AL-MADĀʾINĪ AND THE NARRATIVES OF THE ‘ABBĀSID DAWLA

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This is a study on the Arabic historical narratives of the ‘Abbāsid 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 ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Madāʾinī (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-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla is an important source for the events of the the ‘Abbāsid revolution: since al-Madāʾinī was not directly sponsored by the ‘Abbāsid 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 ‘Abbāsid revolution and its aftermath that took place in 129–137/747–755. 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 ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Madāʾinī (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 ‘Abbāsid revolution can refer to it only when needed.

I have previously published two articles that deal with al-Madāʾinī and the ‘Abbāsid 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 ‘Abbāsid revolution in two lost works (by al-Madāʾinī and al-Haytham b. ʿAdī) 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: 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). Still, many historians and littérateurs of the first part of the third/ninth century, including al-Madāʾinī, 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 Aʿtham, 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. 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 *ahādīth* have a common source or have simply been copied from others. Because *ahādīth* 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

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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 forthcoming. For skeptical views, see, e.g., Berg 2003.

4 On the study of the *isnāds* and the common link with this method, see, e.g., Motzki 2003; Schoeler 2011; for
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 ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr (d. 93 or 94/711–713) concerning the life of the Prophet Muhammad. 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-Wāqidi, and others.

It has to be noted that, because the quotations of al-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī’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 Aʿtham, were independent sources that had a common source (the common link, in the parlance of isnād-cum-matn analysis), namely, al-Madāʾinī, 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-Madāʾinī’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-Mubtadaʾ. 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-Mubtadaʾ. Conrad (1993: 261) also notes that Ibn Ishāq (similarly to al-Madāʾinī, 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-Madāʾinī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*: some of its material was omitted by one or more later authors quoting it, some problematic ascriptions can be detected, and, in general, it is taken as axiomatic in this study that al-Madāʾinī’s students and later authors – usually al-Madāʾinī’s students’ students – reworked the material to the extent that we can only reconstruct the outline of al-Madāʾinī’s work but not, I believe, the original wording (which never existed in one single form, in any case).

AL-MADĀʾINĪ’S LIFE AND THE ʿABBĀSIDS

Birth and early education

To understand al-Madāʾinī’s oeuvre and intellectual outlook, we have to turn to his biography. According to the biographical sources, his full name was Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. Abī Sayf al-Qurashī al-Madāʾinī. Of his family we know virtually nothing other than that they were *mawlās* ‘freedmen’ of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Samura b. Ḥabīb al-Qurashī (d. 50 or 51/670–672) (Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil V*: 1855). Since ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Samura was an officer campaigning in the east, this seems to signify that one of al-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī’s other niṣba (a name denoting descent or origin), al-Qurashī, is, of course, due to his family’s *mawlā* status and relation to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Samura al-Qurashi. However, this clientage relationship does not seem to have played any role in al-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī’s father or grandfather. Nor can his son al-Ḥasan (if such a son existed or lived to maturity) be found in the sources.

Al-Madāʾinī 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 ʿAbbāsids, who ruled from Iraq, not Syria, as the Umayyads had done. Al-Madāʾinī received his education in al-Baṣra and al-Kūfa, as the following list of his teachers shows (al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh*: VI: 104): ʿAwāna b. al-Ḥakam, died 147/764–765 or later, Kūfan; Qurra b. Khālid, died 154/770–771 or later, Baṣran; Ibn Abī Dhiʾb, died 159/776–777, Medina; Mubārak b. Faḍāla, died 164/780–781 or later, Baṣran; Ḥammād b. Salama, died 167/783–784, Baṣran; Sallām b. Miskīn, died c.167/783–784, Baṣran; Juwayriya b. Aṣmāʾ, died 173/789–790, Baṣran; Shuʿba (b. ʿAyyāsh?), died 193/808–809, Kūfan.

5 E.g. Appendix I, no. 26. Of course, there might have been material in al-Madāʾinī’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-Balādhuri’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-Madāʾinī’s biography and bibliography, see also Rotter 1974; Fahd 1975; Sezgin 1986; and especially Lindstedt 2012–2014, which this discussion is largely based on.
10 Crone (2012: 87) claims that al-Madāʾinī transmitted from his father in al-Ṭabarī (*Taʾrīkh III*: 418), but this is incorrect. The ʿAlī b. Muhammad appearing there is actually ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Ḥāshimī, as can be seen in al-Ṭabarī (*Taʾrīkh III*: 417).
11 Al-Madāʾinī’s Kūfa connection was already noted by Sezgin (1986: 946).
12 In Ibn Ḥajar (*Liṣān XXVII*: 190) al-Madāʾinī is quoted on his opinion that Mubārak died in the year 166.
This list demonstrates that al-Madāʾinī’s studies should probably be dated to the 140s–160s/760s–780s. Indeed, al-Madāʾinī 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-Madāʾinī’s works, such as the Kitāb al-Dawla, which is the object of this study.13 These persons were akhbāris or adībs, often associated with the Umayyad or ‘Abbāsid courts (Lindstedt 2012–2014: 238).

At some point in his life, al-Madāʾinī spent some time in al-Madāʾin (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-Madāʾinī 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-Madāʾinī 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.

Muʿtazilism

In al-Kūfa, al-Madāʾinī also studied Muʿtazilī kalām, a rationalistic branch of theology. He is mentioned among the students (or servants? ghilmān) of a shadowy figure called Maʿmar ibn/abū al-Ashʿath (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 Maʿmar in al-Baṣra, but since al-Madāʾinī is mentioned as a Kūfan Muʿtazilite (al-Qādī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, Faḍl al-Iʿtizāl: 344; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, Ṭabaqāt: 54, 140), we should probably place Maʿmar ibn/abū al-Ashʿath there, too. Maʿmar 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 Muʿtazila (al-Jāḥiẓ, Bayān I: 91–92; Ḥayawān II: 140; III: 357, 530). Al-Jāḥiẓ (Hayawān II: 140) calls him a philosopher among the mutakallimūn, ‘theologians’. As an anecdote it is mentioned that Maʿmar disapproved of eating bāqilāʾ ‘beans’ and his students, al-Madāʾinī amongst them, followed suit (Al-Jāḥiẓ, Ḥayawān III: 357).14

Al-Madāʾinī’s Muʿtazilī studies are an intriguing detail, but his Muʿtazilism 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 Baghdad, al-Madāʾinī visited Caliph al-Maʾmūn (reigned from Baghdād 204–218/819–833) a couple of times. One could speculate that al-Madāʾinī’s knowledge of Muʿtazilī theology facilitated his relationship to al-Maʾmūn, who sponsored Muʿtazilī thinkers, although, it must be noted, al-Madāʾinī was never more than a minor guest at al-Maʾmūn’s court.16

Al-Mawṣilī and al-Madāʾinī

At some point in his life, al-Madāʾinī moved to Baghdād, the capital of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate. While an exact date cannot be given for al-Madāʾinī’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

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13 See Appendix II for al-Madāʾinī’s sources in his Kitāb al-Dawla.
15 For a full bibliography of titles attributed to al-Madāʾinī, see Lindstedt 2012–2014: 245–263.
16 On al-Maʾmūn’s relationship with Muʿtazilism, the exact details of which are still debated, see van Ess 1991–1997: III, 199–508.
Baghdād (Cohen 1970: 44). In Baghdād, al-Madāʾinī found a friend and patron in Isḥāq 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-Madāʾinī supposedly died in his house (Ibn al-Nadīm, Fihrist I: 101).

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

Al-Madāʾinī’s relationship with Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, who is portrayed as al-Madāʾinī’s Maecenas, is underlined in a narrative (al-Khaṭīb, Taʾrīkh XII: 55).18 Al-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī’s student, as saying:

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

Al-Madāʾinī’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 ʿAbd al-Ḥakam or al-Kindī).19 Furthermore, his khabars on the life of the Prophet Muḥammad were all but neglected, surviving almost solely in Ibn Saʿd (Ṭabaqāt I/1: 106–125; 1/2: 30–85) and al-Balādhurī (Ansāb: index, s.v. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh). The sixth/twelfth-century author Ibn Razīn gives a rare example of al-Madāʾinī’s narratives of pre-Islamic lore, namely, on Alexander (Ādāb al-Mulūk: 117–119, via al-Madāʾinī’s student al-Ḥārith ibn Abī Usāma).20

**In al-Maʿmūn’s court**

It was probably through Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī that al-Madāʾinī gained access to the court of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs. Al-Madāʾinī’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 Hasan b. Rashīd

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18 For a different version of the story with a different isnād, see Abū l-Faraj, Aghānī V: 247.
19 See, however, al-ʿAskarī (Awāʾil: 202–203); Ibn Ṭaghhrī Birdī (al-Nujūm al-Zāhira I: 201, 347) which suggest that al-Madāʾinī did write something on the conquest of Egypt. Al-Madāʾinī’s bibliography corroborates this (Kitāb Futūḥ Miṣr, Lindstedt 2012–2014: 236).
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.
Ilkka Lindstedt: Al-Madāʾinī and the Narratives of the ʿAbbāsid Dawla


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

Al-Madāʾinī’s visit to al-Maʾmūn is quoted on the authority of al-Madāʾinī himself:

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

“I was in Syria. I did not hear of anyone named ʿAli, Ḥasan or Ḥusayn. Instead, I heard Muʿāwiya, Yazīd and al-Walīd. The people of Syria, may God curse them, call 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-Maʾmūn said: “God has certainly sent against them [i.e. the Shiʿa]21 those who curse those who are alive and those who are dead and curse those of the Shiʿa 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-Shiʿa sentiment at the court of the time.22 It appears certain that al-Madāʾinī died in Baghdād, but we do not know when exactly. Al-Ṭabarī (Taʾrīkh III: 1330), our earliest source on this matter, records al-Madāʾinī’s death year as being 228/842–843.23 Al-Masʿūdī’s (d. 345/956) Murūj (V: 44–45) gives two different years for the death of al-Madāʾinī: 228/842–843, already given by al-Ṭabarī, and 233/847–848. Al-Rabaʿī (d. 379/989–990) gives the rather precise date Dhū l-Qaʿda 224/September–October 839 for al-Madāʾinī’s death (al-Rabaʿī, Taʾrīkh Mawld al-ʿUlamāʾ 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-Madāʾinī 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-Madāʾinī composed a work called Kitāb Akhbār al-Khulafāʾ al-Kabīr, which included the history of the caliphat from Abū Bakr up to al-Muʿtaṣim (r. 218/833–227/842). However, the last khabars which I have found attributed to al-Madāʾinī in the sources deal with al-Amīn and al-Maʾmūn’s civil war (193–198/809–813) (al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh III: 935–936).

All in all, I would argue that the most reliable dates for al-Madāʾinī’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

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21 The end of the passage in the facsimile edition of al-Marzubānī (Mukhār: 411) is garbled, so I translate here the text found in Yāqūt. Note that al-Marzubānī (Mukhār: 411) also recounts another literary meeting between al-Madāʾinī and al-Maʾmūn.

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-Rabaʿī (because his date is exact, also containing a month): Dhū l-Qaʿda 224/ September–October 839, but preferring one over the other is more or less arbitrary.

It can be said that al-Madāʾinī was one of the most important early akhbārīs in compiling and arranging historical accounts (Rotter 1974: 105). Although he visited the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Maʾmūn 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. ʿAdī, for instance. Lassner (1986: 55) notes that al-Haytham b. ʿAdī was “a scholar with strong credentials as an apologist for the ʿAbbāsid house and a frequent visitor to the court of the Caliph al-Mansūr”. This is of importance for the arguments of this study. Al-Madāʾinī seems to have been a more or less independent scholar, whose work on the origins of the ʿAbbāsid dynasty was not an apologetic account. Of course, al-Madāʾinī 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. ʿAdī’s Kitāb al-Dawla seems to have been much more ideologically motivated than al-Madāʾinī’s work with the same title, although al-Madāʾinī quoted some material from al-Haytham and probably received the idea and model of such a work on the beginnings of the ʿAbbāsids from him. For al-Madāʾinī, the ‘Abbāsids’ attempt to legitimize their rule through a genealogical link to the family of the Prophet was only a minor theme, for example.

**AL-MADĀʾINĪ’S KITĀB AL-DAWLA**

**Introduction to the work**

A tentative reconstruction, as well as comparative discussion, of al-Madāʾinī’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 Aʿtham al-Kūfī. Other authors, such as the anonymous author of the Akhbār al-ʿAbbās and Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, could also have had al-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī 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-Tasseron 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-Madāʾinī’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 ʿAbbāsid revolution, and perhaps even the revolution itself.

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

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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-Ṭabarî and did not realize that the most important source is actually Ibn A’tam.

Rotter (1974: 128–129) notes that in Ibn al-Nadîm’s Fihrist, Kitâb al-Dawla is classified under the rubric kutubuhu fi l-futûh, “al-Madâ’înî’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 Kitâb Futûh Khurâsân. While this is an intriguing remark, one should note that the section of al-Madâ’înî’s books on the conquests also includes other miscellaneous material that is not directly connected with the futûh narratives, such as works on the different governors of Khurâsân (Ibn al-Nadîm, Fihrist I: 103). However, as will be seen below when discussing Ibn A’tam’s Kitâb al-Futûh, Rotter was certainly not the first one to think in this way. Rather, the idea that the dawla narratives (whether al-Madâ’înî’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-Madâ’înî’s Kitâb al-Dawla. He suggests that the work encompassed accounts concerning the coming to power of the ‘Abbâсидs, starting from the earliest appearance of the ‘Abbâсид propagandists around the year 100/718–719 until the death of Abû Muslim in Sha’bân 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 ‘Abbâсид 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-Ṭabarî, listing those khabars (reports) that could fit the subject of the work and that are attributed to al-Madâ’înî. There are some deficiencies in this approach. First, it glosses over those passages in al-Ṭabarî that actually stem from al-Madâ’înî but are quoted anonymously or, for instance, with a chain of transmission dhukira, “it has been mentioned”. Furthermore, al-Ṭabarî could have used many different works for information on that era. For the ‘Abbâсид revolution, he could have derived material from the following works of al-Madâ’înî: for instance, Kitâb al-Dawla; Kitâb Akhbâr al-Khulafâ’ al-Kabîr; Kitâb ‘Abdallâh b. Mu’âwiya; Kitâb Wilâyat Asad b. Abdallâh al-Qasrî; Kitâb Maqtaî Yazîd b. ‘Umar b. Hubayra; Kitâb Wilâyat Naṣr b. Sayyâr; Kitâb al-Khawârij; Kitâb al-‘Abbâs b. ‘Abd al-Mu’talîb; Kitâb ‘Abdallâh b. al-‘Abbâs; Kitâb ‘Abdallâh b. ‘Abdallâh b. al-‘Abbâs; Kitâb Muḥammad b. ‘Alî b. Abdallâh al-‘Abbâs; Kitâb Akhbâr al-Saffâh. This problem can be somewhat resolved, as will be done in this study, by comparing al-Ṭabarî’s al-Madâ’înî quotations with other authors, especially Ibn A’tam, who did not have access, it seems, to works by al-Madâ’înî other than his Kitâb al-Dawla. Rotter (1974: 129–130) also ponders the provenance of the al-Madâ’înî quotations in al-Ṭabarî. It appears that he is right in assuming that the whole of the work reached al-Ṭabarî in the recension of Ahmad b. Abî Khaythama Zuhayr (d. 279/892), one of al-Madâ’înî’s significant direct students.

How do I proceed with the Kitâb al-Dawla in this study? Discussing and reconstructing it is problematic, as would be the case with all of al-Madâ’înî’s kitâbs, 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-Nadîm, Yâqût, and an anonymous list of books).

25 For the complete bibliography of al-Madâ’înî, 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-Madāʾi’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-Madāʾi’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-ʿAbbāsiyya, under the rubric kutubuhu fī l-aḥdāth, “his [al-Madāʾi’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-khaṭṭ) [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].

Following Rotter, it seems plausible enough to suppose that the said al-Ḥārith b. Usāma is al-Madāʾi’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-Madāʾi’s material. He also suggests that the Kitāb al-Dawla and the Kitāb al-Dawla al-ʿAbbāsiyya were different works.

It is indeed interesting that Yāqūt states that the Kitāb al-Dawla al-ʿAbbāsiyya “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.

The anonymous al-Muntakhab mimmā fī Khazāʾin al-Kutub bi-Ḥalab, written in 694/1295, knows the work with the title al-Dawla al-ʿAbbāsiyya, too (al-Muntakhab, no. 368). This is probably because the word dawla, when used alone, had lost its connection with the Abbāsid 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-Madāʾi or his students and transmitted by different routes. Indeed, al-Madāʾi 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-Madāʾi’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-ʿAbbāsiyya, 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-Madāʾi’s Kitāb al-Dawla as a source when compiling his Muʾjam al-Buldān, although he certainly had access to the work. In general, he quotes al-Madāʾi very rarely in his Muʾjam al-Buldān.

