The History of al-Ṭabarānī

Volume XXXVI

The Revolt of the Zanj

Translated by David Waines
The present volume of al-Ṭabarî’s monumental history covers the years 255-265/869-878, the first half of the reign of the Abbasid caliph al-Mu’tamīd in Sīmarrā. Although the decade was one of relative calm in the capital, compared with the anarchy of the years immediately preceding, danger signals were flashing in territories adjacent to the imperial heartlands. Chief among them was the revolt of the Zanj, the narrative of which occupies the bulk of the present volume.

A people of semi-servile status, the Zanj, who were based in the marshlands of southern Iraq, were led by a somewhat shadowy and mysterious figure claiming Shi‘ite descent, ‘Ali b. Muhammad. Their prolonged revolt against the central authorities was not crushed until 269/882.

Al-Ṭabarî’s account of these momentous events is unique in both the quality and the quantity of his information. He himself was present in Baghdad during the years of the revolt, and he was thus able to construct his story from reports by numerous eyewitnesses. The result is a detailed narrative that brings alive for the modern reader the main personalities and engagements of the revolt.
THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ
AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XXXVI

The Revolt of the Zanj
A.D. 869–879/A.H. 255–265
The History of al-Ṭabari

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The History of al-Ṭabarī

(Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk)

VOLUME XXXVI

The Revolt of the Zanj

translated and annotated by

David Waines

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State University of New York Press
THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (Taʾrīkh al-rūsul waʾl-mulūk) by Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as The History of al-Ṭabarī, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Al-Ṭabarī’s monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation contains a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It also provides information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The History has been divided here into 39 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (isnād) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—)
between the individual links in the chain. Thus, "According to Ibn Humayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq" means that al-Ṭabari received the report from Ibn Humayd, who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabari's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as dirham and imām, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized, as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.

Ehsan Yar-Shater
To Martin Hinds,

in memory of

a long

and

valued

friendship
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The present volume of Ṭabari's voluminous history covers the years 255–65/869–79. It deals with some of the most dramatic events, if not of the entire History, certainly of the lifetime of the historian himself. Ṭabari was already a mature scholar of about thirty when al-Muhtadi became caliph in 255/868 and the leader of the Zanj commenced his uprising in the very heartland of the 'Abbāsid domains, southern Iraq. These events marked a most severe test for the caliphate and were part of a prolonged internal crisis, not only political in nature, but economic and social as well, a crisis from which the 'Abbāsids never fully recovered.'

The seat of the caliphate was still at Sāmarra, where the Caliph al-Muṭaṣim had transferred affairs of state from Baghdad in 221/836. The move was occasioned by the desire to settle his new Turkish elite military forces and thus avoid tensions between them and the older established political and commercial sections of Baghdad's population. However, the concentration of Turks in Sāmarra helped foster rivalries among them, as well as struggles between them and their masters, the caliphs. The assassination of al-Mutawakkil (247/861) ushered in a period of anarchy that came to an end only with the death of al-Muhtadi (255/868), when the Turkish leaders felt more secure of their position within the state apparatus. The new caliph, al-Muṭamid (with the invaluable support of his brother Abū Aḥmad al-Muwaffaq), remained on the caliphal throne in Sāmarra for more than twenty years and died a natural death, in con-

1. See D. Waines, "The Crisis of the 'Abbāsid Third Century."
trast to the violent deaths of the five previous caliphs in the space of a decade.

But, although a period of relative tranquillity began in the capital, danger signals were flashing in territories adjacent to the imperial heartlands. The situation in Sāmarrā, which had paralyzed central government, had allowed provincial dissent to emerge into the open. Ṭabārī deals here with one such expression of dissent in the career of Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth, a coppersmith (al-Ṣaffār) who, having become master of the province of Sīstān, next moved to challenge the Ṭāḥirīds of Khurāsān, long-standing supporters of the ʿAbbāsids both in the east and in Baghdad. The central government attempted to win Yaʿqūb’s support by granting him the governorship of several eastern regions, but a greater danger then arose when he marched westward toward al-Ahwāz and advanced upon Baghdad itself. Ultimately this particular danger was averted but not before it had seemed possible that Yaʿqūb might join forces with ʿAli b. Muḥammad and his army of the Zanj in the southern marshlands (baṭāʾīḥ) of Iraq.

The Zanj revolt occupies the bulk of the narrative in the present volume, from its tentative beginnings in 255/869 through the traumatic capture of al-Baṣrah in 257/871 to the sacking of Wāsiṭ in 264/878. The period covered here, in fact, marks what Alexandre Popovic has correctly called the first distinct phase of the revolt. The movement was crushed only when the Zanj capital, Mukhtārah, fell to al-Muwaffaq’s forces in 269/882 and the Zanj leader died the following year. In all, the revolt had occupied the central government’s attention for fifteen years.

