayd goes with his entourage, which comprises Abū Mālik¹⁷⁵ “and others”, to Abū Muslim. They try to convince him to return to the fold, but to no avail.
- d) Abū Muslim asks Abū Naṣr Mālik b. Haytham's¹⁷⁶ opinion. He says he thinks that the caliph is speaking through Abū Ḥumayd.
- e) After the delegation has left, Abū Muslim seeks advice from Nayzak.¹⁷⁷ The latter counsels him to go to al-Rayy¹⁷⁸ and stay there.

171 On him, see Sharon 1983: 135, n. 125 and 137, n. 139.

172 Ḥulwān is mentioned in this connection in Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 222) and al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 202). All of the sources, then, agree on this place name, something that is rather rare in the Abū Muslim cycle, which is quoted on the authority of al-Madā'inī.

173 Al-Madā'in also appears in al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 202) but not in Ibn A'tham. Al-Anbār is not mentioned in al-Balādhurī or Ibn A'tham.

174 'Īsā b. 'Alī and 'Īsā b. Mūsā do not appear in this role in al-Balādhurī or Ibn A'tham (cf., however, al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 204). Abū Ḥumayd al-Marwarrūdhī is found in al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 202).

175 Not mentioned by al-Balādhurī or Ibn A'tham.

176 He does not appear in al-Balādhurī or Ibn A'tham in this episode; cf. al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 203).

177 Not mentioned by al-Balādhurī or Ibn A'tham.

178 He does not appear in al-Balādhurī; cf. Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 222), where al-Rayy is mentioned as Abū Muslim's stopping place.

It should be noted that in al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 202–203), the *isnād* for a passage that parallels Ṭ3c, Ṭ4d, and Ṭ5a is not al-Madā'inī but Muḥammad b. 'Abbād¹⁷⁹ ← Azhar b. Zuhayr.¹⁸⁰ This is rather strange, although it is possible, of course, that al-Madā'inī is simply missing from the beginning of the *isnād*. The same discrepancy in the chain of transmission also appears in al-Ṭabarī III: 112 = al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 204, which agree verbatim in some cases. The question arises, which of them was using the *isnād* carelessly? It should be noted that al-Ṭabarī's *khbar* here is a long one and he could have just skipped an *isnād* to save space. On the other hand, al-Balādhurī, as we have seen, is notorious for creating composite *khbars*; most of the time, however, he acknowledges this by a *qālū* ("they said").

Ṭ4 (*Ta'riḫ* III: 107–108): a) Al-Manṣūr writes to Abū Dāwūd Khālīd b. Ibrāhīm, whom Abū Muslim has left in Khurāsān as his deputy, saying that Khurāsān belongs to Abū Dāwūd as long as he lives (cf. IA5).¹⁸¹

b) Abū Dāwūd writes to Abū Muslim, saying that he will not disobey *khulafā' Allāh* 'God's caliphs'.

c) Alarmed, Abū Muslim sends word to Abū Ḥumayd and Abū Mālīk, saying that he will send Abū Ishāq Khālīd b. 'Uthmān¹⁸² to the caliph to find out what the caliph really thinks. The latter, however, buys Abū Ishāq off.

d) Abū Muslim decides to go back to al-Manṣūr, quoting a poem to the end that man cannot fight his destiny.

Ṭ5 (*Ta'riḫ* III, 111–112): a) After Abū Ishāq comes back from al-Manṣūr, Abū Muslim starts off for al-Madā'in. He leaves Abū Naṣr behind with his baggage (*fī thaqalīhi*).

b) Abū Muslim arranges a secret sign with Abū Naṣr so that the latter can recognize an authentic letter from Abū Muslim.

c) On the way to al-Madā'in, Abū Muslim meets an unnamed man from among his (Abū Muslim or al-Manṣūr's?) commanders, saying that al-Manṣūr is sure to kill Abū Muslim. The latter, however, refuses to turn back.

Ṭ6 (*Ta'riḫ* III, 112–115): a) Abū Muslim stays in al-Madā'in with 'Īsā b. Mūsā.

b) Al-Manṣūr sends al-Rabī¹⁸³ to fetch Abū Muslim.

c) Abū Muslim goes to al-Manṣūr alone because 'Īsā b. Mūsā is performing the *wuḍū'*.

179 He is probably Muḥammad b. 'Abbād b. 'Abbād b. Ḥabīb al-Azdī al-Muhallabī, an associate of al-Ma'mūn, who died in 216/831–832. He is also quoted by al-Ṭabarī (through 'Umar b. Shabba) in *Ta'riḫ* III: 145, 151. See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam* VI: 253–254; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'riḫ* V: 632–633; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān* VII: 223.