27 Yāqūt (Muʾjam al-Buldān V: 25) mentions that he also had another work of al-Madāʾi in the khaṭṭ 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 ‘Abbāsid 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: 99). This al-Rāwandī could be connected with the group Rāwandiyya, who deemed Caliph al-Manṣūr to be divine (al-Balādhurī, Ansāb III: 235; al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh III: 129; see also Daniel 1979: 130–133, who refers to it as one of the “Abū Muslim sects”). Ibn al-Nadīm (Fiḥrist I: 108) calls al-Rāwandī’s Kitāb al-Dawla “excellent” (jawwada fihi) and says it is approximately 2,000 folios long, noting that he has seen a part of the work. Later, Ibn al-Nadīm (Fiḥrist 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, Baghdād. Al-Rāwandī’s students, called here the Rāwandiyya and abnāʾ 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 abnāʾ 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-Maʾmūn (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-Rāwandīya 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 ʿAbdallāh al-Rāwandī, who participated in the ‘Abbāsid revolution but whose later destiny is unclear? (Agha 2003: 338). However, this would make al-Rāwandī a very early figure indeed.


• Ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ b. Mihrān al-Baṣrī (d. 252/866–867) is also credited with a *Kitāb al-Dawla* (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrīst* I: 107; GAS I: 317; Omar 1971). He was al-Madāʾinī and Ḥasan b. Maymūn’s student (Yāqūt, *Irshād* III: 221), so his *Kitāb al-Dawla* could be modeled on theirs. The anonymous *Akhbār al-ʿAbbās* 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 *Akhbār al-ʿAbbās* 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-Manṣūr (al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* III: 276). The *Akhbār al-ʿAbbās*, 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-Madāʾinī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla* s 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-Manṣūr, continuing at least until 145/762–763.

It could also be noted that in al-Ṭabarī (*Taʾrīkh* III: 496–497), Ghamr b. Yazīd b. Ḥabd 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 ʿAbbāsid caliphs is meant. The early ‘Abbāsid caliphs were often depicted as playing an eschatological role, so there is no clear demarcation in any case.

Curiously, it is said in the *Fihrīst* that it was Ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ who composed the first *Kitāb al-Dawla* (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrīst* 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. Ḥadī and al-Madāʾinī (see above). Of the *Kitāb al-Dawlas*, al-Haytham b. Ḥadī’s seems to have been especially popular and is quoted, with the title, in several sources (al-Dāraquṭnī, *al-Muṭalif wa-l-Mukhtalif* II: 830; Ibn Ṭāṣākir, *Taʾrīkh* LXXIV: 113; Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *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 Aʾtham 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 ʿAbbāsids; this they did, for example, by collecting narratives from different sources, including...
eyewitnesses. Later historians did not leave it at that but inserted these narratives on the da‘wla into the grand narrative of the Muslim community.

As it happens, one monograph that deals with the da‘wla is extant, although its focus is different, dealing with the whole history of the ‘Abbāsid family until their coming to power. This is the so-called Aṣḥāb al-ʿAbbās, an anonymous work that is later than the works of al-Haytham b. ʿAdī and al-Madāʾinī (Daniel 1982). It is also bulkier than the earlier works. The Aṣḥāb al-ʿAbbās, 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 da‘wla ‘revolution’ (Daniel 1982: 419–420; for the da‘wa, see Daniel 1979: 29–45), but its da‘wla narrative is broadly similar to those of al-Haytham b. ʿAdī and al-Madāʾinī and it will thus be discussed in this study as part of what I call the da‘wla 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-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ 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-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla. The Aṣḥāb al-ʿAbbās is a very pro-ʿAbbāsid work and has even been termed a sort of “authoritative, official, interpretation” of the history of the ‘Abbāsids (Daniel 1982: 425).

There are also other transmitters of da‘wla 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). The accounts that he transmitted can be retrieved from al-Ṭabarī and the Aṣḥāb al-ʿAbbās, 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.

It could briefly be mentioned that the much later Ḥājjī Khalīfa 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-Madāʾinī inī’s Kitāb al-Dawla. The Aṣḥāb al-ʿAbbās is a very pro-ʿAbbāsid work and has even been termed a sort of “authoritative, official, interpretation” of the history of the ‘Abbāsids (Daniel 1982: 425).
32 Daniel (1982: 426) suggests that the author of the Aṣḥāb al-ʿAbbās might have drawn directly on another authority, Abū l-Khaṭṭāb. This is possible. The author probably received al-Madāʾinī material through al-Balādhurī. Some of Abū l-Khaṭṭāb’s accounts might also have been similar to al-Madāʾinī’s.
33 On him, see Daniel 1982: 426–427 and notes 41–42. Agha (2003: 349 and index) seems to identify him with al-Haytham b. Muʿawiyah al-‘Akki, who was an ‘Abbāsid propagandist and who took part in the revolution. Although al-Haytham b. Muʿawiyah al-‘Akki bore this kunya, the identification is far from certain.
34 See the previous footnote.
Al-Haytham b. ʿAdī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*

Al-Haytham b. ʿAdī’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 ʿAbd Rabbihi’s (d. 328/940) *al-ʿIqd al-Farīd* (IV: 475–482) quotes the main bulk of the work, although abridging, it seems, al-Haytham b. ʿAdī’s original text. *Al-ʿIqd al-Farīd*, then, proffers the outline to which other works, such as al-Ṭabarī, quoting al-Haytham b. ʿAdī, can be compared. Nagel’s starting point is very similar to mine. In my study of al-Madāʾinī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*, however, Ibn Aʿtham is the one providing the basic narrative arc. Based on Nagel’s reconstruction, it can be conjectured that al-Haytham b. ʿAdī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla* was somewhat shorter than al-Madāʾinī’s. Nonetheless, it offered a model for later writers of *dawla* narratives. It included the following items (Nagel 1972: 13–25):

- Abū Hāshim b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya gives the *waṣiyya* ‘will’ to Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās: the rule belongs to the ʿAbbāsids, and Abū l-ʿAbbās will be the first ʿAbbāsid caliph.
- The origins of Abū Muslim are discussed.
- The ʿAbbāsid dāʿīs ‘propagandists’ are sent.
- Abū Muslim’s toils in Khurāsān. The armed *dawla* begins.
- Ibkrāhīm al-Imām is killed while imprisoned.
- The ʿAbbāsid army marches to Iraq.
- Abu l-ʿAbbās is given the *bayʿa* ‘pledge of allegiance as a caliph’.

As will be seen below, al-Madāʾinī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla* included basically the same themes, although it apparently did not dwell so much on the theme “the ʿAbbāsids as part of the Prophet’s lineage through Abū Hāshim”. To be sure, al-Madāʾinī 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. ʿAdī’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-Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr’s reign, al-Haytham b. ʿAdī seems to mention only one event, the killing of Abū Muslim. This is in contrast with al-Madāʾinī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*, which continues to the first years of al-Manṣūr’s caliphate. Al-Haytham b. ʿAdī’s *dawla* narrative reads more like an apologetic and pro-ʿAbbāsid narrative than al-Madāʾinī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*. This is probably because al-Haytham had close contacts with the ʿAbbāsid court of his day.

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36 Indeed, al-Haytham b. ʿAdī functions as a source in al-Madāʾinī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla* (see Appendix I, nos. 33, 34). Hence, one can claim with some justification that al-Madāʾinī had access to al-Haytham b. ʿAdī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*. Perhaps al-Madāʾinī participated in al-Haytham b. ʿAdī’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. ʿAdī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*, which could then have been larger than previously supposed. For example, Ibn al-ʿAdim (*Baghyā*: 3928–3930) includes a long narrative from al-Haytham b. ʿAdī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla* on Abū Muḥammad Ziyād ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Yazīd al-Sufyānī’s rebellion. See also Shaddel (2017). The work might also have included a report on ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAlī contesting al-Manṣūr’s succession, as quoted in ps.-Ibn Qutayba (*al-Imāma*: 298–299).
Sources for the investigation of al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla

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

The main problem for the investigation of al-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī composed many works dealing with the late Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid 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-Yaʿqūbī and al-Dīnawarī, are not considered below because their compositions do not appear to be illuminating as to al-Madāʾinī’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 Aʿtham al-Kūfī (d. first half of the fourth/tenth century) is the main source for the study of al-Madāʾinī’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 Aʿtham’s life on the basis of biographical literature. To quote my conclusions (Lindstedt 2017: 308–309):

Abū Muḥammad Ahmad b. Aʿtham b. Nadhir b. al-Ḥubāb b. Kaʾb b. Ḥabīb al-Azdī al-Kūfī was from the tribe of Azd [al-Sahmī, Taʾrīkh 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 Aʿtham was almost certainly Shiʿite, which can be deduced from his works. The medieval scholar Yaʿqūt already made this observation [Yaʿqūt, Irshād I: 379].

At some point of his life, he lived in, or at least visited, Jurjān. Ibn ʿAdī (d. c. 365/976), who met him there, listed Ibn Aʿtham among his teachers [al-Sahmī, Taʾrīkh Jurjān: 41–42]. Hence Ibn Aʿtham’s floruit is to be placed in the late 3rd/9th–early 4th/10th centuries. Another person who ties Ibn Aʿtham to the Eastern part of the Islamic world is the historian from Bayhaq, Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad al-Sallāmī who seems to have been Ibn Aʿtham’s contemporary and met him [Yaʿqūt, Irshād I: 379]. Hence, although Ibn Aʿtham 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 Aʿtham 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.

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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 Aʿtham 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 Aʿtham’s use of sources. Generally, Ibn Aʿtham is quite lackadaisical about giving his sources. Most of his khabars start with what could be called an anonymous qāla. It sometimes means “Ibn Aʿtham says”, sometimes “the authority mentioned earlier continues”. More often than not, its exact subject is obscure, which shows Ibn Aʿtham’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 Aʿtham did occasionally note his sources. According to my reckoning, al-Madāʾinī 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 ʿAbbāsid revolution. Al-Madāʾinī 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 Aʿtham. It should be noted that Ibn Aʿtham does not include much of al-Madāʾinī’s material before the ʿAbbāsid revolution anonymously either. This I found out when searching in the Kitāb al-Futūḥ parallels for al-Madāʾinī quotations that appear in other works.

So, thirteen out of sixteen of the explicit al-Madāʾinī quotations appear in the latter part of the work, dealing with the coming to power of the ʿAbbāsids. In this part, there also appear many quotations of al-Madāʾinī’s material with a qāla without his name; this can be ascertained from other works that quote these narratives in parallel versions mentioning al-Madāʾinī by name. What, then, is the reason for the dearth of al-Madāʾinī’s material in volumes I–VII of the Kitāb al-Futūḥ and the sudden proliferation of his khabars in volume VIII of the modern edition? I believe that there is no answer other than to suppose that Ibn Aʿtham was using a monograph by al-Madāʾinī for this part of his work. 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 ʿAbbāsid revolution. Analysis of the dawla narrative of Ibn Aʿtham shows that al-Madāʾinī 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 Aʿtham, Futūḥ VIII: 211–214).

There is also some stylistic evidence that Ibn Aʿtham’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 Aʿtham’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. This I take to be another indication that Ibn Aʿtham was mostly using for this part of his work a single source, which I would identify as al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla. This is exactly the missing key that we need for the investigation and that Rotter overlooked. Ibn Aʿtham offers us the skeleton, so to speak, for al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla, in much the same

40 The collective isnād: Ibn Aʿtham, Futūḥ II: 147 (as Abū l-Ḥusain ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Qurashi, 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 ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Qurashi); VII: 278 (Abū l-Ḥasan al-Madāʾinī).
41 Ibn Aʿtham, 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-Madāʾinī.

It should be noted that Shaban already grasped the great importance of Ibn Aʿtham in retrieving al-Madāʾinī’s material. However, his contention that Ibn Aʿtham and al-Madāʾinī were contemporaries seems incorrect (Shaban 1970: xvii–xviii; cf. Lindstedt 2014: 118–123). Even though Ibn Aʿtham is a unique source for the study of al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla in that the Kitāb al-Dawla was possibly the only work of al-Madāʾinī’s that he had direct access to, there are also problems relating to his exposition. Most annoying is his recurring use of a qāla without a name. Furthermore, Ibn Aʿtham 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 Aʿtham’s editorial spirit, not due to his sources. Finally and unfortunately, it should be noted that Ibn Aʿtham nowhere says which recension of the Kitāb al-Dawla he had. His isnāds are always: al-Madāʾinī ← a possible source (the latter is rarely given), although, considering Ibn Aʿtham’s dates, there must have been a transmitter between him and al-Madāʾinī. This fact makes it much more difficult to discuss the origin, transmission, and transmutation of the Kitāb al-Dawla.

Ibn Aʿtham preserves for us al-Madāʾinī’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 ʿAbbāsid revolution that had begun to solidify at the beginning of the fourth/tenth century. The Kitāb al-Futūḥ quotes important parts of al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla, as such as al-Manṣūr’s reply to Abū Muslim’s excoriating letter, not preserved in other sources. Here I will translate both the letter and its reply from Ibn Aʿtham (Futūḥ VIII: 223–224):

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 ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Abū Muslim. And now, O commander of the believers: I took your brother as Imām 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 Qurʾān and distorted its significations, desiring the petty vanities of this world that God has rebuked 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 Mehdī Shaddel for this reference.
47 Cf. al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh 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-ʿAbbās, not Brāḥīm al-Imām, pace tr. McAuliffe, al-Ṭabarī, History XXVIII: 105, n. 132. Below, in al-Manṣūr’s reply, [Abū] al-ʿAbbās is explicitly mentioned. It is interesting that in this letter, Abū Muslim is depicted as reprimanding the former caliph Abū al-ʿAbbās 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.\textsuperscript{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,\textsuperscript{50} in his correct opinion (bi-raʾyihi) 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.\textsuperscript{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.’\textsuperscript{52} ‘They are sinners.’\textsuperscript{53} And ‘they are wrongdoers.’\textsuperscript{54} God has brought all of them [these qualities/verses] together in you. Take it easy, O abū mujrim,\textsuperscript{55} until the letter [or the preordained book? al-kitāb] reaches its appointed time (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-ʿAbbās 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 Aʿtham (and only he) is quoting material that logically belongs to al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla show the value of his Kitāb al-Futūḥ in the investigation of al-Madāʾinī’s work.

- The Taʾrīkh of Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ (d. c.240/854–855) is important since Khalīfa was one of al-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī appear in his work. We have two possibilities for this: either Khalīfa heard al-Madāʾinī lecture a shorter, perhaps earlier, version of the Kitāb al-Dawla, or then he had access to another work of al-Madāʾinī that contained some overlapping material.\textsuperscript{56} The latter choice seems to be closer to the mark.

\textsuperscript{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.
\textsuperscript{50} On the term al-ridā, see Sharon 1990: 29–34.
\textsuperscript{51} Yahwī bika al-rīḥ min makān saḥīq. Cf. Q. 22:31, tahwī bihi al-rīḥ fi makān saḥīq.
\textsuperscript{52} Q. 5:44.
\textsuperscript{53} Q. 5:47.
\textsuperscript{54} Q. 5:45.
\textsuperscript{55} “The father of the criminal”, a pun on the name of Abū Muslim.
\textsuperscript{56} See Appendix I, nos. 11, 24, 26.
• **Al-Balādhurī** (d. 279/892–893) was a direct student of al-Madāʾinī (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-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla* but did not want to reproduce passages from it at length. Rather, he summarized freely al-Madāʾinī’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 ‘Abbāsid 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 ‘Abbāsid part can, in fact, be read as a sort of dawla narrative in itself but, as with the *Akhbār al-ʿAbbās*, its focus is on the whole ‘Abbāsid family and its origins. Hence, both the *Akhbār al-ʿAbbās* and al-Balādhurī provide much information on al-ʿAbbās and his son ‘Abdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās, something that al-Haytham and al-Madāʾinī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla* did not discuss, at least at any length.

• The anonymous *Akhbār al-ʿAbbās* (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 ʿAbbāsidiana”. It contains one explicit al-Madāʾinī quotation, an account of ‘Abdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās. This was probably not from his *Kitāb al-Dawla*, however. The *Akhbār al-ʿAbbās* appears, on the other hand, to include anonymously quoted material that is somewhat similar to al-Madāʾinī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*.57 However, the exact relationship between it and al-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla* as his direct source. It could also be that the author of the *Akhbār al-ʿAbbās* received al-Madāʾinī’s material secondhand through, for example, al-Balādhurī, who had a great influence on the form of the *Akhbār al-ʿAbbās*, 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-ʿAbbās* ends at the appearance of Abū l-ʿAbbās in al-Kūfa (132/749), whereas al-Madāʾinī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla* continued to 137/755 (see the next section). This is possibly because the unique manuscript in which the *Akhbār al-ʿAbbās* 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-ʿAbbās*. This is based on a couple of misunderstandings and it should be rejected. Bahramian’s interpretation is that Ibn Aʾtham al-Kūfī was the author of the *Akhbār al-ʿAbbās*. This is argued on the basis of the fact that al-Sahmī mentions one Abū Muhammad al-Kūfī al-Khaṭīb as writing a *kitāb fī akhbār walad* (or *wuld*) al-ʿAbbās, “a book on the accounts of the offspring of al-ʿAbbās” (al-Sahmī, *Taʾrīkh Jurjān*: 217–218). But there

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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 Aʿtham 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 Aʿtham’s Kitāb al-Futūḥ and the Akhbār al-ʿAbbās, purportedly showing that Ibn Aʿtham wrote both works, is very superficial. A more thorough comparison, undertaken during this study, shows that Ibn Aʿtham and the author of the Akhbār al-ʿAbbās had different sources and different aims. The author of the Akhbār al-ʿAbbās 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 Aʿtham al-Kūfī, but some other person or persons.

- **Al-Ṭabarī’s** (d. 310/923) Tāʾrīkh is the secondmost significant work for al-Madāʾinī’s dawla material, containing many quotations that seem to be quite intact. As mentioned above, Rotter based his reconstruction of al-Madāʾinī’s works, including the Kitāb al-Dawla, solely on it, which will be shown to be perfunctory. Al-Ṭabarī’s quotations of al-Madāʾinī’s material differ in wording from those of Ibn Aʿtham, although they often overlap a great deal, sometimes agreeing verbatim. Al-Ṭabarī’s al-Madāʾinī quotations for the ʿAbbāsid revolution seem to be in the recension of Aḥmad b. Abī Khaythama Zuhayr, who is an important transmitter of al-Madāʾinī’s material to al-Ṭabarī.\(^60\) It is very helpful that al-Ṭabarī gives rather complete isnāds for al-Madāʾinī’s dawla narratives. Without him, we would not be able to discuss the provenance of al-Madāʾinī’s material to any extent.

- The Tāʾrīkh 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-Madāʾinī’s material from Aḥmad b. al-Ḥārith, al-Madāʾinī’s student, all of whose works have been lost. Al-Madāʾinī’s dawla narratives are, however, rather scant in the Tāʾrīkh al-Mawṣil and stem mostly from authors whose works are extant to us, namely, Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ and al-Ṭabarī. In the detailed analysis given in Appendix I, I will suggest that he most likely did not have access to al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla.\(^61\)

- **Al-Masʿūdī’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-Masʿūdī, Murūj IV: 92–93). In most cases, it seems fairly clear that al-Masʿūdī received al-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla, but the Aghānī sometimes supplies khabars that provide interesting variants. They could be from other works of al-Madāʾinī. The anonymous Kitāb al-ʿUyūn wa-l-Ḥadāʾiq or al-Dhahabi’s Taʾrīkh 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, Taʾrīkh 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. ʿAdī 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-Madāʾinī, whereas in fact they only quote al-Balādhurī or al-Ṭabarī. The anonymous *Taʾrīkh al-Khulafāʾ* (composed in the fifth/eleventh century) relies on the *Akhbār al-ʿAbbās*, although it gives some independent al-Madāʾinī material; mostly it can be disregarded.63 Yaqūt does not quote al-Madāʾinī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla* in his *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, although he claims in his *Irshād* to have seen it. This lack of references is very unfortunate. As to *al-ʿIqd al-Farīd*, it only quotes al-Haytham b. ʿAdī for its *dawla* narrative (Nagel 1972: 13–25).64

Ibn ʿAsākir’s (d. 571/1176) *Taʾrīkh Madīnat Dimashq* is an ample, rich source on which much work remains to be done. Ibn ʿAsākir 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 *Taʾrīkh Madīnat Dimashq* has been found to quote only al-Madāʾinī’s *dawla* material that is extant to us in other sources, chiefly al-Ṭabarī and Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ. This is not always so. Cobb (2001a: 115–119) has noticed that Ibn ʿAsākir’s work includes, for instance, an account of the rebellion of Abū l-Haydhām al-Murrī (d. 182/798) that stems from al-Madāʾinī and does not survive in other sources. Ibn ʿAsākir’s immediate source for that passage was probably Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Rāzī’s (d. 347/958) *Tasmiyat Umarāʾ Dimashq*, which is not extant (Conrad 1991: 34–35).

In the end, then, we have three main sources: al-Balādhurī, Ibn Aʿtham, and al-Ṭabarī. What is fortunate is that these three are completely or mostly independent of each other. It is possible that Ibn Aʿtham 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 Aʿtham and al-Ṭabarī. While Ibn Aʿtham might have known al-Balādhurī’s work, as far as I can tell he did not know al-Ṭabarī’s *Taʾrīkh*. And al-Ṭabarī nowhere mentions—or, it seems, relies on—al-Balādhurī or Ibn Aʿtham (the writing of the latter’s *Futūḥ* could, in any case, postdate al-Ṭabarī’s *Taʾrīkh*).

### The outline of the *Kitāb al-Dawla*

If we rely solely on Ibn Aʿtham, the *Kitāb al-Dawla* seems to have started with the public appearance of Abū Muslim and the beginning of the revolution proper (Ibn Aʿtham, *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 Aʿtham could have simply dropped material from the beginning. While Rotter proposed that the accounts of early ʿAbbāsid 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. ʿAbdallāh al-Qasrī. These accounts could, however, derive from another work of al-Madāʾinī, namely, *Kitāb Wilāyat Asad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Qasrī*. The *khabars* attributed to al-Madāʾinī under those years in al-Ṭabarī (Rotter’s sole

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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-ʿAbbās*, that relies also to some extent on the *Akhbār al-ʿAbbās* (Sharon 1983: 237). The *Dhikr Banī al-ʿAbbās* refers to al-Madāʾinī in post-revolution matters (Dhikr: 50) that, in my estimation, fall outside his *Kitāb al-Dawla*.

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

65 For this and other titles mentioned here, see Lindstedt 2012–2014, s.v.
source) form an organic whole: al-Madāʾinī is mentioned 18 times there, and the accounts clearly deal with Asad b. 'Abdallāh rather than the ʿAbbāsid daʿwa.

Further, it should be noted that, as Rotter also assumed, the Kitāb al-Dawla did not include narratives on the earlier history of the ʿAbbāsid family that are included, for instance, in the beginning of volume III of al-Balāḍhurī’s Ansāb al-Ashrāf. These were probably part of such works of al-Madāʾinī as Kitāb al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, Kitāb Abdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās, and Kitāb ʿAlī b. ʿAbdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās.

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

The starting point of the Kitāb al-Dawla is problematic, however, because al-Ṭabarī’s and Ibn Aʿtham’s 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-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī quotation that appears in Ibn Aʿtham (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 ʿAbbāsids than al-Madāʾinī. This also holds true if we take into account all the possible al-Madāʾinī 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-Madāʾinī explicitly in the isnāds of the Kitāb al-Futūḥ of Ibn Aʿtham (VIII: 218) occurs in connection with the killing of Ibn al-Muqaffāʿ. 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 khabars of this cycle are indeed attributable to al-Madāʾinī (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 Aʿtham (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 Aʿtham (Futūḥ VIII: 228–229) is quoting al-Madāʾinī 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

Ilkka Lindstedt: Al-Madāʾinī and the Narratives of the ʿAbbāsid Dawla

al-Madāʾinī are bolded; this means those items that occur at least both in 1) Ibn Aʿtham and in 2a) al-Ṭabarî or 2b) al-Balādhurī, at least one of whom ascribes it to al-Madāʾinī:

1. Date uncertain: The caliphate will come to the ʿAbbāsids, 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 daʿwa 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.
7. Correspondence between Naṣr b. Sayyār, Marwān II and Yazīd b. ʿUmar 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.
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.
14. Muḥarram–Rabīʿ I 131/September–November 748: Naṣr’s final moments are described from another perspective.
15. The ʿAbbāsid forces advance toward Nihāwand. Abū Muslim moves from Marw to Naysābūr.
17. Qaḥṭaba conquers Ḥulwān, whose governor decides to escape. Then Qaḥṭaba sends a detachment against Shahrazūr’s Umayyad army commander, ʿUthmān b. Sufyān, who is killed. Qaḥṭaba moves to Iraq and makes ready for a fight against its governor, Ibn Hubayra. He camps at Awānā.
19. In al-Kūfa, Abū Salama does not want to disclose the identity of the Imām Abū l-ʿAbbās. The ʿAbbāsid 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.

22. The 12th of Rabīʿ I 132/20th of October 749: Abū Salama assembles the Kūfans at the main mosque, where Abū l-ʿAbbās 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. ʿAbbāsid troops conquer Damascus. Marwān reaches Egypt, where he is killed.

25. Marwān’s head tours Abū l-ʿAbbās’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 ʿUmar II, are desecrated.67

27. Abū l-ʿAbbās disparages Syrian shaykhs for supporting the Umayyads.

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


30. Abū Jaʿfar goes to Khurāsān in order to get Abū Muslim’s consent for the killing of Abū Salama.

31. Abū Jaʿfar does battle with Ibn Hubayra at Wāsiṭ. The latter surrenders on the condition that he receive a written amān ‘quarter’.


33. Some further events toward the end of Abū l-ʿAbbās’s reign: Muḥammad b. Ṣulṭ b. Kathīr al-Khārijī in Armīniyya and Ādharbayjān and kills him; Abū Muslim comes to Iraq in order to visit Abū l-ʿAbbās and perform the pilgrimage.

34. The bayʿa is given to Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr.

35. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī claims the caliphate after Abū l-ʿAbbās’s death. Abū Muslim is sent to fight him.

36. Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ 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 Aʿtham, it seems, did not have access to the exact same dawla traditions of al-Madāʾinī. 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-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla (see Appendix I, no. 26, for more details).
is, different versions composed by al-Madāʾinī or different recensions transmitted and reworked by his students. It is also probable that al-Ṭabarī used other works of al-Madāʾinī (for example, the Kitāb Akhbār al-Khulafaʾ al-Kabīr [Ibn al-Nadīm, Fihrist I: 102], to which Ibn Aʿtham, it seems, did not have access) and furnished additional information that way. Al-Balādhurī, who possibly received al-Madāʾinīʾs Kitāb al-Dawla firsthand by participating in al-Madāʾinīʾs 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-Madāʾinīʾs 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-Madāʾinī on which information is preserved for us, we can pinpoint only three: First, we have the al-Sukkarīʾ an al-Ḥārith b. Abī Usāma recension, mentioned by Yāqūt.70 Apart from Yāqūtʾs short description, it seems that no details of it survive. Of course, we have the unanswerable question of which recension Ibn Aʿtham 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 Zuhayrʾs 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 Aʿtham and al-Ṭabarīʾs quotations differ in such a way that it is inconceivable to think that Ibn Aʿtham could have used the same Aḥmad b. Abī Khaythama Zuhayr recension. Lastly, we have al-Balādhurīʾs recension, which he received firsthand from al-Madāʾinī. Nevertheless, al-Balādhurī quotes material from the work only rarely as distinct items. More often, he includes al-Madāʾinīʾs material in his anonymous/collective qālū accounts and reworks the material in the course.

Ibn Aʿtham

The fullest form of al-Madāʾinīʾs Kitāb al-Dawla is transmitted by Ibn Aʿtham inasmuch as he opted to include even those parts that ran counter to the gathering consensus on the chronology and history of the ʿAbbāsid revolution current at the beginning of the fourth/tenth century. This means that he preserved such details from the Kitāb al-Dawla as Abū Salamaʾs big role at the sermon in al-Kūfa, the intriguing possibility that Ibrāhīm al-Imām was still alive when allegiance was pledged to Abū l-ʿAbbās, which later historical writing (probably rightly) denied (Lindstedt 2014), and Abū Muslimʾs amān (Appendix I, no. 37). Ibn Aʿthamʾs 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 Aʿtham 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 Aʿthamʾs Kitāb al-Futūḥ, as it is available to us, itself rests on poor manuscript evidence, which further hampers the investigation of al-Madāʾinīʾs Kitāb al-Dawla.

Ibn Aʿtham 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

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68 On al-Balādhurīʾs sources, see also Athamina 1984.
69 On the authorsʾ 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 Aʿtham”.

Ibn Aʿtham’s own making: al-Balādhurī’s and al-Ṭabarī’s quotations from the Kitāb al-Dawla present an atomistic khabar structure. This also makes Ibn Aʿtham’s quotations problematic for the reconstruction work.\footnote{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 Taʾrīkh 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).}

For Ibn Aʿtham, the ʿAbbāsid 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 futūḥ ‘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 ʿAbbāsids, such as the massacre of the Umayyads (Appendix I, no. 26). Furthermore, he did not always follow al-Madāʾinī 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-Madāʾinī (Appendix I, no. 25). For al-Ṭabarī, history was mostly serious business.

However, al-Ṭabarī is invaluable in that when he quotes al-Madāʾinī he leaves the prose text basically intact. Thanks to this, we are able see that the Kitāb al-Dawla was very thorough in giving names and, for instance, discussing the composition of the ʿAbbāsid troops in detail. Furthermore, al-Ṭabarī does include some portions that are likely from the Kitāb al-Dawla but go unquoted by Ibn Aʿtham (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-Madāʾinī’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 Taʾrīkh 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-Madāʾinī adhered to such a model. Of course, sometimes al-Madāʾinī 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 Taʾrīkh.

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

Al-Balādhurī, as already stated, quotes al-Madāʾinī haphazardly for his dawla narrative (indeed he uses all of his sources rather messily in the ʿAbbāsid 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 Aʿtham 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 Aʿtham 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 ʿAbbāsids, for him, was specifically genealogically justified. Note the order of the lineages treated in the Ansāb: 1) the Prophet, 2) ʿAlī and the ʿAlīds, 3) the ʿAbbāsids, 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 ʿAbbāsid 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 ʿAbbāsid family. 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-Hādı and al-Rashīd, are treated very briefly (al-Balādhurī, Ansāb III: 277–278). This closes the ʿAbbāsid 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-Maʾmūn? 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. ʿAdī and al-Madāʾinī ended their Kitāb al-Dawlas with the discussion of the reigns of Abū ʿAbdullāh b. ʿAbbās 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 ʿAbbāsid 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.

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

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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 naʿman wa-karāmatan wa-naʿma ʿaynī.
77 Printed FSṬĀNA, which is a mistake.
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 al-balādhurī, which is nonsensical here.
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-Madāʾinī, if indeed we can talk about a single original text, is difficult or impossible. Only al-Ṭabarī explicitly says that he is citing al-Madāʾinī, and his khabar is regrettably short. Ibn Aʿtham, who is, as argued above, the best source for investigating al-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī, the following Figure 1 will illustrate the known routes of transmission of that work:

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 1** The known transmission routes of Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla

### AL-MADĀʾINĪ AND THE NARRATIVES OF THE DAWLA

Al-Madāʾinī’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 ‘Abbāsid revolution. The main objects of comparison are al-Haytham b. ʿAdī’s Kitāb al-Dawla, al-Balādhurī’s Ansāb, and the anonymous Akhbār al-ʿAbbās, although other works will be consulted and discussed, too. But first we have to say a few words on al-Madāʾinī’s sources to better grasp al-Madāʾinī’s own role in composing or compiling the Kitāb al-Dawla.

### Al-Madāʾinī’s sources

Al-Madāʾinī’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

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80 As to al-Ṭabarī, he seems to have moved some of the material, found already here in Ibn Aʿtham, to Taʾrīkh 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 ‘Abbāsid 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-Madāʾīnī 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-Nuʿmān al-Marwazī, Jabala b. Farrūkh, and al-Mufaḍḍal b. Muḥammad al-Ḍabbī.


3. Umayyad sources, of which Khālid b. al-Aṣfaḥ b. ʿAbdallāh and perhaps Iyās b. Ṭalḥa are representatives.

The great number of informants from his hometown of al-Baṣra should be noted, as should al-Madāʾīnī’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. 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 ‘Abbāsid cause already in the reign of the first caliph Abū l-ʿAbbās (Ibn Aʿtham, Futūḥ VIII: 223–224; Appendix I, no. 37). This is rather doubtful and the whole letter smacks of an ‘Abbāsid forgery composed to justify Abū Muslim’s murder. Second, as suggested above, al-Madāʾīnī was only a minor guest at the ‘Abbāsid court (and only in the reign of al-Maʾmūn), 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-Maʾmūn, in the post-civil war era. We can, of course, conjecture that al-Madāʾīnī saw some letters and other documents through his ‘Abbāsid contacts, but even in this case the documents could have been forged and showcased by the ‘Abbāsids to justify their power. The fact that al-Madāʾīnī 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 ‘Abbāsids.