180 Azhar b. Zuhayr b. al-Musayyab al-Ḍabbī (the full names are given in al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 204), of whom al-Ṭabarī relates that in 199/814–815 he battled the rebelling al-Ḥasan al-Hirsh and killed him. He was probably al-Musayyab b. Zuhayr al-Ḍabbī's (d. 201) brother. See Crone 1980: 186–187.

181 Abū Dāwūd is not mentioned by al-Balādhurī.

182 Not referred to in the two other sources.

183 That is, Abū l-Faḍl al-Rabī' b. Yūnus, "who was at the time a servant of Abū l-Khaṣīb" (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 112). He is mentioned in al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 204). Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 228) reads that on the fourth (*al-rābi'*) day, al-Manṣūr sent for Abū Muslim. I suggest that the word *al-rābi'* is a corrupt form of the name al-Rabī' since the length of his stay is not mentioned elsewhere. The manuscript evidence for Ibn A'tham's work is rather poor and corrupt. This can be seen, for example, in Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 175) and the editor's notes to it, which show how many of the names appearing in the work have become corrupt.

- d) Al-Manṣūr calls 'Uthmān b. Nahīk¹⁸⁴ and entrusts him with the killing of Abū Muslim at a sign.
- e) When Abū Muslim enters, al-Manṣūr takes his sword and puts it under a cushion on which he sits.
- f) Al-Manṣūr begins to denigrate Abū Muslim for all his mistakes and, in the end, has him killed.

Cf. the whole of Ṭ6 with IA4, B4.

Ṭ7 (*Ta'rīkh* III, 117–118): After killing Abū Muslim, al-Manṣūr writes a forged letter to Abū Naṣr, but the latter recognizes the forgery and flees toward Khurāsān. Al-Manṣūr finally catches him but chooses to pardon him.

The Abū Muslim narrative in Ibn A'tham

IA1 (*Futūḥ* VIII: 219–221): a) Al-Manṣūr sends Yaḡfīn b. Mūsā (not Abū l-Khaṣīb, as in Ṭ1b) to count the booty that Abū Muslim has gained from 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī. Abū Muslim pours scorn on Yaḡfīn and al-Manṣūr. The passage shows similar characteristics to B1b; for instance, Abū Muslim refers to al-Manṣūr as the son of al-Sallāma, B1b even adding *al-fā'ila* 'whore'.

b) ≈ Ṭ1c and B1c, but here al-Manṣūr gives al-Shām and Khurāsān to Abū Muslim. This does not make much sense and the passage is probably corrupt. In fact, Abū Muslim's answer shows the absurdity of this: "Ibn al-Sallāma gives me al-Shām and Khurāsān to rule, but are [they] not [already] mine and in my power?" It is possible that Ibn A'tham was working with a defective manuscript of the *Kitāb al-Dawla* of al-Madā'inī, as alluded to above.¹⁸⁵

c) Al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba, "who was at that time in al-Shām with Abū Muslim", writes covertly to al-Manṣūr, informing him of Abū Muslim's words and saying that the Satan that used to inhabit 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī's head has moved to Abū Muslim's head.

IA2 (*Futūḥ* VIII: 221–222): a) Abū Muslim begins his trip toward Khurāsān. His route is described differently from Ṭ3a or B2b. Three different place names are referred to which are not mentioned in Ṭ or B in this connection: al-Kafartūthā¹⁸⁶, Nahr al-SRYĀ (unidentified), and Naṣībīn. An individual called Hishām b. 'Umar, described as Abū Muslim's cousin, is also mentioned. This is an interesting fact; as we know, Abū Muslim's origins and lineage are a disputed question. Identifying this Hishām would perhaps help to solve the enigma. However, I have been unable to do this.

b) A man called al-Hirmās (unidentified) meets Abū Muslim and recites a poem which is not found elsewhere. Abū Muslim orders Hishām b. 'Umar to write these verses to al-Manṣūr.

c) Abū Muslim proceeds until he enters al-Mawṣil.¹⁸⁷ A group of his companions, "who liked al-Manṣūr's rule (*yahwā dawlat al-Manṣūr*)", approaches him and asks for permission to go

184 Mentioned in Ibn A'tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 227) and al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 205).