The dates of al-Madāʾīnī’s firsthand sources can give some indications of when the Kitāb al-Dawla was composed or, at least, when al-Madāʾīnī 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 Saʿīd 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-Madāʾīnī 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-Madāʾīnī 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 ‘Abbāsid revolution and its historiography.

81 Other scholars have been less suspicious. For example, Sharon (1990: 162) notes that a bayʿa 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 `Abbāsid 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 `Abbāsids, genealogical legitimation is twofold: First of all, the `Abbāsids 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 `Abbāsids belong to the Shi`a since they received the testament of Abū Hāshim b. Mūhammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya (d. c.98/716–717). The `Abbāsids, 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 `Abbāsid and Umayyad armies, the reader is reminded that God is on the side of the `Abbāsids, 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 `Abbāsid 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 `Abbāsid 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 `Abbāsid *dawla*, including al-Madāʾini’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 `Abbāsids. The discussion of the Prophet’s uncle al-`Abbās and the latter’s son

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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 `Abbāsids should be understood in the context of the Shi`i sect; for example, see Daniel 1979: 26: “the Abbāsid movement began as a relatively minor and obscure shi`i sect”. For a modern discussion of the testament of 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 `Abbāsids 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 `Abbāsids. 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-`Abbāsid narratives.
also belongs to the themes of preparation since it is not overtly related to the ʿAbbāsid revolution but forms the background for the idea that the ʿAbbāsids propagated, that the ʿAbbāsids 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 ʿAbbāsid propagandists were sent to Khurāsān and elsewhere to conduct daʿwa form the inception of the dawla narratives. Al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla does not dwell on these two themes (preparation and inception), but they receive more space in, for example, the anonymous Akhbār al-ʿAbbās. 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 ʿAbbāsid historiography.

3. The revolution itself, that is, the military phase following the daʿwa, 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 ʿAbbāsids’ disavowal of the ʿAlīds, 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-ʿAbbās as the first ʿAbbāsid 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-Madāʾinī in all likelihood ended his Kitāb al-Dawla. The narratives on the murders, which might seem at first glance unflattering to the ʿAbbāsids or simply a weird way to end a work, receive their justification from the role that they play in the grand narrative of al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla. At the end, the reader/hearer observes the ʿAbbāsids 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 ʿAbbāsid rule was there to stay, perhaps till the beginning of the eschatological events. There are, however, no clear apocalyptic overtones in al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla.

AL-MADĀʾINĪ’S NARRATIVE IN COMPARISON TO OTHERS

We will start with the size. Al-Haytham b. ʿAdī’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-Madāʾinī’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 Aʿtham, in whose work the dawla narrative stemming from al-Madāʾinī is some seventy pages long in the modern edition (Ibn Aʿtham, Futūḥ VIII: 159–229). This gives some idea of the length of al-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī 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 'Abbāsid family and did not just concentrate on the revolution. The anonymous author of the Akhbār al-ʿAbbās had a similar, maximalist approach. Indeed, al-Balādhurī is one of his sources, so al-Balādhurī’s concept of the importance of the whole 'Abbāsid 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-Madāʾinī’s narrative (only Appendix I, no. 1, represents them). The fact that al-Madāʾinī did not have much to do with the 'Abbāsid 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-Madāʾinī’s akhbār on al-ʿAbbās 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-Madāʾinī, al-ʿAbbās was not a sacred figure. As for al-Haytham b. ʿAdī, who frequented the 'Abbāsids 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. ʿAdī emphasized the significance of Abū Hāshim b. Muhammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya’s testament for the 'Abbāsids (Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, al-ʿIqd al-Farīd IV: 475–476). For him, the role of al-ʿAbbās as the Prophet’s uncle was not yet an important factor for the genealogical legitimation of the 'Abbāsids. In al-Haytham’s narrative, the 'Abbāsids were, then, the true inheritors of the Shīʿa even without the sacredness of al-ʿAbbās, which later became an important theme (Nagel 1972: 37–38). According to al-Haytham, the “secret bayʿa and the clandestine daʿwa” (Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, al-ʿIqd al-Farīd IV: 475) were carried out by the Hāshimites since the killing of al-Ḥusayn. His narrative, then, links the advent of the 'Abbāsids with the wider context of the Shīʿa. Al-Madāʾinī 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 Aʿtham’s or al-Ṭabarī’s works with an attribution to him.

In al-Haytham b. ʿAdī’s narrative, the testament of Abū Hāshim foretells that the first two 'Abbāsids (Abū l-ʿAbbās and al-Manṣūr) will both be šāhīb hādhā 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-ʿAbbās that the role of al-ʿAbbās as the uncle of the Prophet becomes highlighted.86 This is probably because during the time of al-Balādhurī and the anonymous author, the 'Abbāsids were no longer seen as the inheritors of the Shīʿa. Rather, they were seen – and wanted to be seen – as the enemies of the heretical Shīʿa.87 While the Ansāb and the Akhbār

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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-ʿAbbās and the early 'Abbāsids.
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-Masʿūdī).
al-'Abbās also record the will of Abū Hāshim b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya (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-Madāʾinī) in his Ansāb. He was especially concerned with exonerating the reputation of al-ʿAbbās, 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-ʿAbbās 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 istisqāʿ ‘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-ʿAbbās (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-ʿAbbās in it. It is rather part of early ‘Abbāsid comment and a propaganda on the contemporary situation: the ‘Abbāsid family and caliphs are sacred and, indeed, the source of rain and fertility. The ‘Abbāsid 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-ʿAbbās was a late convert to Islam and “his relations with Muḥammad were more correct than warm” (Daniel 1979: 27). To counter the ‘Abbāsid portrayals of al-ʿAbbās, the uncle of Muḥammad, the Shīʿa 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-ʿAbbās shared only the same father with ‘Abdallāh (Muḥammad’s father) but not the mother. The Akhbār al-ʿAbbās (165–166, translation adopted from Sharon 1983: 86, with some changes) tells us that it was the idea of the third ‘Abbāsid caliph, al-Mahdī, to reduce the importance of Abū Hāshim b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya’s testament to the ‘Abbāsids and emphasize the importance of al-ʿAbbās as the inheritor of the Prophet himself:

The Kaysānīyya believed in the imāma of Muḥammad b. ‘Alī [i.e. Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya] and asserted that his father [the fourth caliph ‘Alī] had appointed him as his successor. The Kaysānīyya were associated with Mukhtār b. Abī ʿUbayd, otherwise known as Kaysān, who was the first to believe in the imāma of Muḥammad b. ‘Alī [Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya]. This view was held (also) by ‘Alī b. ‘Abdallāh [b. al-ʿAbbās] and his descendants down to the time of al-Mahdī. The organization of the ‘Abbāsid Shīʿa originated in Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, 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-ʿAbbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, telling them: “The imāma belonged to al-ʿAbbās, 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-ʿAbbās, after him to ‘Alī b. ‘Abdallāh, after him to Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, after him to Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad, after him to Abū al-ʿAbbās, after him to Abū Jaʿfar, and after him to al-Mahdī.

Al-ʿAbbās’s son, ‘Abdallāh, is an even more sacred and central figure in al-Balādhurī’s narrative. ‘Abdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās is shown, for instance, talking with Archangel Gabriel, who brings ‘Abdallāh wisdom (al-hikma). ‘Abdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās is shown to have contacts with the Shīʿa (broadly understood), such as al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī. In a narrative, ‘Abdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās suggests...
Ilkka Lindstedt: Al-Madāʾinī and the Narratives of the ʿAbbāsid Dawla

(to al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī) that al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī should battle Muʿāwiya (al-Balādhurī, Ansāb III: 51).88 Furthermore, ʿAbdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās had contacts with Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya (al-Balādhurī, Ansāb III: 53). When ʿAbdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās dies, an invisible supernatural voice recites the Qurʾān, 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 Ṭabāṭabā, the Prophet himself grants the imāma to ʿAbdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās, whom he calls “the father of the kings” (quoted in Lassner 1986: 27–28).

Another son of al-ʿAbbās, Qutham, is said to have looked like the Prophet and been the foster brother of al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī (al-Balādhurī, Ansāb III: 65). Clearly the whole ʿAbbāsid 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-ʿAbbās, for example, dying as a martyr at Samarqand and his brother Maʿbad in Ifrīqiyya (al-Balādhurī, Ansāb III: 65–66). Al-Balādhurī (Ansāb III: 158–159) also quotes an account noting that the ʿAbbāsids were the inheritors of the Prophet’s mantle (burd), literally.90

The Akhbār al-ʿAbbās is awash with similar stories. Sharon (1983: 83) notes that the author of the Akhbār “devoted most of the opening hundred pages, or nearly a quarter of his book, to ʿ Abdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās’ biography”. In one of the most noteworthy accounts, ʿAbdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās 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” (Akhbār al-ʿAbbās: 52). This account might have something to do with the very early, indeed contemporary, conception (later reinterpreted) that the first caliph, Abū ʿAbdullāh b. al-ʿAbbās, already held the regnal title al-Mahdī (al-Jbour 2001).

In the sources, ʿAlī b. ʿAbdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās is not as interesting a figure as his father and grandfather.91 Lassner (1986: 53) is probably right in describing ʿAlī b. ʿAbdallāh as having “little impact, if any, on the revolutionary movement”. However, there are stories to the effect that he was named after or by ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalib 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 ʿAbbāsid propaganda to legitimize their rule from a theocratic and genealogical standpoint. They are an intrinsic part of, for example, the pro-ʿAbbāsid Akhbār al-ʿAbbās, but they do not feature prominently at all in al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla. While al-Madāʾinī wrote other works that dealt with the earlier history of the ʿAbbāsid family, surviving quotations show that even in these narratives of al-Madāʾinī, al-ʿAbbās did not appear as a holy figure.

88 Once again, other material points at an opposite picture. ʿAbdallāh b. al-ʿAbbās seems to have been on good terms with Muʿāwiya and other Umayyad caliphs, “a fact of some embarrassment to later partisans of his family” (Daniel 1979: 27). In fact, the ʿAbbāsid 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 ʿAbbāsids, which can also be seen in the fact that the early coins issued by the ʿAbbāsids contained Q. 42:23: “No reward do I ask of you for this except the love of those near of kin” (lā asʾalukum ʿalayhi ajran illā l-mawadda fī l-qurbā). It does not require much imagination to conclude that by al-qurbā the ʿAbbāsids 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 ʿAbbāsids; 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-Madāʾinī’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 ‘Abbāsid propagandists (duʿāt) 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 duʿāt is placed in the year AH 100 (Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, al-ʿIqd al-Farīd IV: 477), a date that has clear apocalyptic undertones. In the same year, it is said, the ‘Abbāsid mahdī, the first caliph Abū l-ʿAbbās, is born. The birth of a rival mahdī, the Ḥasanid Muhammad b. ‘Abdallāh, 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 Muhammad b. ‘Abdallāh’s (d. 145/762) revolt in al-Ḥijāz was a failure. Indeed, it seems that al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla also began with a narrative that proved the ‘Abbāsids’ supremacy over the Ḥasanids to be true (and, one may suspect, at the same time of the ‘Abbāsids’ 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 ‘Abbāsid ‘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; Muhammad b. ‘Abdallāh’s revolt was a minor affair, easily crushed by the ‘Abbāsid 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-Naṭṭāḥ’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 ‘Abbāsid daʿwa really starts to gain sway in Khurāsān. Al-Madāʾinī only briefly refers to Abū Muslim becoming part of the ‘Abbāsid cause (Appendix I, no. 2, if my reconstruction is correct). Al-Madāʾinī 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 ‘Abbāsid 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 ‘Abbāsid cause in the province. When the fitna between the Muḍar and the Yaman begins, the ‘Abbāsid propagandists understand that the moment of the dawla has drawn close (Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, al-ʿIqd al-Farīd IV: 477). The fitna or ʿaṣabiyya as a sign for the preparation for the militant phase of the revolution is also found in al-Madāʾinī’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 ‘Abbāsid 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

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92 For the ʿaṣabiyya clashes preceding the ‘Abbāsid 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 ‘Abbāsids, al-ʿAbbās included, was sacred. The idea is not yet present in the works of al-Haytham and al-Madāʾinī; and 2) when al-Haytham and al-Madāʾinī 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-Madāʾinī 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-Madāʾinī (see Appendix II for his sources). However, there were fewer people alive who would have experienced the daʿwa phase (730–740s CE), let alone the earlier deeds of the ‘Abbāsid family. Al-Madāʾinī, 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 daʿwa 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 ‘Abbāsid 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 ‘Abbāsids (and the ‘Abbāsid family). These were very important themes in al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla, and the main bulk of the work dealt with the battles, clashes, and massacres by means of which the ‘Abbāsids 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 ‘Abbāsids who were awaiting such a dawla: similar expectations were ascribed to other Shiʿī 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 ‘Abbāsid caliph, Abū l-ʿAbbās, 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 ‘Abbāsid caliph but, as is so often the case, even his reign did not provoke eschatological events.  

It is interesting to note that al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla also included accounts describing the views and feelings of the other side, namely, that of the Umayyads (e.g. Ibn Aʾtham, Futūḥ VIII: 160–168). His dawla narrative is not, then, told only from the ‘Abbāsid 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 ‘Abbāsids 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).

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93 See Bacharach 1993 and Bates 2003 for the numismatic record. Al-Mahdī received the title before assuming office.
Even though al-Madāʾinī also consulted informants who had witnessed the events of the revolution from the other side, it is of course the ʿAbbāsid side whose narrative dominates and which al-Madāʾinī, in the end, related to. From the battle narratives, it appears rather frequently that God is on the side of the ʿAbbāsid armies. Thus, these narratives served a purpose related to theocratic legitimation. Sharon (1990: 190) is of the opinion, probably correctly, that al-Madāʾinī’s narratives were often “stylized to fit into a more or less stereotyped battle description”.

In a fascinating account traceable back to al-Madāʾinī, the ʿAbbāsid commander Qaḥṭaba b. Shabīb is said to have attached a Qurʾānic manuscript (muṣḥaf) to a lance before a battle against the Umayyads (Ibn Aʿtham, 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. Muʿāwiya’s side) that tied copies of the Qurʾān to spears, and now it is the ʿAbbāsids who emerge victorious against the Umayyads (Daniel 1979: 77). The legacy of the Prophet and divine favor clearly belong to the ʿAbbāsids, not the Umayyads.

According to al-Madāʾinī, when the defeat becomes clear to Marwān II after many losses to the ʿAbbāsid 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 Aʿtham, Futūḥ VIII: 180–181).

Some narratives belonging to this category and stemming from al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla have been analyzed elsewhere; one can point to the death of Ibrāhīm al-Imām and the bayʿa of Abū l-ʿAbbās (Lindstedt 2014), as well as the death of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān II (Lindstedt 2013: 48–54). For the ʿAbbāsids, the most awkward aspect in the imprisonment and demise of Ibrāhīm al-Imām was that he was the leader that the ʿAbbāsids probably planned to enthrone. This becomes clear in al-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī) khabars to solve this problem, as well as the fact that the man given the bayʿa, Abū l-ʿAbbās, was not intended to be the caliph in the first place. In one report, it is emphasized that Abū l-ʿAbbās 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-Madāʾinī) accounts that connect the ʿAbbāsid daʿwa and dawla to the different Shiʿi 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 sīḥt aḥmad, ‘the grandson of Aḥmad [the Prophet]’), Zayd b. ʿAṭī b. al-Ḥusayn, his son Yaḥyā b. Zayd, and Ibrāhīm al-Imām all together (al-Balādhurī, Ansāb III: 126, 162). The ʿAbbāsids are in this way connected to the Shiʿa, broadly understood, and are seen as avengers of the deaths of the earlier Shiʿi 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 Shiʿi martyr. Moreover, Abū l-ʿAbbās is transformed into the first real, legitimate caliph that the Muslim community has had since ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. Because of the ʿAlī connection and

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94 Mīrāth Aḥmad, appearing in a poem in Ibn Aʿtham (Futūḥ VIII: 185).
96 Dāwūd b. ʿAṭī’s inauguration speech in al-Balādhurī (Ansāb III: 140–141). This shows that the early ʿAbbāsids did not yet espouse the idea of the four rāshidūn caliphs. ʿAlī was accepted, of course, because he belonged to the Prophet’s clan, Banū Hāshim, and, more particularly, the aḥl al-bayt. On this speech, see also Sharon 1983: 106–107.
other similar features of the 'Abbāsid historiography that link the 'Abbāsids 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 'Abbāsid revolution was actually a restorative process.

In al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla, the killings of Zayd b. ‘Alī and Yahyā b. Zayd also play a significant role in the 'Abbāsid propaganda. It said that donning the color black – the official color of the 'Abbāsids, especially during the 'Abbāsid revolution – was a sign that they were mourning the two figures (al-Madāʾinī in Ibn Aʿtham, Futūḥ VIII: 160). In a non-al-Madāʾinī tradition recounted in the Akhābār al-ʿAbbās, when the Khurāsānīs address Ibrāhīm al-Imām, they note that Zayd b. ‘Alī and Yahyā b. Zayd are ahl baytika, ‘people of your house’ (Sharon 1983: 147, n. 176, referring to the Akhābār al-ʿAbbās: 241). In the same work, one of the 'Abbāsid 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-Kūfa[ in al-Kūfa] and his son [Yahyā] driven in flight to the province [Khurāsān]. Fear has enveloped you while the evil house [of the Umayyads] continues beyond the point of toleration” (Akhbār al-Dawla: 241, translation from Lassner 1986: 94).

The 'Abbāsid historiography, then, showed the 'Abbāsids drawing legitimacy from three different Shīʿ sources: 1) through a testament from Abū Hāshim ← Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya ← ‘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 Yahyā b. Zayd, by avenging their killings. No wonder, then, that according to al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla the people in al-Kūfa expected the Khurāsānī troops to proclaim an ‘Alid as caliph (Ibn Aʿtham, Futūḥ VIII: 177, the last line). Analyzing the Kitāb Sulaym b. Qays, Patricia Crone (2005) has suggested that this Shīʿ work was composed in an environment just after the 'Abbāsid revolution, when the Shīʿa 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-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla (see Robinson 2010 for these events). They are quoted at the greatest length by Ibn Aʿtham, where they appear as a direct command of Abū l-ʿAbbās to ‘Abbālāh b. ‘Alī to kill all Umayyads that he can get his hands on (Ibn Aʿtham, Futūḥ VIII: 193–194, 196, 199–201, 204–205). Al-Ṭabarī (Taʾrīkh III: 51) only hints at this, saying that seventy-two Umayyads were slaughtered by ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Alī at Abū Fuṭrus. According to al-Madāʾinī, Umayyads were massacred in al-Ḥijāz (quoted by Ibn Aʿtham and al-Balādhurī), Abū Fuṭrus (al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī), and al-Shām (Ibn Aʿtham and al-Balādhurī). Furthermore, the bodies of the Umayyad caliphs, save for ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-ʿAzīz, were dug out of their graves in Damascus and the tombs burned (Ibn Aʿtham, 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-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla is clearly the dinner party thrown by Abū l-ʿAbbās (Ibn Aʿtham, Futūḥ VIII: 199–200). Inspired by the inciteful poetry of Sudayf b. Maymūn, Abū l-ʿAbbās 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 Futrus (or Nahr Abū Futrus) 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-ʿAbbās. Tables are then brought and placed over the bodies, and Abū l-ʿAbbās orders the ʿAbbāsids and ʿAlids 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-Madāʾinī 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 ʿAbbāsids 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-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla (Appendix I, nos. 30, 34–37). The accounts form a story of how the ʿAbbāsids, 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 bayʿa to Abū l-ʿAbbās 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 ʿAbd Rabbihi, al-ʿIqd al-Farīd IV: 482; Nagel 1972: 11). To al-Haytham, the culmination of the dawla is the enthronement of Abū l-ʿAbbās in al-Kūfa.

Al-Madāʾinī continued the story to the first years of the second ʿAbbāsid caliph, al-Manṣūr, who is indeed the principal figure in the political murders. In al-Madāʾinī’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-ʿAbbās; here al-Manṣūr is a central player (Appendix I, no. 30).100
2. The death of Abū l-ʿAbbās (136/754) and the bayʿa of al-Manṣūr. However, on the former’s death, ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī also proclaims himself caliph, which leads al-Manṣūr to send Abū Muslim to fight him. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī is defeated but not killed (Appendix I, nos. 34–35; Lindstedt 2013: 54–59).
3. Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ drafts a foolproof amān for ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī. This irks al-Manṣūr, who wants to have Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ killed. The murder is carried out by Sufyān b. Muʿawiya 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.
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-Madāʾinī) does not mention Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ in his *Kitāb al-Dawla*, as far as it can be reconstructed. To add the killing of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (c.139/756–757) to those of Abū Salama and Abū Muslim is then an innovation of al-Madāʾinī. It is interesting to note that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ is not mentioned elsewhere in al-Madāʾinī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*, but clearly al-Madāʾinī saw him as an important figure in the early ʿAbbāsid caliphate, even if Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ did not have any role to play in the revolution itself. It seems that al-Madāʾinī was alone among the early composers of the *dawla* narratives in inserting Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ’s killing into the context of the ʿAbbāsid revolution and its aftermath. Perhaps because of this, most modern scholarly literature does not mention Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ’s murder as part of the events of the revolution. Significantly, al-Madāʾinī was later followed by al-Balādhurī (*Ansāb* III: 218–224), who also places Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ’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-ʿAbbās’s caliphate, Abū Muslim wanted the caliph dead so that he could himself rise to a leading position. Indeed, al-Madāʾinī included in his *Kitāb al-Dawla* a letter of Abū Muslim to al-Manṣūr saying that he (Abū Muslim) withdrew from the ʿAbbāsid cause already during Abū l-ʿAbbās’s caliphate. As discussed above, the correspondence is of dubious authenticity. Furthermore, Abū Muslim is said to have been tardy in giving the *bayʿa* to al-Manṣūr after the death of the first caliph (al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb* III: 185). According to al-Madāʾinī (apud Ibn Aʿtham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 220), Abū Muslim also spoke ill of al-Manṣūr.

It must be noted that all the murdered persons were outside the ʿAbbāsid family. ‘Abdallāh b. ʿĀlī certainly tried to claim the caliphate for himself and thus revolted against al-Manṣūr, but, according to al-Madāʾinī, he was not killed but only put under house arrest for this. Other authorities claimed that ‘Abdallāh b. ʿĀlī was indeed murdered by the ʿAbbāsids, 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 ʿAbbāsid family was considered sacrosanct at the time.

These narratives are part of boundary themes since they draw a line between the ʿAbbāsids 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 Shiʿa and hence betrayed the ʿAbbāsids even before they had come to power. Abū Muslim, on the other hand, is depicted as being disloyal to the ʿAbbāsid family and cause during the latter part of Abū l-ʿAbbās’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-Madāʾinī. It is said, for example, that Abū l-Jahm b. ʿAṭiyya, an early supporter of the ʿAbbāsids (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-Madāʾinī’s narrative does not comment much on the many revolts that followed the coming to power of the ʿAbbāsids (only Appendix I, nos. 29, 33; for the revolts, see Daniel 1979: 86–92; Cobb 2001b). For him, the threat to the ʿAbbāsids, for the first years of their power, was internal, not external. The “future” aspect is only implied by al-Madāʾinī. 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-Madāʾinī decided to narrate these events from al-Manṣūr’s reign in detail, while the earlier al-Haytham only alluded to them: al-Madāʾinī 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-Madāʾinī’s era, the ’Abbāsid revolution was brought to a close.

RECENT STUDIES ON THE ’ABBĀSID REVOLUTION

In the last fifty years or so, some fascinating books on the ’Abbāsid 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 ’Abbāsid 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 ’Abbāsid 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 ’Abbāsid 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 ’Abbāsid 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-Madāʾīnī, whose first language, it seems, was Arabic but who was ultimately of Iranian descent? It is probable that al-Madāʾīnī’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-Madāʾīnī as a non-Arab without any qualms. Despite this, I have a feeling that Agha would classify al-Madāʾīnī 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 ʿAbbāsid 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-Madāʾīnī’s Kitāb al-Dawla included some dialogue in Persian (e.g. Ibn Aʿtham, 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 Aʿtham, Futūḥ VIII: 164; Daniel 1979: 44). Thus, this tells us next to nothing of the ethnic composition of the ʿAbbāsid movement. Perhaps we should stick to the earlier opinion of Elton Daniel, who noted that even though the ʿAbbāsids clearly had many Iranian supporters, “no one group, racial or otherwise, dominated the daʿwa” (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 ʿAbbāsid propagandist riwāya ‘narrative’, are all but devoid of references to the primary sources. Of course, the reason for this is simple: none of the sources really support his analysis, which is often fanciful. Agha’s study is a highly revisionist one, based on the idea that ʿAbbāsid propaganda permeates the dawla narratives. But as I have tried to show in the course of this study, al-Madāʾīnī, for one, was not a sycophant of the ʿAbbāsids and his Kitāb al-Dawla was not written at the behest of the caliph. To the contrary, although al-Madāʾīnī certainly believed in the legitimacy of the ʿAbbāsid 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-Madāʾīnī’s Kitāb al-Dawla for the modern study of the history of the ʿAbbāsid revolution and early ʿAbbāsid dynasty that we have to discuss next.

The value of al-Madāʾīnī’s Kitāb al-Dawla

What can be said about the significance of al-Madāʾīnī’s Kitāb al-Dawla as a source for the ʿAbbāsid revolution? Modern scholars have often praised al-Madāʾīnī as an early, reliable source, while at the same time they have disparaged Ibn Aʿtham (and therefore, unknowingly, al-Madāʾīnī), 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 Aʿtham 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 ʿAbbāsid movement.” Farouk Omar (1969: 26) also criticizes Ibn Aʿtham, saying: “His accounts on the early ʿAbbāsid daʿwa

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103 See, for instance, Agha 2003: 129–135 (“Exposing the ʿAbbāsid 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 Aʿtham, since his dawla narrative is devoid of details such as personal names. This was not a feature in al-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī positively (and with good reason, in my opinion), it follows that we also have to value Ibn Aʿtham to some extent. There are intriguing details in al-Madāʾinī apud Ibn Aʿtham that cannot be dismissed. For example, the rather widespread Umayyad massacres are recounted at length only in Ibn Aʿtham.

Al-Madāʾinī, as compared to al-Haytham b. ʿAdī, for instance, did not concentrate so much on the earlier, sacred history of the ʿAbbāsid 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-Madāʾinī, in contrast to al-Haytham, was not sponsored by the ʿAbbāsids.

One theme to consider could be the shūrā before the bayʿa to the first ʿAbbāsid caliph, which, according to Agha (2003: 124), lasted months and were “much wider than reported”. If we are to believe al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla, and in this case I think we should, Agha’s claim is unfounded. This is because al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla does not describe these consultations as having taken place (Lindstedt 2014). According to Elton Daniel (1982: 426), al-Madāʾinī “systematically deemphasized the Shiʿite dimensions of the daʿwa and incidents of Abbasid–ʿAlid cooperation”. This might be so, but another possibility also springs to mind: that other authors gave too much weight to the Shiʿite 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 bayʿa would then be given to. At this point, it is related that Abū Salama carried out extensive discussions with the leading Shiʿī 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 ʿAbbāsids once they were in power. What better way would there be to justify this than to claim that Abū Salama betrayed the ʿAbbāsid cause even before the bayʿa to Abū l-ʿAbbās?

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 ʿAbbāsid revolution. However, it was suppressed during the reigns of al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī, who struggled with ʿAlid rebellions. In the age of al-Maʿmūn, this pro-ʿAlid 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-ʿAlid as such, but anti-Abū Salama, and they must be read in that context. Furthermore, although the ʿAbbāsids were certainly keen to claim that both the ʿAbbāsids and ʿAlids were the Prophet’s family and part of the larger Hāshimite faction, it is clear at least from al-Madāʾinī’s narrative that they never intended to give the ʿAlids 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” Shiʿī 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 “Hāshimi Shiʿism” before the ʿAbbāsid revolution based on the poetry of al-Kumayt (d. 126/743) and other poets, see Madelung 1989. For the term “Hāshimiyya” 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 Hāshimiyya 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-Madāʾinī’s dawla narratives (considered anti-ʿAlid by Daniel) survive, at greatest length, in the work of Ibn Aʿtham, whom Daniel (1982: 434, n. 48) calls “a conspicuously pro-ʿAlid source”. It is also possible that al-Madāʾinī may have entertained Shiʿī sympathies (Lindstedt 2012–2014: 241). Clearly the matter of ʿAbbāsid–ʿAlid 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 ʿAbbāsids did not have anything to do with other Shiʿī movements; rather, I am stating that if we base our study on the evidence at hand, there is no proof that the ʿAbbāsids at any point had a plan to give the caliphate or real power to non-ʿAbbāsids. The literary evidence clearly shows that the ʿAbbāsids cooperated with and wooed other Shiʿī factions, but they were always the ones pulling the strings at the end of the day. It is remarkable, for example, that Ibn Aʿtham quotes al-Madāʾinī as saying that Abū Muslim ordered black to be worn as a sign of mourning for the killings of Zayd b. ʿAlī and Yaḥyā b. Zayd (Ibn Aʿtham, Futūḥ VIII: 160), but this was probably just one of the ploys of the ʿAbbāsids to entice the larger Shiʿī/Yaḥyā Banū Hāshim community and the people supporting their cause. For the study of the question of what the connection of the ʿAbbāsid daʿwa with other Shiʿī movements was, we should not, then, gloss over such a “marginal” source as Ibn Aʿtham.

As mentioned above, Saleh Said Agha’s main claim is that the ʿAbbāsid revolutionary army was ethnically predominantly Iranian. 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, Taʾrīkh II: 2004–2005; Sharon 1990: 187–188; Agha 2003: 199). This speech – probably fictitious – stems from al-Madāʾinī’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 Aʿtham. The al-Ṭabarī version seems to reveal that many of the fighters for the ʿAbbāsid cause were of Iranian descent. However, because of the text of Ibn Aʿtham, 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, changed His religion and deviated from His cause (amrihi). This land used to belong to their ancient fathers [i.e. early Arab conquerors?], 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 Aʿtham, Futūḥ VIII: 170: 15–171: 4)

107 This could naturally be because of ʿAbbāsid 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 ʿAbbāsids did nothing to support the revolt of Zayd b. ʿAlī. This is probable. Referring to Akhbār al-ʿAbbās: 231–232, Sharon (1983: 145) notes that when “the abortive Shiʿī rising of Zayd b. ʿAlī broke out in Kūfah in 122/739–740, one tradition relates that the leaders of the ʿAbbāsid 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 ʿAbbāsids act like they were exacting blood revenge for Zayd and Yaḥyā.
111 This probably refers to the deeds of the third caliph, ʿUthmān, who was from the Umayyad family. He standardized the Qurʾān 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 (Taʾrīkh II: 2005) reads “your fathers”, referring to the fighters for the ʿAbbāsid 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 Aʿtham) / 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 Aʿtham’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-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla lies, in any case, in the accounts of the Umayyad massacres that the ʿAbbāsids perpetrated. They form an interesting narrative cycle in al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla. No other early akhbārī, it seems, reported the massacres at the same length as al-Madāʾinī. That al-Madāʾinī chose to narrate accounts of these acts that were seen by many as rather disgraceful to the ʿAbbāsids 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-Madāʾinī’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 ʿAbbāsid dawla a revolution?**

As a sort of detour, it is worth considering how to conceptualize the ʿAbbāsid dawla. It has become rather in vogue for scholars to say that the ʿAbbāsid 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 ʿAbbāsid environment.

But denying the revolutionary nature of the events of 747–750 (or 755) CE surely misses the point. The ʿAbbāsid 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 ʿAbbāsid armies.114 Because of the length of this conflict – three years – what happened cannot be described merely as a coup d’état. The ʿAbbāsids endeavored to root out the whole Umayyad

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113 After listing many misdeeds of the ʿAbbāsids, Al-Maqrīzī (Nizāʿ: 65) comments: “How is this tyranny and corruption compatible with the justice of the Muḥammadan sharīʿa and the conduct of the imāms of the guidance?”

114 For example, Daniel (1979: 9) calls it a “mass revolt” in which the ʿAbbāsids 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. To al-Madāʾinī, 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 ‘Abbāsids did not rule from Syria, the former center of the Umayyad state, but built their capitals (al-Hāshimiyya, Baghdād, Sāmarrāʾ) 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 ‘Abbāsids), which was basically an ‘Abbāsid construct to justify their power. But this is, of course, not true. We can certainly call the ‘Abbāsid 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 ‘Abbāsids 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 ‘Abbāsid 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 ‘Abbāsid 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 ‘Abbāsids 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 ‘Abbāsids faced. I would not oppose giving longer dates for the ‘Abbāsid 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. ‘Ali (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 ‘Abbāsids and their supporters carried out was indeed a revolution.