185 See Ṭ6b above and note.

186 Yāqūt, *Mu'jam* (s.v.), describes the place as a large village in al-Jazīra.

187 Not mentioned in this connection in al-Ṭabarī or al-Balādhurī.

and perform the *hajj*. Abū Muslim says that it is not the time for the *hajj*, but whoever wants to leave can do so.

d) Abū Muslim goes from al-Mawṣil to Ḥulwān via Shahrazūr¹⁸⁸ with a guide (cf. T3a, B2b).

e) Once in Ḥulwān, Abū Muslim receives a letter from al-Manṣūr stating that if the former returns to al-Manṣūr, he will be the caliph's *wazīr*. Abū Muslim quips to Shabīb, his secretary (not known elsewhere), saying that if he returns to Iraq it will be like in the proverb: "His feet came to you with death."¹⁸⁹

f) Abū Muslim leaves from Ḥulwān toward Marw. He stops at al-Rayy for a day.¹⁹⁰ In Marw he writes to al-Manṣūr.

IA3 (*Futūḥ* VIII: 223–225): a) In all three of our sources, Abū Muslim's letter to al-Manṣūr is quoted with only minor changes. (= T2, B3a.)

b) Al-Manṣūr responds to Abū Muslim. The reply is very different from the one quoted by al-Balādhurī (B3b) or from the non-al-Madā'inī reply in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḥ* III: 104). As to the style and content of the letter, it is quite clear that this is the real reply from al-Madā'inī's *Kitāb al-Dawla*, because it explicitly deals with Abū Muslim's accusations against al-Manṣūr's brother Ibrāhīm, something that is lacking in al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī.

c) This part is of significant interest. Abū Muslim becomes extremely anxious because of al-Manṣūr's letter (cf. T4c). He "humbles himself and submits" and writes a letter to al-Manṣūr asking for an *amān*. This letter he sends along with Abū Ishāq, the leader of his guard (not mentioned elsewhere), and, notably, al-Manṣūr grants the *amān*! This information is not found in the two other sources, in which Abū Muslim's hubris is the main cause of his demise. The murder of Abū Muslim was hard for the 'Abbāsīd establishment to justify; of course, a formal *amān* would have made things even more difficult. Whether or not the account in Ibn A'tham has a factual basis is of secondary interest here, but it may be noted that such an *amān* would have been rather embarrassing to the 'Abbāsīds and information about it would have been prone to disappear.

It is interesting to note that al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḥ* III: 211) quotes al-Nafs al-Zakiyya's letter, which reproaches al-Manṣūr for violating the *amāns* he had given to Ibn Hubayra, 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī and Abū Muslim. Although in T2 al-Ṭabarī opts not to quote the passage, probably stemming from al-Madā'inī, which explicitly states that al-Manṣūr gave a formal *amān* to Abū Muslim, al-Nafs al-Zakiyya's letter shows that such a view was current. Fortunately, IA3c preserves this passage.

IA4 (*Futūḥ* VIII: 225–228): This passage is similar to T6a–f and B4, with changes, al-Balādhurī being more akin to Ibn A'tham than al-Ṭabarī. In al-Balādhurī, the passage is attributed to an authority other than al-Madā'inī, so it is possible that Ibn A'tham was also using another source.

188 Shahrazūr is not mentioned in al-Ṭabarī's or al-Balādhurī's Abū Muslim narrative.

189 *Atatka bi-ḥā'in rijlāhu*; see Ibn Manẓūr (*Lisān al-'Arab*, s.v. HYN). Note that there are two proverbs in Ibn A'tham's narrative and none in other sources: Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 220, l. 17 and the one dealt with here, 222: l. 14.

190 Neither of the place names is noted by al-Ṭabarī or al-Balādhurī as part of Abū Muslim's route; cf. T3e (III: 207), where the implication is that Abū Muslim did not go to al-Rayy.

IA5 (*Futūḥ* VIII: 228–229): The companions/troops (*aṣḥāb*) of Abū Muslim demonstrate against his killing. They are quieted with money (cf. al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* III: 117, anonymous). Abū Muslim's head tours Khurāsān. Al-Manṣūr writes to Abū Dāwūd, appointing him as the governor of Khurāsān (cf. Ṭ4a). The narrative ends with what seems to be the author's (al-Madā'inī's or Ibn A'tham's) epilogue: "The people (or army, *ahl*) of Khurāsān calmed down and forgot Abū Muslim as if he never existed. The power became truly al-Manṣūr's after the killing of Abū Muslim, for there remained no one but him."

The Abū Muslim narrative in al-Balādhurī

B1 (*Ansāb* III: 201–202): a) ≈ Ṭ1b.

b) ≈ IA1a.

c) ≈ Ṭ1c, IA1b.