115 There were probably also atrocities connected to the first clashes between the ‘Abbāsids 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 `Abbāsid 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-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla on the basis of quotations in al-Balādhurī, al-Ṭabarī, and Ibn Aʿtham. I have argued that al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla is an important source for the historical events of the `Abbāsid 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-Madāʾinī was not directly sponsored by the `Abbāsid dynasty, he was not constrained to be a spokesperson for the ruling house’s propaganda needs. Al-Madāʾinī’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-Muqaffāʿ.

I will end with some general rules concerning al-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla, since it seems that al-Madāʾinī 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-Manṣūr-Abū Muslim correspondence (see above).

3. The prose narrative of al-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī not only consulted the `Abbāsid side but also Umayyad informants, which gives some impartiality to his narrative. As has been shown when comparing al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla to that of al-Haytham and other dawla literature, al-Madāʾinī’s work was not particularly focused on the sacred aspects of the `Abbāsid movement, revolution, and reign. However, al-Madāʾinī 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-MADĀʾINĪ’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-Madāʾinī. 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-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī’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’tam and al-Ṭabarī is pursued here, although it 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-Madāʾinī, see Appendix II.

1. Date uncertain: the caliphate will come to the ʿAbbāsids, not the Ḥasanids.
   This is where al-Madāʾinī’s name first appears in Ibn A’tam and, hence, it is taken as the probable starting point of the Kitāb al-Dawla. The khabar (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 ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī when Dāwūd b. ʿAlī asked why the children of ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥasan do not claim the caliphate. ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥasan says that the time is yet to come, but ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī 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, Taʾrīkh II: 1726 (al-Madāʾinī ← Hamza 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 ʿAbbāsīd propagandists in Khurāsān, although these are not included in Ibn A’tam’s Kitāb al-Futūḥ. However, of Rotter’s suggestions (al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh II: 1501–1503, 1589–1591, 1726, 1840–1841),117 I would tentatively accept only this one. Other khabars were probably from other works of al-Madāʾinī. The crux of the matter here

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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, Taʾrīkh II: 1501–1503, 1589–1591) are more likely from Kitāb Wilāyat Asad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Qasrī. The last reference, al-Ṭabarī (Taʾrīkh II: 1840–1841), on the other hand, has nothing to do with the ʿAbbāsīds.

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 ʿAbbāsid activists (*wa-ghumiza bihim*). In prison, he meets ʿĪsā b. Maʿqil, whom Abū Muslim belongs to as a slave; Abū Muslim’s descent is not discussed. Bukayr buys Abū Muslim from ʿĪsā and sends him to Ibrāhīm al-Imām. How the *khabar* ends – *thumma šāra [Abū Muslim] ilā an ikhṭalafa ilā Khurāsān* – is important because the ending ties it smoothly to the next quotation from what seems to be al-Madāʾinī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla* in al-Ṭabarī (*Ṭarīkh* II: 1949): *lam yazal Abū Muslim yakhtalifu ilā Khurāsān ḥattā waqaʿat al-ʿaṣabiyya bi-hā*.122

3. 129/746–747: Abū Muslim propagandizes in Khurāsān; the daʿwa turns militant.


The account in al-Ṭabarī, not exactly paralleled in other sources, tells how Abū Muslim visits Khurāsān, where he meets ʿAbbāsid *duʿāt* like Usayd/Asad b. ʿAbdallāh. Some of the propagandists have been exposed and imprisoned. Abū Muslim continues to convert people to the ʿAbbāsid cause and in Marw he makes known Ibrāhīm al-Imām’s letter proclaiming that Abū Muslim should propagate the daʿwa 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 Aʿtham 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.


The passage in Ibn A’tam (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 (*Ṭarīkh* 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:

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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 ʿAbbāsid agent in Nasā; see *Akhbār al-ʿAbbās*: 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 Masʿūd ūd b. Qattāt al-Kūfī. He is unknown to me, but quite a few *khabars* that are similar to those of al-Madāʾinī appear; cf. items nos. 25, 30, 37 below. He could, then, be an informant (or perhaps transmitter) of al-Madāʾinī, but this is uncertain.


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

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

Al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh II: 1965, l. 6–1967, l. 17 (al-Madāʾinī ← al-Ṣabbāḥ the mawlā of Jibrīl ← Maslama b. Yahyā); 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 khabar 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-Madāʾinī, his students, or al-Ṭabarī is difficult to say, but al-Madāʾinī’s khabar 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 ʿAbdallāh b. Muʿāwiya al-Jaʿfarī (al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh II: 1976–1981). However, it is perhaps more likely that this is from the Kitāb ʿAbdallāh b. Muʿāwiya instead. 127 Furthermore, ʿAbdallāh b. Muʿāwiya is not mentioned by Ibn Aʾtham.

Nowhere in the sources is this description of the correspondence attributed to al-Madāʾinī. Its positioning, however, strongly suggests that it should be; in both Ibn Aʾtham and al-Ṭabarī, it is found in the dawla narrative of al-Madāʾinī. In Ibn Aʾtham, 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.

125 See also Daniel 1979: 55–56.
126 It is, of course, completely possible that the khabar(s) could have been included in many different works by al-Madāʾinī in the same or a modified form. This possibility makes the reconstruction even more difficult.
128 The previous authority mentioned is Abū l-Khaṭṭāb (Taʾrīkh 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 (Taʾrīkh VII: 385).

Ilkka Lindstedt: Al-Madāʾinī and the Narratives of the ʿAbbāsid Dawla
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.*


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 Aʿtham. It is, then, possible that they are not from the *Kitāb al-Dawla* but some other work of al-Madāʾinī.


The khabar is not explicitly attributed to al-Madāʾinī in any sources. Because of its positioning in the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* of Ibn Aʿtham, it seems rather safe to deem it to be from al-Madāʾinī, 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 Aʿtham concerning the killing of Tamīm b. Naṣr b. Sayyār does not get support from other sources. Without naming his sources, al-Ṭabarī (*Taʾrīkh* II: 1997–2003) relates that Tamīm was killed by Qaḥṭaba b. Shabīb only after Abū Muslim had had his former allies ʿAlī and ʿUthmān 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


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

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

131 See also *Akhbār al-ʿAbbās*: 323–326; *Taʾrīkh al-Khulafāʾ*: 548.

132 Or Qisṭāna, see Yāqūt (*Muʿjam*, s.v). The text (Ibn Aʿtham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 170, l. 2) reads FSṬĀNA, which is incorrect.

133 For these events, see Sharon 1990: 156–159.
al-Madāʾinī was probably among Ibn Aʿtham’s sources for this passage, he did have other sources at hand, too.

As noted above, al-Ṭabarī here shares similarities with Ibn Aʿtham. 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 Aʿtham 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-Madāʾinī, and indeed among his cited informants for the history of the dawla is Khālid b. ʿAbdallāh, who served as the governor of Wāsīt 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 maṭlaʿ of which appears in Ibn Aʿtham ( Futūḥ VIII: 168, l. 6), is found in toto in al-Ṭabarī ( Taʾrīkh 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-Madāʾinī, since he is mentioned in al-Ṭabarī ( Taʾrīkh II: 1574).

All the accounts, while sharing some features like the Qurʾānic quotation, diverge substantially. Only al-Ṭabarī explicitly says that he is citing al-Madāʾinī, and his khabar is regrettably short. Ibn Aʿtham, who is, as argued above, the best source for the investigation of al-Madāʾinī’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 Aʿtham, to al-Ṭabarī ( Taʾrīkh 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. ʿUmar 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.


The khabar 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-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb Wilāyat Naṣr b. Sayyār.

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


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. Ḥanẓala, the Umayyad governor of Jurjān,

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134 He is quoted in al-Ṭabarī ( Taʾrīkh II: 125; III: 15).
is killed. The battle is said to have begun on Friday the 1st of Dhū l-Ḥijja in the year AH 130.\footnote{This was actually a Thursday. The date could be a pious guess. However, Akhbār al-ʿAbbās: 330 corroborates the date by saying that the ʿAbbāsids won the fight on Saturday the 3rd of Dhū l-Ḥijja.}
The overlapping of the passages in Ibn Aʿtham and al-Ṭabarī shows that their source material is very similar in many places.

14. \textit{Muḥarram–Rabiʿ I 131/September–November 748}: Naṣr’s final moments are described from yet another perspective. This time he dies at Sāwa (or Sāwah).

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

Here Al-Ṭabarī gives, on the authority of al-Madāʾinī, 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 khabar is indeed from the same work, the Kitāb al-Dawla, and al-Madāʾinī 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.\footnote{For the works of al-Madāʾinī, see Lindstedt 2012–2014: Bibliography.}

15. The ʿAbbāsid forces advance toward Nihāwand. Abū Muslim moves from Marw to Naysābūr.

\begin{quote}
Al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh III: 2, l. 16–4, l. 1 (probably the same isnād as in item 14).
\end{quote}

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


\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

Al-Ṭabarī’s exposition is richer in detail and greater in size than Ibn Aʿtham’s. Whereas above it seemed that al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Aʿtham might have been using different sources, from now on their al-Madāʾinī quotations are rather similar. Here Ibn Aʿtham was probably modifying al-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī’s khabars without informing the reader of this. Also, the Akhbār al-ʿAbbās displays similar characteristics to al-Madāʾinī’s narrative quoted in Ibn Aʿtham and al-Ṭabarī. For instance, Qaḥṭaba’s call to the Umayyad troops to adhere to the Qurʾān before the battle of Nihāwand (Ibn Aʿtham, Futūḥ VIII: 172, ll. 7–9; al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh III: 5, ll. 9–10) is echoed in the call of Qutayba, the scribe of Ṭabīb b. Ismāʿīl, before the battle of Iṣfahān (Akhbār al-ʿAbbās: 340, ll. 16–18). How the author of the Akhbār al-ʿAbbās received this material is unclear, but at least here it probably was not through al-Balādhurī’s work.
17. Qaḥṭaba conquers Ḥulwān, whose governor decides to escape. Then Qaḥṭaba sends a detachment against Shahrazūr’s Umayyad army commander, ʿUthmān b. Sufyān, who is killed. Qaḥṭaba moves into Iraq and makes ready for a fight against its governor, Ibn Hubayra. He camps at Awānā.


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 ʿAbdallāh 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-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī quotations are in composite khabar passages with the isnād qālū.

Next, Qaḥṭaba sends Abū ʿAwn ʿAbd al-Malik b. Yazīd to Shahrazūr against ʿUthmān 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 ʿUthmān 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. Muwarriʿ 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 (Taʾrīkh III: 12, ll. 8–9) that among al-Madāʾinī’s informants was a certain Ismāʿīl b. Abī Ismāʿīl 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-Madāʾinī, who had at least some contacts with the ’Abbāsid court and family, was influenced by the ’Abbāsid interpretation of the revolution, although to al-Madāʾinī’s credit it must be said that he also consulted Umayyad informants (e.g. Khālid b. al-Aṣfāḥ b. ʿAbdallāh) and included in his Kitāb al-Dawla stories about the cruel massacres that the ’Abbāsids carried out against the Umayyads – something that al-Ṭabarī, for one, chose not to recount (see below, no. 26).


Ibn A’tham, Futūḥ VIII: 175, l. 12–176, l. 11 (qāla); al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh III: 13, ll. 9–14 (al-Madāʾinī ← al-Ḥasan b. Rashīd, Jabala b. Farrūkh).

137 In al-Balādhurī (Ansāb III: 137) as well as in Akhbār al-ʿAbbās: 354, 357, he is called ʿUbaydallāh b. al-ʿAbbās al-Kindī.
Here Ibn Aʿtham’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 khabar, while in Ibn Aʿtham no name is given. The remainder of al-Ṭabarī’s account (Taʾrīkh III: 13, l. 14–14, l. 13) is very dissimilar to Ibn Aʿtham’s narrative: the latter is more matter of fact, which is probably due to Ibn Aʿtham’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-ʿAbbās (369, l. 10–371, l. 8). As has been hinted at above, similarities and overlapping in al-Ṭabarī and the Akhbār al-ʿAbbās show that the anonymous author of the latter work had al-Madāʾinīʾs material at hand, either directly or indirectly.


The passage is not found in Ibn Aʿtham, but sources other than al-Ṭabarī also include it with some changes. Because al-Madāʾinīʾs 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 Qaḥṭabaʾs death, the troops pledge allegiance to Qaḥṭabaʾs 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 Aʿtham, Futūḥ VIII: 176, l. 12–177, l. 9 (qāla);139 al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh III: 15, ll. 7–16; 16, ll. 3–14; 20, ll. 4–16 (al-Madāʾinī ← Khālid b. al-ʿAṣfahā, Abū ʿAbdallāh; al-Madāʾinī ← Abū Bādir; al-Madāʾinī ← Umāra mawlā Jibrīl b. Yahyā); al-Balādhurī, Ansāb III: 138, ll. 4–10 (qāla).

Ibn Aʿthamʾs exposition is once again simpler, omitting names included in al-Ṭabarī. For instance, al-Ṭabarī informs us that Qaḥṭabaʾs troops first pledged allegiance to Qaḥṭabaʾs son Ḥumayd because al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭabaʾ 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 Aʿtham is prone to eliminate from his smooth, straightforward exposition. In al-Ṭabarī (Taʾrīkh III: 16, ll. 3–14), a khabar intervenes, telling of Qaḥṭabaʾs demise from another perspective and naming the killer; cf. al-Balādhurī, Ansāb III: 138, ll. 3–4 (zaʿamū, ‘they claim’, indicating doubt on al-Balādhurīʾs part).

138 In the isnād of the latter part of the account, Ibn Shihāb al-ʿAbdī is given as al-Madāʾinīʾs informant. The former is quoted twice in al-Ṭabarī (Taʾrīkh III: 14, 15), both times through al-Madāʾinīʾs. Could he be identical with Shihāb b. ʿAbdallāh, who is mentioned in al-Balādhurī (Ansāb III: 120) as an informant of al-Madāʾinī? However, he is also unknown. In al-Mizzī (Tahdīb XII: 571–576), two different individuals with a rather similar name (Shihāb b. ʿAbbād al-ʿAbdī) are mentioned.

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

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Ilkka Lindstedt: Al-Madāʾinī and the Narratives of the ʿAbbāsid Dawla


This rather complicated khabar is full of names, which is probably why Ibn Aʿtham chose to exclude it from his narrative.

22. The 12th of Rabīʿ I 132/20th of October 749:\(^{141}\) Abū Salama assembles the Kūfans at the main mosque, where Abū l-ʿAbbās preaches to the people. The people pledge allegiance to him.

Ibn Aʿtham, Futūḥ VIII: 177, l. 12–180, l. 4 (qāla).

In Ibn Aʿtham’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]’” (Ibn Aʿtham, Futūḥ VIII: 177, ll. 14–15). Abū l-ʿAbbās then enters, riding a dark mule humbly as a Messiah-like figure.\(^{142}\) Abū l-ʿAbbās’s sermon is rather short and, interestingly, devoid of Qurʾānic quotations.\(^{143}\)

Al-Ṭabarī’s exposition (Taʾrīkh III: 29–33) follows an unnamed source (dhukira). It does not show similarities with the one in Ibn Aʿtham which probably derives from al-Madāʾinī. Perhaps al-Ṭabarī chose to overlook al-Madāʾinī as a source for the bayʿa because in his version the speech of Abū l-ʿAbbās is not pious enough. Moreover, in Ibn Aʿtham’s version the speakers are Abū Salama and Abū l-ʿAbbās, whereas in al-Ṭabarī they are Abū l-ʿAbbās and Dāwūd b. Ḳalb. The big role that Abū Salama has in Ibn Aʿtham was, of course, awkward for the ʿAbbāsid grand narrative.\(^{144}\)


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.


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

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\(^{140}\) This is an interesting remark which shows that the persons in al-Madāʾinī’s isnāds were not necessarily well known. Whether the remark is by al-Madāʾinī 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-Masʿūdī, Murūj IV: 99: Friday the 12th of Rabīʿ II). However, al-Balādhurī (Ansāb III: 141) (ʿan Hishām b. al-Kalb), seems to corroborate the date, explicitly saying that this was a Wednesday.

\(^{142}\) Usually he is made to ride a beautiful horse, Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ (Taʾrīkh: 409); al-Ṭabarī, (Taʾrīkh III: 29).

\(^{143}\) For these events, see Lindstedt 2014.

\(^{144}\) See also Elad 1986: 61–64.
Ibn Aʿtham starts with a short detour, depicting a scene between Marwān II and Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbdallāh al-Qasrī. Marwān II says that he has decided to go to Byzantium and seek refuge there. Ismāʿīl advises against that, but Marwān has already made up his mind. First, however, he wants to battle the ʿAbbāsid 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-Madāʾinī and a description of what Marwān actually did after the battle of al-Zāb.