B2 (*Ansāb* III: 202): a) ≈ Ṭ3b.

b) ≈ Ṭ3a, IA2d.

c) Al-Manṣūr asks "those of the Banū Hāshim that were present" to write to Abū Muslim to try to resume his allegiance. Al-Manṣūr sends the letter with Jarīr b. Yazīd al-Bajalī. This passage is found briefly alluded to in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'rīkh* III: 104). Nonetheless, there the *isnād* is *qāla ghayr man dhakartu khabarahu*, which would indicate that the authority is not al-Madā'inī. Here Al-Balādhurī is reticent to give his precise sources.

d) This passage is somewhat similar to Ṭ3c, Ṭ4d, and Ṭ5a in a shortened form. The *isnād* is Muḥammad b. 'Abbād ← Azhar b. Zuhayr, which has already been dealt with.

B3 (*Ansāb* III: 203–204): a) = IA3a, Ṭ2.

b) Al-Manṣūr's answer to Abū Muslim's letter is dissimilar to IA3b. It is highly probable that it does not stem from al-Madā'inī but rather from another source.

B4 (*Ansāb* III: 204–206): This passage is similar to Ṭ6a–f and IA4, with changes. However, most of the narrative is again prefaced by the confusing Muḥammad b. 'Abbād ← Azhar b. Zuhayr *isnād*.

APPENDIX II: AL-MADĀ'INĪ'S SOURCES IN HIS *KITĀB AL-DAWLA*

The sources mentioned in the chains of transmission are listed here alphabetically, with references where they appear as al-Madā'inī's sources.

'Abdallāh b. Badr (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 16, 61).

He is cited only twice in al-Ṭabarī, both times through al-Madā'inī. 'Abdallāh b. Badr seems to be unknown, but he fought on the Umayyad side, as can be seen from the passages in question. See Agha 2003: 108.

'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Umayya (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 41).

He is mentioned only once in al-Ṭabarī. Could he be identical with the 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Umayya al-Tamīmī mentioned in al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb* XVI: 537–539 or with the 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Umayya al-Makkī mentioned in Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān* V: 87–88? However, virtually nothing is known of either of these figures.

Abū 'Abdallāh al-Sulamī: see Ḥamza b. Ṭalḥa al-Sulamī below.

Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Isbahānī (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* II: 2004).

He is mentioned three times as a *rāwī* in al-Ṭabarī (see Index), always quoted through al-Madā'inī. He is unknown.

Abū l-'Abbās al-Filasṭīnī (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 195, 205).

Abū l-'Abbās al-Filasṭīnī is difficult to identify. He is probably *not* Abū l-'Abbās 'Abdallāh b. Muḥammad b. 'Amr al-Azdī al-Shāmī al-Filasṭīnī al-Ghazzī, who seems to be the same age as al-Madā'inī or younger, although no exact dates are given; see Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'riḫ* XXXII: 361–363; Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb* XVI: 95–96; Elad 2004: 162, n. 68.

Abū 'Aṣim al-Zabādī (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* VII, ed. Damascus: 662).

Abū 'Aṣim al-Zabādī or al-Ziyādī as he appears in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ* II: 1275, 1809), where he is also quoted through al-Madā'inī for the late Umayyad period. Otherwise, he is unknown.

Abū Ḥafṣ (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* II: 1996, III: 99, 102, 112, 117).

Abū Ḥafṣ al-Azdī is a rather copious source in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ* I: 2887; II: 189, 394, 489, 1308, 1323, 1996; III: 24, 99, 102, 111, 112, 117); he is almost always quoted through al-Madā'inī. In al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 102, he appears in a first-person *khbar* as a guard for the treasure that Abū Muslim captured from 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī. I am unable to find an *ism* for him, but from the passages that are quoted here we know that he was an acquaintance of Abū Muslim.

Abū l-Ḥasan b. al-Furāt (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 159).

He could be identical with Abū l-Ḥasan al-Jushamī (see next).

Abū l-Ḥasan al-Jushamī al-Khurāsānī (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* II: 1959, 2000, 2004, 2016; III: 4, 8, 9, 50).

Ed. Leiden of al-Ṭabarī reads al-Ḥusmī, but see the *Indices*: 131 and ed. Cairo, VII: 360. Abū l-Ḥasan al-Jushamī is always cited through al-Madā'inī in al-Ṭabarī for the late Umayyad and the early 'Abbāsīd periods. Abū l-Ḥasan al-Khurāsānī, a *rāwī* (transmitter) also always cited through al-Madā'inī, is probably identical with him; although al-Jushamī is usually to be understood as a tribal *nisba* (name), Jusham is also a village in Khurāsān. Abū l-Ḥasan al-Jushamī

appears in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* II: 1184, 1251, 1286, 1959, 2000, 2003, 2016, III: 4, 11; Abū l-Ḥasan al-Khurāsānī occurs in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* II: 494, 1308, 1311; III: 8–9, 50.

In al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 50, Abū l-Ḥasan al-Khurāsānī quotes a *shaykh* of the tribal group Bakr b. Wā'il.

Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Marwazī (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 20, 38, 46, 54).

He is cited four times in al-Ṭabarī for information on the 'Abbāsīd revolution, always through al-Madā'inī. He is unknown.

Abū Ṭālib al-Anṣārī (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 50).

He is cited only once in al-Ṭabarī. He is unidentified.

'Āmir b. Ismā'īl (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* VII, ed. Damascus: 655).

'Āmir b. Ismā'īl al-Ḥārithī al-Muslī (d. 157/773–774), of the tribal group Banū Musliyya b. 'Āmir, was an officer of the 'Abbāsīd revolution. He died in Baghdād, and Caliph Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr prayed over his corpse; see al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 46, 49, 380; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'riḫ* XXV: 308–310; Agha 2003: 342. The Banū Musliyya and the 'Abbāsīds had a special connection before and during the revolution; see Sharon 1983: 141–143. As the chain of transmission Ismā'īl b. al-Ḥasan ← 'Āmir b. Ismā'īl (see below) implies, 'Āmir b. Ismā'īl was probably not al-Madā'inī's direct source.

Bishr b. 'Īsā (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 61).

Bishr b. 'Īsā is a source cited seven times in al-Ṭabarī. He is unknown.

Ḥafṣ b. Shabīb (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 4, 6).

He is cited only twice in al-Ṭabarī, both times through al-Madā'inī. He is unknown.

Ḥamza b. Ṭalḥa al-Sulamī ← his father (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* II: 1726).

Ḥamza b. Ṭalḥa al-Sulamī and his father are unknown. Ḥamza b. Ṭalḥa could be identical with Abū 'Abdallāh al-Sulamī, cited three times in al-Ṭabarī (II: 1300; III: 28, 61) and twice explicitly through al-Madā'inī, but this does not help much with the identification of this *rāwī*.

Al-Ḥasan b. Rashīd (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* II: 1959, 1996, 2000, 2016; III: 1, 4, 6, 12, 13, 38).

Ḥasan b. Rashīd/Rushayd al-Jūzjānī, Abū 'Alī, is a quite prolific source for the late Umayyad/early 'Abbāsīd period. He stemmed from the Banū Khuzā'a. Al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ* III: 752) shows him or his namesake as having influence in the 'Abbāsīd state during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd. He was probably the *ḥājib* of Caliph al-Mahdī as well. He was also a transmitter of *ḥadīth*, although considered unreliable. See Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān* III: 44–45; Sourdel 1959: 112, 114; Rotter 1974: 127.

Al-Haytham b. 'Adī (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 84).

This famous scholar (d. 207/822) was an older contemporary of al-Madā'inī, a historian, genealogist, and attendant at the early 'Abbāsīd courts (e.g. of al-Manṣūr); see GAS I: 272 and the in-depth study of Leder 1991. It is not very often that al-Madā'inī quotes him. Al-Haytham b. 'Adī also wrote a *Kitāb al-Dawla*, as has been noted in this study.

Hishām b. 'Amr al-Taghlibī (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* III: 96).

Hishām b. 'Amr al-Taghlibī was the governor of al-Mawṣil for Marwān II but turned against him after the battle of al-Zāb. He was employed in the construction of Baghdād, and in 151/768–769 Abū Ja'far appointed him governor of Sind. See Zambaur 1927: 279; Crone 1980: 167–168.

Ismā'īl b. Abī Ismā'īl (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* III: 10, 12).

Ismā'īl b. Abī Ismā'īl al-Thaqafī is said to have been a *mawlā* of Banū Naṣr of Qays. He functioned as the governor of al-Kūfa from AH 158 to 159, although there are some conflicting reports about whether he was ever the governor or not. See al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* III: 458, 465; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam* V: 258; Zambaur 1927: 43.

Ismā'īl b. al-Ḥasan ← 'Āmir b. Ismā'īl (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* III: 49).

Ismā'īl b. al-Ḥasan is cited twice in al-Ṭabarī for information on the 'Abbāsīd revolution, both times through al-Madā'inī, but he is otherwise unknown.