The difference between Ibn Aʿtham and al-Ṭabarī’s expositions can be gauged from the number of individuals named in their accounts, which are of similar length. Ibn Aʿtham’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 Aʿtham 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 ʿAbbāsid and Umayyad sides. One of the leaders of the ʿAbbāsid troops was a certain al-Mukhāriq b. Ghiyārī. 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 ʿAbbāsids and say that al-Mukhāriq had already been killed, thus succeeding in escaping his captors. Ibn Aʿtham, 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 Aʿtham 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-Madāʾinī, 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-Madāʾinī’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 ʿAbbāsids 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-Madāʾinī. 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-Masʿūdī (Murūj IV: 92–93) has a khabar ascribed to al-Madāʾinī “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 ʿAbbāsids’ attempt to portray themselves as more pious and modest than the Umayyads.
24. Marwān flees. The ‘Abbāsid troops conquer Damascus. Marwān reaches Egypt, where he is killed.


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 ʿĀmir b. Ismāʿīl, shows how interested al-Madāʾinī 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 (*Taʾrīkh* III: 50) has the 27th of Dhū l-Ḥijja 132/6th of August 750, whereas Ibn Aʿtham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 190) gives the 4th of Dhū l-Qaʿda/14th of June 750. I am unable to find any date in al-Balādhurī. Although both of the dates seem to stem from al-Madāʾinī (in Ibn Aʿtham implicitly, in al-Ṭabarī explicitly), one of them should be considered an interpolation to the al-Madāʾinī material if we do not think that they are two variant dates given by al-Madāʾinī, which is rather unlikely here, since neither of the sources give them both. As can be seen from al-Ṭabarī (*Taʾrīkh* 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-Madāʾinī’s *khabar* from other sources without stating this openly.

At the end, Ibn Aʿtham 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-Madāʾinī’s original work, although this cannot be determined with certainty. Ibn Aʿtham also includes a letter from ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī to Abū l-ʿAbbās, stating that the “Pharaoh” has been slain.146

25. Marwān’s head tours Abū l-ʿAbbās’s court and al-Kūfā. Some poems extolling and disparaging the Umayyads are quoted.


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

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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-ʿAṭāʾ al-Sindī stem from another work of al-Madāʾinī; see Abū l-Faraj, Aghānī XVII: 245–257 for the entry of Abū l-ʿAṭāʾ where al-Madāʾinī 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-Ḥijāz and Syria. In Damascus, the graves of the Umayyad family, with the exception of ʿUmar II, are desecrated.

Ibn Aʿtham, 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-Madāʾinī in wa-ghayruhu; al-Madāʾinī ← Abū ʿĀṣim al-Zabādī; al-Madāʾinī ← al-Balādhurī, Ansāb III: 104, ll. 11–17 (anonymous). Cf. al-Azdī, Taʾrīkh al-Mawṣil: 138, l. 8–139, l. 2 (Khalīfa [Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ] ← [al-Madāʾinī?] ← Abu l-Dhayyāl [Zuhayr b. Hunayd]); Abū l-Faraj, Aghānī IV: 349, l. 17–355, l. 9 (numerous isnāds, but no al-Madāʾinī, although some khabars are somewhat similar to his material). Al-Ṭabarī (Taʾrīkh III: 51) only hints at the Umayyad massacres and says that 72 men were killed by ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī 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-ʿAbbās disparages Syrian shaykhs for supporting the Umayyads.


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-Madāʾinī 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-ʿAbbās, exhorting him to slaughter the remaining Umayyads.152


Although the beginning of the item (Ibn Aʿtham, 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-Madāʾinī. For instance, the Kitāb Akhbār al-Saffāḥ comes to mind (see Lindstedt 2012–2014: 247). In addition to the change in style, observe how often the isnād “al-Madāʾinī has said” occurs in items 25, 27, 28 and 32 whereas in the rest of Ibn Aʿtham’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-Madāʾinī could mean that Ibn Aʿtham has switched from his main source

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148 The authority mentioned just six lines above is al-Madāʾinī.
149 I am unable to find this passage in the printed edition of Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ’s Taʾrīkh.
150 For these events, see Wellhausen 1927: 551–552; Moscati 1950; Robinson 2010.
151 The isnād continues: wa-kāna min ghalabat ahl al-ʿilm fīʿaṣrihi.
152 On Sudayf, see El Acheche 1997.
(al-Madāʾinī’s Kitāb al-Dawla) to another of al-Madāʾinī’s works. Of course, it is not impossible that al-Madāʾinī’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 Aʿtham’s. It is possible that the former was also using al-Madāʾinī inī as his source, although he only gives al-Haytham b. ʿAdī.


The revolt of these diehard Umayyads is only rather briefly mentioned by al-Madāʾinī; hence, al-Ṭabarī also uses other sources to tell their stories. It is unclear why Ibn Aʿtham 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 Jaʿfar goes to Khurāsān in order to get Abū Muslim’s consent for the killing of Abū Salama.


The first isnād given in al-Ṭabarī is quite fascinating. It goes through an ʿAbbāsid governor to the future caliph Abū Jaʿfar 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-Madāʾinī—in it could be a fictitious construction. Note that in Ibn Aʿtham a similar account is told in the third person, which is probably Ibn Aʿtham’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-Madāʾinī quotations in al-Ṭabarī/al-Balādhurī and Ibn Aʿtham differ to some extent, although they also show similarities: Abū Jaʿfar 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 Aʿtham only hints at the actual killing. Ibn Aʿtham’s exposition ends with a reference to the increasing dissatisfaction in Abū Jaʿfar and Abū l-ʿAbbās’s minds toward Abū Muslim, with Abū Jaʿfar 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 Masʿūd 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-Madāʾinī, 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’.


   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-Madāʾinī 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. 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-Madāʾinī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*. (Cf. ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Ali’s amān, dealt with in no. 35 below.) Ibn A’tham/al-Madāʾinī’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 ‘Abbasids.

32. **Two literary khabars about al-Sayyid b. Muḥammad al-Ḥimyarī and ‘Abdallāh b. Saʿīd al-Saʿdī with Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ.**

   Ibn A’tham, *Futūḥ* VIII: 205, l. 6–207, l. 13 (al-Madāʾinī ← Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Filasṭīnī; al-Madāʾinī). 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 jāʾiza saniyya ‘magnificent reward’ occurs in these khabars. 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 taʾrīkh-cum-adab texts could include very heterogeneous material. Here I think of such works as Ibn Qutayba’s *Kitāb al-Maʿārif*, al-Balādhurī’s *Ansāb*, or even Ibn Isḥāq/Ibn Hishām’s *Sīra*.

33. **Some further events toward the end of Abū l-ʿAbbās’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-ʿAbbās and perform the pilgrimage.**


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154 Ps.–Ibn Qutayba (*Imāma wa-l-Siyyasa*: 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. ‘Ali’s amān, but the findings are also of interest here.

155 For the siege of Wāsiṭ, see Elad 1986.


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 support. The Umayyads were fighting him but soon had more urgent business when the ‘Abbāsid 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, *Taʾrīkh* 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-Madāʾinī inā material, which is explicitly stated by the isnāds. This is rather interesting, since otherwise Ibn A’tham relies on al-Madāʾinī inā as his only or at least main source for this period. Ibn A’tham’s text on the ʿAbbāsid’s 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.*


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. ʿAbdallāh al-Hāshimī, which could be interpreted so that the first qāla actually refers to Ibn A’tham’s dawla narrative’s main source, al-Madāʾinī. This finds corroboration in the fact that, according to the bio-bibliographical literature, this Yaḥyā was a source of al-Madāʾinī.161 The khabar describes how Abū Muslim allegedly plotted to give the bay’a to ʿĪsā b. Mūsā instead, which is not found in al-Ṭabarī or in al-Balādhurī.

As for al-Madāʾinī 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-Madāʾinī isnāds, also has some khabars prefixed with such formulas as qālū. Notice the isnād in al-Ṭabarī: al-Madāʾinī ← al-Haytham b. ʿAdī ← Abdallāh b. ʿAyyāsh. It reveals that the khabar is part of what could be called court historiography. Both men (al-Haytham and his teacher Abdallāh b. ʿAyyāsh) 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. ʿAlī’s claim (see next item). (Lassner 1980: 24–34)

35. *ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī claims the caliphate after Abū l-ʿAbbās’ death. Abū Muslim is sent to fight him.*


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 ʿAbbāsid caliph, Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ. It is not certain whether Abū l-ʿAbbās had nominated Abū Ja’far as his successor or not. (Nöldeke 1892: 116; cf. Lassner 1980: 22–23)

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161 His full name was Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥasan al-Hāshimī al-ʿAlawī. He was a half-brother of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya. He revolted in al-Daylam in 176/792–793. Al-Madāʾinī 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, *Taʾrīkh* III: 612–24, 669–672.


Hence, on receiving news of the death of Abū l-ʿAbbās, ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī, a veteran officer in the service of the nascent ʿAbbāsid state, made his bid for the caliphate.

Al-Ṭabarī (Taʾrīkh III: 92–93) starts by stating that ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī was in the border region of Byzantium, in a place called Dulūk (al-Balādhurī, Ansāb III: 106: bayna Dulūk wa-Raʿbān), when he heard that Abū l-ʿAbbās was dead and Abū Jaʿfar the new caliph. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī, however, claimed the caliphate for himself, saying that “Abū l-ʿAbbās sent me against Marwān on the understanding that I will succeed in power (al-amr) after him.”163 After receiving the bayʿa from his entourage at Tall Muhammad,164 ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī 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 Aʿthamʾs exposition is. We have no reason on the basis of the isnāds to suppose that it does not stem from al-Madāʾinī: it is prefixed by a qāla, with the immediately preceding isnād being qāla wa-qāla Yahyā b. ʿAbdallāh al-Hāshimī, where the first qāla seems to be al-Madāʾinī, as argued above. Ibn Aʾtham (Futūḥ VIII: 214–215) tells us that ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī is in al-Shām when he hears the news of Abū l-ʿAbbāsʾs death. This could be just a simplification by Ibn Aʾtham (Futūḥ VIII: 215, ll. 1–2): instead of specifying that ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī is in the thughūr region of northern Syria, a vaguer al-Shām suffices. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī then claims the caliphate, “and people rushed to [pledge] the bayʿa 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 minhars of [al-Shām]”. This would indicate that ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlīʾs “counter-caliphate” was more widespread and lasted longer than other sources acknowledge. It is interesting that here ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī takes al-Raqqa as his headquarters, although in other sources the place is mentioned only in passing (al-Balādhurī, Ansāb III: 106, 108; al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh III: 94), his base being in Ḥarrān. Again, Ibn Aʾtham 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-Madāʾinī without saying so. Ibn Aʾtham also includes another account, a dialogue between Abū Muslim and al-Mansūr. As in other sources, al-Mansūr sends Abū Muslim to fight ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī. But Abū Muslim says that he has one condition: before or after fighting ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī, he wants to get rid of others who may possibly pose dangers to the ʿAbbāsids (or Abū Muslim!) as well, such as Khālid b. Barmak. Al-Mansūr gets angry at this proposition and Abū Muslim abandons his plans. The same dialogue is placed later on by al-Ṭabarī (Taʾrīkh III: 100–101; see item 37 below).

Al-Ṭabarī continues (Taʾrīkh III: 93–94) by depicting Abū Muslim as going to fight ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī. But Abū Muslim says that he has one condition: before or after fighting ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī, he wants to get rid of others who may possibly pose dangers to the ʿAbbāsids (or Abū Muslim!) as well, such as Khālid b. Barmak. Al-Mansūr gets angry at this proposition and Abū Muslim abandons his plans. The same dialogue is placed later on by al-Ṭabarī (Taʾrīkh III: 100–101; see item 37 below).

163 As al-Balādhurī (Ansāb III: 105, ll. 11) formulates it. Basically the same line is found in al-Ṭabarī (Taʾrīkh III: 92, l. 20–93, l. 3); Ibn Aʾtham (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 ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlīʾs speech is essentially the same.

164 An unidentified place not found in al-Balādhurī or Ibn Aʾtham.
Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba, who starts on `Abdallāh b. 'Ali'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-Madāʾinī.

Finally, we have the battle proper, including its aftermath, in al-Ṭabarā (Taʾrīkh III: 95, l. 15–98, l. 14). The first part of it (Taʾrīkh III: 95, l. 15–96, l. 15) still has al-Haytham b. 'Adī as the source. That the isnād in al-Ṭabarā cannot be understood as al-Madāʾinī ← al-Haytham b. 'Adī seems to be the case here. At this juncture, we should deal with Ibn Aʿtham and al-Balādhurī's passages about the preparation for the battle. Ibn Aʿtham (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. 'Ali is in al-Raqqa with 50,000 Syrian and Mesopotamian troops. He decides to go to Ḥarrān, leaving in al-Raqqa his possessions and supplies, which Abū Muslim moves to take. In al-Haytham b. 'Adī/al-Ṭabarā's version, `Abdallāh b. 'Ali 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-Ṭabarā, and thus he seems to be using Ibn 'Adī as his source. However, from the following line onwards, he begins to cite al-Madāʾinī inī.

Then comes the battle. It is only briefly discussed in Ibn Aʿtham (Futūḥ VIII: 216, ll. 5–8), but at length in al-Ṭabarā (Taʾrīkh III: 96, l. 15–98, l. 9, explicitly al-Madāʾinī inī). Again, al-Balādhurī (Ansāb III: 108, ll. 6–17, qālū, yuqālu) constructs a composite khabar from many pieces. Ibn Aʿtham and al-Balādhurī agree on the length of the battle; on the other hand, al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarā quote the same rajaz poem composed by Abū Muslim and agree on some other circumstances as well. Al-Ṭabarā 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-Ṭabarā 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-Ṭabarā (Taʾrīkh III: 98, ll. 9–14), at length in Ibn Aʿtham (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-Madāʾinī inī, then qālū). We will leave al-Ṭabarā aside here, because he does not give any remarkable information, and only deal with the other two sources. Ibn Aʿtham narrates that many Syrian troops started to desert. Noting how desperate his situation is, `Abdallāh b. 'Ali also decides to flee. When his troops see this, they ask for safe-conduct from Abū Muslim, who grants it. Al-Mansūr sends Abū Muslim to pursue `Abdallāh b. 'Ali, “wherever he may be”. `Abdallāh b. 'Ali's brother, 'Abd al-Ṣamad, takes refuge in al-Ruṣāfa, while `Abdallāh b. 'Ali 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. 'Ali. Sulaymān writes to al-Mansūr, asking for an amān for his brother. When the latter consents, still another brother of `Abdallāh, ʿĪsā b. 'Ali, asks his secretary, Ibn al-Muqaffā, to write the amān document for `Abdallāh b. 'Ali. The document is so ingeniously written, guaranteeing the safety of `Abdallāh b. 'Ali so well, that al-Mansūr becomes angry and decides to kill Ibn al-Muqaffā (see the next item).

Al-Balādhurī's account agrees with Ibn Aʿtham in outline. However, the detailed route of `Abdallāh b. 'Ali's flight, for instance, is not mentioned. Indeed, Ibn Aʿtham 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. 'Ali asked not only an amān for `Abdallāh from al-Mansūr but also permis-
cision for ‘Abdallāh to perform the ḥajj. But al-Balādhurī remarks that ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Alī did not perform the pilgrimage.

Now, it is also very interesting to see that al-Azdī (Taʾrīkh al-Mawṣil: 165, l. 10–170, l. 14, Muḥammad b. al-Mubārak al-ʿAskarī [← Aḥmad b. al-Ḥārith al-Kharrāz] ← al-Madāʾinī) actually includes the amān, which, if we trust the isnād, stems from al-Madāʾinī. It is not included in other works, although it somewhat resembles the amān of Ibn Hubayra, quoted by Ibn Aʿtham from al-Madāʾinī (see above, no. 31). In general, al-Azdī does not quote al-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī’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-Madāʾinī, 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-Madāʾinī. 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 amān were following the usual style of such documents (as argued by Marsham & Robinson 2007: 271–273).

36. Ibn al-Muqaffa’ is killed.166


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 Taʾrīkh, 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 Aʾtham. Sometimes they agree verbatim, as in some of the dialogue between Ibn al-Muqaffa’ and Sufyān b. Muʿawiya 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 Aʾtham). 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 Aʾtham, but the former (II: 222, ll. 6–9) also includes some additional information. Al-Balādhurī’s khabar is explicitly composite.

165 The “tawqīʿ” to the amān is purportedly quoted in al-Jahshiyārī (Wuzarāʾ: 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 ʿAbbāsids, like Abū Salama and Abū Muslim. Second, he was associated with ʿĪsā b. ʿAlī, one of the ʿumūma who were all, in a way, rivals to al-Manṣūr. For the episode of the killing of Ibn al-Muqaffa’, see also al-Jahshiyārī, Wuzarāʾ: 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-Dhahabi, Siyar XIV: 440.
37. The rancor between al-Manṣūr and Abū Muslim increases. Al-Manṣūr has Abū Muslim killed.