For 'Āmir b. Ismā'īl, see above s.v.

Iyās b. Ṭalḥa: see below Zuhayr b. Hunayd ← Iyās b. Ṭalḥa.

Jabala b. Farrūkh (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* II: 2004; III: 1, 4, 9, 12, 13, 20, 27, 38, 54).

Jabala b. Farrūkh al-Tājī is cited by al-Ṭabarī for information on the late Umayyad period and the 'Abbāsīd revolution; he is a rather prolific source but otherwise unknown.

Jabala b. Farrūkh ← Yazīd b. Asīd ← Abū Ja'far [the future caliph al-Manṣūr] (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* III: 58).

For Yazīd b. Asīd, see below s.v.

Jibrīl [b. Yaḥyā]: see below 'Umāra *mawlā* Jibrīl b. Yaḥyā and al-Ṣabbāḥ, the *mawlā* of Jibrīl ← Maslama b. Yaḥyā.

Khālīd b. al-Aṣḥaḥ (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* III: 15).

Khālīd b. al-Aṣḥaḥ b. 'Abdallāh is cited twice in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'rikh* II: 1251; III: 15), both times through al-Madā'inī. He served as the governor of Wāsiṭ under the Umayyads. His father had been the governor of Sistān. In all probability, Khālīd witnessed the 'Abbāsīd revolution on the Umayyad side. (Crone 1980: 146–147)

Al-Kinānī (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* III: 51).

He is cited only once in al-Ṭabarī and is unidentifiable. See, however, the different al-Kinānīs in al-Sam'ānī, *Ansāb* V: 98–99, especially Abū Naḍr Hāshim b. al-Qāsim (d. AH 207).

Maslama b. Muḥārib (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* III: 99).

The text has Salama b. Muḥārib, but this should be amended to Maslama, as in the *Addenda et Emendanda*: DCCXXVII. Maslama b. Muḥārib b. Salm (d. between 148/765 and 168/785), a great-grandson of Ziyād b. Abīhi, the famous governor of Iraq, was a Baṣran *akhbārī* and source for al-Madā'inī; see Petersen 1964: 92, 128; Rotter 1974: 117.

Maslama b. Yaḥyā: see below al-Ṣabbāḥ, the *mawlā* of Jibrīl ← Maslama b. Yaḥyā.

Al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbī (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* II: 1990, 1996; III, 5).

Al-Mufaḍḍal b. Muḥammad b. Ya'lā al-Ḍabbī al-Kūfī (d. between 164/780–781 and 170/786–787) was a widely learned scholar and collector of literary and historical traditions. He was a famous philologist of the Kūfan school and the author, among other things, of a collection of proverbs and an anthology of poem, the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, which he composed for his pupil, the future caliph al-Mahdī. He came to Baghdād during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd, whose court he frequented. In the bio-bibliographical literature, al-Madā'inī is mentioned explicitly among his transmitters. In al-Ṭabarī, he is cited for information on the Umayyad period and early 'Abbāsīd period. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* I: 68–69; al-Khaṭīb, *Ta'riḫ* XXIII: 122–123; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam* V: 381–381; Yāqūt, *Irshād* VII: 171–173; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'riḫ* IV: 485; Jacobi 1993; Lichtenstädter 1993.

Muḥriz b. Ibrāhīm (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 9, 99).

Muḥriz b. Ibrāhīm al-Jūbānī, Abū l-Qāsim, an 'Abbāsīd *naqīb*, one of the *du'āt* from Marw and participants in the 'Abbāsīd revolution under Qaḥṭaba b. Shabīb, is cited three times for information on events concerning the revolution (Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 9, 46, 99). Abū Muslim gave one of his daughters in marriage to Muḥriz b. Ibrāhīm. Later, he became an official under al-Mahdī. See al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* II: 1955–1957, 2001; III: 1, 99, 461, 547; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil* V: 254, 359, 370, 395; Sharon 1990: 93, 186, 192–193, 270; Agha 2003: 363.

Muslim b. al-Mughīra (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 99).

In al-Ṭabarī, Muslim b. al-Mughīra's reports are cited five times, four times transmitted through al-Madā'inī (see Index). He is quoted for information on the late Umayyad and early 'Abbāsīd periods.

Al-Nu'mān al-Marwazī, Abū l-Sarī (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 4, 20, 27, 38, 54, 61, 99).

Abū l-Sarī al-Nu'mān al-Azdī al-Marwadhī al-Khurāsānī was a little-known *rāwī* for the late Umayyad and early 'Abbāsīd periods; see Rotter 1974: 130.

Al-Ṣabbāḥ the *mawlā* of Jibrīl ← Maslama b. Yaḥyā (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* II: 1965, 1989).

The same *isnād* occurs twice in al-Ṭabarī, both times through al-Madā'inī. Of al-Ṣabbāḥ the freedman nothing is known. Jibrīl is probably Jibrīl b. Yaḥyā al-Bajalī al-Khurāsānī (see above). In this case, Maslama b. Yaḥyā is the brother of Jibrīl, that is, Maslama b. Yaḥyā al-Bajalī, who is mentioned in al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*: 168 as being in charge of the Khurāsānī troops posted at the Anatolian town of Adhana. He also served as the governor of Egypt during the reign of Hārūn. The brothers probably joined the 'Abbāsīd cause during the revolution or shortly thereafter. See Crone 1980: 179–180; Agha 2003: 355.

Sa'īd b. Aws (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* III: 99).

Sa'īd b. Aws is mentioned once in al-Ṭabarī. He might be Abū Zayd Sa'īd b. Aws b. Thābit al-Anṣārī (d. 215/ 830–831), who was a Baṣran historian and grammarian. See Al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt*: 165–166; al-Ṣafadi, *Wāfī* XV: 200–202; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt* II: 378–380; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb* IV: 4–5.

Shaykh of the Banū Sulaym ← Sālim/Sallām (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* III: 59).

The text reads Sālim, who was, as we learn from the text, Abū Ja'far's chamberlain. His name is given elsewhere as Sallām b. Sulaym (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* III: 67–68). Of course, it is possible that Abū Ja'far had two different chamberlains with similar but different names.

Sulaymān b. Dāwūd (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* III: 24, 54).

Sulaymān b. Dāwūd is mentioned twice in al-Ṭabarī, both times cited through al-Madā'inī. This Sulaymān b. Dāwūd is possibly identical with Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān b. Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī (d. in al-Baṣra 203 or 204/818–820), who is mentioned often in al-Ṭabarī and sometimes quoted through al-Madā'inī. Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān b. Dāwūd was of Persian origin, but he lived in al-Baṣra and Baghdād, and could have met al-Madā'inī in either place. He was a traditionist and considered reliable. He is said to have transmitted *ḥadīth* from memory, without notes. See al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* VI (index): 389–390; *Kitāb al-'Uyūn wa-l-Ḥadā'iq*: 358, 362; al-Khaṭīb, *Ta'rikh* IX: 25–30; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam* VI: 136. The Sulaymān b. Dāwūd in question could also be, for instance, Abū Ayyūb Sulaymān b. Dāwūd b. 'Alī (d. 219 in Baghdād, on whom see Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt* VII/2: 84), Abū l-Rabī' Sulaymān b. Dāwūd b. al-Rashīd al-Baghdādī (d. 231, on whom see Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam* VI: 396–397), or Abū l-Rabī' Sulaymān b. Dāwūd al-Zahrānī (d. 234, on whom see Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam* VI: 427).

'Umāra mawlā Jibrīl b. Yaḥyā (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* III: 20, 46).

'Umāra (or, less likely, 'Ammār) *mawlā* Jibrīl b. Yaḥyā is cited three times in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'rikh* III: 20, 28, 46) for information on the 'Abbāsīd revolution, two times explicitly through al-Madā'inī.

Jibrīl b. Yaḥyā b. Qurra al-Bajalī al-Khurāsānī, his patron, was an 'Abbāsīd officer who participated in the siege of Damascus with 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī. In 140 or 141 or 142/757–760, he supervised the rebuilding of al-Miṣṣā. Later, in 147/764–765, he led an unsuccessful attempt to avert a Turkish attack on Armenia. In 159/775–776, he was appointed governor of Samarqand; before this, under al-Manṣūr, he appears to have served as the governor of Khurāsān or part of it, perhaps for a short time. In Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh* LXXII: 25–28, his *nisba* reads al-Jurjānī. See al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh* II: 446–447; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* III: 135, 328, 459; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam* V: 93; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil* V: 500, 577, 591; VI, 39, 41; Crone 1980: 179–80.

Al-Walīd b. Hishām ← his father (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* III: 84, 87, 92).

In al-Ṭabarī, Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Walīd b. Hishām b. Qaḥdham al-Qaḥdhamī is a source for the Umayyad and early 'Abbāsīd periods. He was from al-Baṣra, as was al-Madā'inī. He died in 222/836–837; see Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ* IX: 20; al-Sam'ānī, *Ansāb* IV: 455; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān* VIII: 393.