This forms the last section in the *Kitāb al-Dawla* of al-Madāʾinī.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-Madāʾinī 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-Madāʾinī. On the other hand, the Abū Muslim narrative in Ibn A‘tham (*Futūḥ* VIII: 219, l. 18–229, l. 2) definitely stems from al-Madāʾinī, as will be seen, even if he possibly had some other sources as well.

Yet again, the al-Madāʾinī 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.

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

169 ʿAbdallāh b. Ṣāliḥ b. Muslim al-ʿIjlī al-Kūfī al-Muqriʾ was a Qurʾān reciter, different from another ʿAbdallāh b. Ṣāliḥ and his contemporary, Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Miṣrī, known as Kātib al-Layth. ʿAbdallāh b. Ṣāliḥ al-ʿIjlī 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 Qurʾān recitation. He was a qādī 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, *Taʾrīkh* IX: 483–485; al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh* V: 572–574.

The Abū Muslim narrative in al-Ṭabarî

T1 (Taʾrîkh 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-ʿAbbās.

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 Yaqṭīn b. Mūsā,171 saying that he has given Syria and Egypt, instead of Khurāsān, to Abū Muslim. (≈ B1c)

T2 (Taʾrîkh III: 105): Abū Muslim writes a letter to al-Manṣūr showing open defiance. Curiously enough, the letter disparages Ibrāhīm al-Imām and the ʿAbbāsids in general, but Abū l-ʿAbbās and al-Manṣūr are not named. (= IA3a, B3a)

T3 (Taʾrîkh III: 105–107): a) Abū Muslim starts off toward Khurāsān, taking the road to Ḥulwān.172 (≈ B2b, IA2d)

b) Al-Manṣūr goes to al-Madāʾ 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.

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171 On him, see Sharon 1983: 135, n. 125 and 137, n. 139.
172 Ḥulwān is mentioned in this connection in Ibn Aʿtham (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-Madāʾ in.
173 Al-Madāʾ in also appears in al-Balādhurī (Ansāb III: 202) but not in Ibn Aʾtham. Al-Anbār is not mentioned in al-Balādhurī or Ibn Aʾtham.
175 Not mentioned by al-Balādhurī or Ibn Aʾtham.
176 He does not appear in al-Balādhurī or Ibn Aʾtham in this episode; cf. al-Balādhurī (Ansāb III: 203).
177 Not mentioned by al-Balādhurī or Ibn Aʾtham.
178 He does not appear in al-Balādhurī; cf. Ibn Aʾtham (Futūḥ VIII: 222), where al-Rayy is mentioned as Abū Muslim’s stopping place.


181 Abū Dāwūd is not mentioned by al-Balādhurī. Ibn Aʿtham (*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 ʿUthmān b. Nahīk 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 (Taʾrīkh 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 Aʿtham

IA1 (Futūḥ VIII: 219–221): a) Al-Manṣūr sends Yaqṭīn b. Mūsā (not Abū l-Khaṣīb, as in Ṭ1b) to count the booty that Abū Muslim has gained from ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAffi. Abū Muslim pours scorn on Yaqṭīn 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-fāʿila ‘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 Aʿtham was working with a defective manuscript of the Kitāb al-Dawla of al-Madāʾinī, as alluded to above.
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 ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAli’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-Kafartūthā, Nahr al-SRYĀ (unidentified), and Naṣībīn. An individual called Hishām b. ʿUmar, 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. ʿUmar to write these verses to al-Manṣūr.
c) Abū Muslim proceeds until he enters al-Mawṣil. A group of his companions, “who liked al-Manṣūr’s rule (yahwā dawlat al-Manṣūr)”, approaches him and asks for permission to go

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184 Mentioned in Ibn Aʿtham (Futūḥ VIII: 227) and al-Balādhurī (Ansāb III: 205).
185 See Ṭ6b above and note.
186 Yāqūt, Muʿjam (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. Ṭ3a, 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. (= Ṭ2, 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-Madāʾinī reply in al-Ṭabarī (*Taʾrīkh* III: 104). As to the style and content of the letter, it is quite clear that this is the real reply from al-Madāʾinī’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. Ṭ4c). He “humbles himself and submits” and writes a letter to al-Manṣūr asking for an *amān*. This letter he sends along with Abū Isḥāq, 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 ʿAbbāsid establishment to justify; of course, a formal *amān* would have made things even more difficult. Whether or not the account in Ibn Aʿtham 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 ʿAbbāsids and information about it would have been prone to disappear.

   It is interesting to note that al-Ṭabarī (*Taʾrīkh* III: 211) quotes al-Nafs al-Zakiyya’s letter, which reproaches al-Manṣūr for violating the *amān* he had given to Ibn Hubayra, ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Alī and Abū Muslim. Although in Ṭ2 al-Ṭabarī opts not to quote the passage, probably stemming from al-Madāʾinī’s, 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 Ṭ6a–f and B4, with changes, al-Balādhurī being more akin to Ibn Aʿtham than al-Ṭabarī. In al-Balādhurī, the passage is attributed to an authority other than al-Madāʾinī, so it is possible that Ibn Aʿtham was also using another source.

188 Shahrazūr is not mentioned in al-Ṭabarī’s or al-Balādhurī’s Abū Muslim narrative.
190 Neither of the place names is noted by al-Ṭabarī or al-Balādhurī as part of Abū Muslim’s route; cf. Ṭ3e (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, Taʾrīkh 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-Madāʾinī’s or Ibn Aʿtham’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

b) ≈ IA1a.  
c) ≈ Ṭ1c, IA1b.

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 (Taʾrīkh III: 104). Nonetheless, there the isnād is qāla ghayr man dhakartu khabarahu, which would indicate that the authority is not al-Madāʾinī. 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. ʿAbbād ← 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-Madāʾinī 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. ʿAbbād ← Azhar b. Zuhayr isnād.
APPENDIX II: AL-MADĀʾINĪ’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-Madāʾinī’s sources.


He is cited only twice in al-Ṭabarī, both times through al-Madāʾinī. ʿAbdallāh 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.


He is mentioned only once in al-Ṭabarī. Could he be identical with the ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Umayya al-Tamīmī mentioned in al-Mizzī, *Tahdhib* XVI: 537–539 or with the ʿAbd 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.


He is mentioned three times as a ṛāwī in al-Ṭabarī (see Index), always quoted through al-Madāʾinī. He is unknown.


Abū ʿĀṣim al-Zabādī or al-Ziyādī as he appears in al-Ṭabarī (*Taʾrīkh* II: 1275, 1809), where he is also quoted through al-Madāʾinī for the late Umayyad period. Otherwise, he is unknown.


Abū Ḥafṣ al-Azdī is a rather copious source in al-Ṭabarī (*Taʾrīkh* I: 2887; II: 189, 394, 489, 1308, 1323, 1996; III: 24, 99, 102, 111, 112, 117); he is almost always quoted through al-Madāʾinī. In al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* III: 102, he appears in a first-person *khabar* as a guard for the treasure that Abū Muslim captured from ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī. 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.


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


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-Madāʾinī in al-Ṭabarī for the late Umayyad and the early ʿAbbāsid periods. Abū l-Ḥasan al-Khurāsānī, a ṛāwī (transmitter) also always cited through al-Madāʾinī, 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


**Abū Šāliḥ al-Marwazī** (al-Ṭabarī,*Taʾrīkh* III: 20, 38, 46, 54).

He is cited four times in al-Ṭabarī for information on the ’Abbāsid revolution, always through al-Madāʾinī. He is unknown.

**Abū Ĭālib al-Anṣārī** (al-Ṭabarī,*Taʾrīkh* III: 50).

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


ʿĀmir b. Ismāʿīl al-Ḥārithī al-Musliyya (d. 157/773–774), of the tribal group Banū Musliyya b. Ṭalḥa, was an officer of the ’Abbāsid revolution. He died in Baghdād, and Caliph Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr prayed over his corpse; see al-Ṭabarī,*Taʾrīkh* III: 46, 49, 380; Ibn Ḥasan al-Manṣūr,*Taʾrīkh* XXV: 308–310; Agha 2003: 342. The Banū Musliyya and the ’Abbāsids had a special connection before and during the revolution; see Sharon 1983: 141–143. As the chain of transmission Ismāʿīl b. al-Ḥasan ← ʿĀmir b. Ismāʿīl (see below) implies, ʿĀmir b. Ismāʿīl was probably not al-Madāʾinī’s direct source.

Bishr b. Ḫaṣḥa (al-Ṭabarī,*Taʾrīkh* III: 61).

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

**Ḥafṣ b. Shabīb** (al-Ṭabarī,*Taʾrīkh* III: 4, 6).

He is cited only twice in al-Ṭabarī, both times through al-Madāʾinī. He is unknown.

**Ḥamza b. Ṭalḥa al-Sulami ← his father** (al-Ṭabarī,*Taʾrīkh* II: 1726).

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


Ḥasan b. Rashīd/Rushayd al-Jūzjānī, Abū ʿAlī, is a quite prolific source for the late Umayyad/early ’Abbāsid period. He stemmed from the Banū Khuzāʿa. Al-Ṭabarī (*Taʾrīkh* III: 752) shows him or his namesake as having influence in the ’Abbāsid state during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd. He was probably the *hājib* 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. Ṭālib** (al-Ṭabarī,*Taʾrīkh* III: 84).

This famous scholar (d. 207/822) was an older contemporary of al-Madāʾinī, a historian, genealogist, and attendant at the early ’Abbāsid courts (e.g. of al-Manšūr); see GAS I: 272 and the in-depth study of Leder 1991. It is not very often that al-Madāʾinī quotes him. Al-Haytham b. Ṭālib also wrote a *Kitāb al-Dawla*, as has been noted in this study.
Hishām b. 'Amr al-Taghlibī (al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh 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 Jaʿfar appointed him governor of Sind. See Zambaur 1927: 279; Crone 1980: 167–168.

Ismāʿīl b. Abī Ismāʿīl (al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh III: 10, 12).

Ismāʿīl b. Abī Ismāʿīl 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, Taʾrīkh III: 458, 465; Ibn al-Jawzī, Muntaẓam V: 258; Zambaur 1927: 43.


Ismāʿīl b. al-Ḥasan is cited twice in al-Ṭabarī for information on the ‘Abbāsid revolution, both times through al-Madāʾinī, but he is otherwise unknown.

For ‘Āmir b. Ismāʿīl, see above s.v.

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


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


For Yazīd b. Asīd, see below s.v.

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

Khālid b. al-Aṣfaḥ (al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh III: 15).

Khālid b. al-Aṣfaḥ b. ‘Abdallāh is cited twice in al-Ṭabarī (Taʾrīkh II: 1251; III: 15), both times through al-Madāʾinī inī. He served as the governor of Wāsiṭ under the Umayyads. His father had been the governor of Sistān. In all probability, Khālid witnessed the ‘Abbāsid revolution on the Umayyad side. (Crone 1980: 146–147)

Al-Kinānī (al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh III: 51).

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


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 Başran akhbārī and source for al-Madāʾinī inī; see Petersen 1964: 92, 128; Rotter 1974: 117.

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


Muslim b. al-Mughira (al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrikh III: 99).

In al-Ṭabarī, Muslim b. al-Mughira’s reports are cited five times, four times transmitted through al-Madāʾinī (see Index). He is quoted for information on the late Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid periods.


Abū l-Sarī al-Nuʾmān al-Azdī al-Marwadhī al-Khurāsānī was a little-known rāwī for the late Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid periods; see Rotter 1974: 130.

Al-Ṣabbāḥ the mawlā of Jibrīl ← Maslama b. Yahyā (al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrikh II: 1965, 1989).

The same isnād occurs twice in al-Ṭabarī, both times through al-Madāʾinī. Of al-Ṣabbāḥ the freedman nothing is known. Jibrīl is probably Jibrīl b. Yahyā al-Bajalī al-Khurāsānī (see above). In this case, Maslama b. Yahyā is the brother of Jibrīl, that is, Maslama b. Yahyā 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 ʿAbbāsid cause during the revolution or shortly thereafter. See Crone 1980: 179–180; Agha 2003: 355.


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

Sulaymān b. Dāwūd (al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīḥ III: 24, 54).
Sulaymān b. Dāwūd is mentioned twice in al-Ṭabarī, both times cited through al-Madāʾinī. This Sulaymān is possibly identical with Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān b. Dāwūd al-Ṭayālisī (d. in al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīḥ III: 203 or 204/818–820), who is mentioned often in al-Ṭabarī and sometimes quoted through al-Madāʾinī. Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān b. Dāwūd was of Persian origin, but he lived in al-Ṭabarī and Baghdād, and could have met al-Madāʾinī in either place. He was a traditionist and considered reliable. He is said to have transmitted hadīth from memory, without notes. See al-Masʿūdī, Murūj VI (index): 389–390; Kitāb al-ʿUyūn wa-l-Ḥadāʾiq: 358, 362; al-Khaṭīb, Taʾrīkh IX: 25–30; Ibn al-Jawzī, Montazam VI: 136. The Sulaymān b. Dāwūd in question could also be, for instance, Abū Ayyūb Sulaymān b. Dāwūd b. ʿAlī (d. 219 in Baghdād, on whom see Ibn Saʿd, Ṭabaqāt VII/2: 84), Abū l-Rabīʿ Sulaymān b. Dāwūd b. al-Rashīd al-Baghdādī (d. 231, on whom see Ibn al-Jawzī, Montazam VI: 396–397), or Abū l-Rabīʿ Sulaymān b. Dāwūd al-Zahrānī (d. 234, on whom see Ibn al-Jawzī, Montazam VI: 427).

ʿUmāra mawlā Jibrīl b. Yaḥyā (al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīḥ III: 20, 46).
ʿUmāra (or, less likely, ʿAmmār) mawlā Jibrīl b. Yaḥyā is cited three times in al-Ṭabarī (Taʾrīḥ III: 20, 28, 46) for information on the ʿAbbāsid revolution, two times explicitly through al-Madāʾinī.

Jibrīl b. Yaḥyā b. Qurra al-Bajalī al-Khurāsānī, his patron, was an ʿAbbāsid officer who participated in the siege of Damascus with ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī. In 140 or 141 or 142/757–760, he supervised the rebuilding of al-Miṣṣīṣa. 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 ʿAsākir, Taʾrīkh LXXII: 25–28, his nisba reads al-Jurjānī. See al-Yaʿqūbī, Taʾrīkh II: 446–447; al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīḥ III: 135, 328, 459; Ibn al-Jawzī, Montazam V: 93; Ibn al-Aṭhīr, Kāmil V: 500, 577, 591; VI, 39, 41; Crone 1980: 179–80.

Al-Walīd b. Hishām ← his father (al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīḥ III: 84, 87, 92).
In al-Ṭabarī, Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Walīd b. Hishām b. Qaḥdham al-Qaḥdhamī is a source for the Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid periods. He was from al-Ṭabarī, as was al-Madāʾinī. He died in 222/836–837; see Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Jarḥ IX: 20; al-Samʿānī, Ansāb IV: 455; Ibn ʿAsākir, Montazam V: 93; Ibn al-Aṭhīr, Kāmil V: 500, 577, 591; VI, 39, 41; Crone 1980: 179–80.

Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd al-Ḥakam al-Hamadhanī ← his mawlā (al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīḥ III: 7).
Yaḥyā is mentioned only in al-Ṭabarī. He is unknown.

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


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


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-ʿAdawī (al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh II: 1991), a rāwī quoted rather frequently in al-Ṭabarī ʿan al-Madāʾinī ʿan Zuhayr b. Hunayd. Al-Muhallab was also in charge of the kharāj of Khurāsān for Naṣr b. Savyār (al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh 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-ʿAdawī, al-Madāʾinī’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, Taʾrīkh II: 1188, 1201); the connection of the family to that scholar is therefore clear (indeed, they were from the same tribe, ʿAdī al-Ribāb b. ʿAbd Manāt).

If this identification is correct, Iyās’s father’s full name was Ṭalḥa b. Iyās b. Zuhayr b. Ḥayyān al-ʿAdawī. 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, Taʾrīkh 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 maqāṭīʿ, that is, hadīths with incomplete chains of transmission. We see that the family managed to switch to the Abbāsid side since Ṭalḥa b. Iyās is mentioned as the qāḍī of al-Baṣra in the early years of the new dynasty (Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, Taʾrīkh: 414; al-Balādhurī, Ansāb X [ed. Damascus]: 247; Wakīʾ, Qudāt: 268). Ṭalḥa and al-Muhallab’s grandfather was the general Zuhayr b. Ḥayyān, who fought against the Turks (al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh II: 490–493).