His father was Hishām b. Qaḥdham b. Sulaymān. Hishām was considered to have made mistakes in his *ḥadīth* transmission. Not much is known of him. See Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Jarḥ* IX: 67–68; al-Bukhārī, *Ta'rikh* VIII: 200; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān* VIII: 337.

Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥakam al-Hamadhanī ← his *mawlā* (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* III: 7).

Yaḥyā is mentioned only in al-Ṭabarī. He is unknown.

Yazīd b. Asīd (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* III: 114).

Yazīd b. Asīd (Usayd?) b. Zāfir al-Sulamī (d. after 162/779) is cited twice in al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'rikh* III: 58, 114) as a *rāwī*, both times through al-Madā'inī, but in III: 58 the chain of

transmission is al-Madā'inī ← Jabala b. Farrūkh ← Yazīd b. Asīd ← Abū Ja'far. He was the son of a Christian mother and a Qaysī. During the Umayyad caliphate, he was a prominent army commander. Later, under the 'Abbāsids, he served as governor of Armenia, of al-Mawṣil, and of al-Jazīra. See *Kitāb al-Uyūn wa-l-Ḥadā'iq*: 265; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* III: 80, 374, 380, 493; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*: 209–210; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh* LXV: 117; Zambaur 1927: 178. Ibn Khallikān (*Wafayāt* VI: 322) records his name as Ibn Usayd, but Crone (1980: 165) refers to him as Yazīd b. Asīd.

Zuhayr b. Hunayd (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* II: 1959, 1990, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2016; III: 1, 5, 6, 12, 15, 61).

Abū l-Dhayyāl Zuhayr b. Hunayd al-'Adawī al-Baṣrī is cited in al-Ṭabarī, often through al-Madā'inī. According to his *nisba*, he was from al-Baṣra like al-Madā'inī. Blankinship (1994: 268–269) notes that because of Zuhayr b. Hunayd's role as an important transmitter of historical narratives, his tribe, the 'Adī l-Ribāb, receives more attention than the other tribes of Khurāsān. See also al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb* IX: 428.

Zuhayr b. Hunayd ← Iyās b. Ṭalḥa b. Ṭalḥa [correct: Iyās b. Ṭalḥa b. Iyās?] (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* II: 1990, 1991).

Iyās b. Ṭalḥa b. Ṭalḥa is the first-person narrator of the story. He surfaces only here in al-Ṭabarī. He was the nephew of al-Muhallab b. Iyās al-'Adawī (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* II: 1991), a *rāwī* quoted rather frequently in al-Ṭabarī 'an al-Madā'inī 'an Zuhayr b. Hunayd. Al-Muhallab was also in charge of the *kharāj* of Khurāsān for Naṣr b. Sayyār (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* II: 1767). As the story here also shows, the whole family had sided with the Umayyads. Iyās's father's name should be corrected to Ṭalḥa b. Iyās, analogously to his brother. Ibn Abī Ḥātim (*Jarḥ* IV: 483) notes that Zuhayr [b. Hunayd] al-'Adawī, al-Madā'inī's source, transmitted from someone named Ṭalḥa b. Iyās, which, if the amendment is accepted, could be the person in question since his brother al-Muhallab occurs often as a source of Zuhayr b. Hunayd (see, e.g., al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* II: 1188, 1201); the connection of the family to that scholar is therefore clear (indeed, they were from the same tribe, 'Adī al-Ribāb b. 'Abd Manāt).

If this identification is correct, Iyās's father's full name was Ṭalḥa b. Iyās b. Zuhayr b. Ḥayyān al-'Adawī. The latter was the *qāḍī* of al-Yamāma during the last years of Umayyad rule (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* VII [ed. Damascus]: 559). During the revolution, however, Ṭalḥa b. Iyās and his son were at their home, which is said to have been four *farsakhs* from Marw (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* II: 1991). Ibn Ḥibbān (*Thiqāt* VI: 490) also says that Ṭalḥa b. Iyās "is reckoned to be from the people of Marw," adding that he transmitted *maqāṭī'*, that is, *ḥadīths* with incomplete chains of transmission. We see that the family managed to switch to the 'Abbāsīd side since Ṭalḥa b. Iyās is mentioned as the *qāḍī* of al-Baṣra in the early years of the new dynasty (Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *Ta'rīkh*: 414; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* X [ed. Damascus]: 247; Wakī', *Quḍāt*: 268). Ṭalḥa and al-Muhallab's grandfather was the general Zuhayr b. Ḥayyān, who fought against the Turks (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh* II: 490–493).