Ṭabārī’s account of these events is of primary importance, “tant par la qualité que par la quantité de ses informations,” as Popovic acknowledges. Ṭabārī’s skills as a historian are apparent from the manner in which he has constructed his account around reports from those who participated in or witnessed the events recorded. He also displays the storyteller’s touch in his inclusion of certain selected anecdotes that bring the narrative to life. My favorite is the picture of a fleeing Zanj soldier who attempts to halt the advance of his pursuer first by tossing his armor at him and finally by trying to stop him with a metal field-oven that he had been carrying. More-

2. A. Popovic, La révolte des esclaves en Iraq au III/IX siècle, 83.
over, Ṭabari seems to have been living in Baghdad through at least some of the period of the revolt, as is attested in his brief account of the serial murderer of women who was captured and executed, and whose corpse was publicly displayed in the city, and more particularly in his mention of having been present at the departure of al-Muwaffaq’s large and well-equipped army to engage the Zanj in the south. Ṭabari, for the most part, avoids making judgments on the persons and events he is dealing with, yet he cannot restrain himself entirely from expression of feeling on such momentous events. For example, until the infamous incident of the “Day of the Barges” outside al-Baṣrah, he refers to ‘Ali b. Muḥammad as the Zanj leader; thereafter, however, ‘Ali is designated “the enemy of God,” “the cursed one,” and, most frequently, simply al-khabīth “the abominable one.”

A brief comment on the annotation is apposite here. The primary importance of Ṭabari’s account, as already noted, lies in the mass of detail unique to him. Some personal names and place names, especially in the account of developments within the Zanj camp, occur only here and often only once, which makes complete identification virtually impossible. As far as possible, I have cited the works of Le Strange for the identification of place names, as readers of this translation may wish to pursue certain points in a language accessible to them. Tribal names have generally, been left unannotated. References to earlier passages in the History are confined to providing a fuller context for events at the beginning of this translation, linking them with earlier or alternative accounts of the same incidents or with immediate antecedent events. The labor of this translation would have been much greater but for the exhaustive study of the revolt by Popovic; my indebtedness to him will be evident from the footnotes.

It remains for me to thank those who have kindly responded to pleas for assistance on points of obscurity and difficulty in the text. To Professor C. E. Bosworth, Basim Musallam, Nasser Tuwaim, and Goudah al-Batanuni I offer gratitude. A more special thanks is owed to the editor, Ehsan Yar-Shater, for reviewing the text and to Everett Rowson for his painstaking scrutiny of the translation, his corrections, and numerous helpful suggestions. And finally, a word of appreciation to Estelle Whelan for her unfailing good humor at moments of mutual vexation.

David Waines
Map 1. The Lower Part of Southern Iraq in the Third/Ninth Century
The Caliphate of Ibn al-Wāthiq:
Al-Muhtadī bi-Allāh
On Wednesday, the last day of Rajab¹ of this year 255 (July 14, 869), Muḥammad the son of al-Wāṭiqi was rendered the oath of allegiance as caliph. He was called al-Muhtadi bi-Allāh.² His agnomen was Abū ʿAbdallāh. His mother, a Byzantine, was called Qurb.

It was reported on the authority of an eyewitness that Muḥammad b. al-Wāṭiqi refused to accept the oath of allegiance from anyone until al-Muʿtazz came before him and submitted his abdication, confirming his inability to administer matters entrusted to him and, moreover, expressing his desire to relinquish these matters into the care of Ibn al-Wāṭiqi.³

Extending his hand, al-Muʿtazz acknowledged his allegiance to Muḥammad b. al-Wāṭiqi, and only then was the new caliph given the honorific title of al-Muhtadi. Thereupon al-Muʿtazz withdrew,

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¹ The last day of the month was, in fact, Thursday.
³ Al-Muʿtazz had become caliph in al-Muḥarram 252 (January 866), achieving the rank through the forced abdication of his predecessor, al-Mustaʿin. See El,¹ s.v. “al-Muʿtazz.”
and the inner circle of clients \textit{[mawāli]}}\textsuperscript{4} rendered their own oaths of allegiance.

The text of the statement concerning al-Mu‘tazz’s abdication is as follows:

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. The following is what the witnesses, named in this document below, were called upon to testify. They witnessed that Abū ‘Abdallāh, the son of the Commander of the Faithful al-Mu-tawakkil ‘alā-Allāh (while calling upon them to attest that he was of sound mind and that he lawfully performed this act of his own free will and without compulsion) acknowledged that he had reflected carefully upon matters concerning his title to the caliphate and the administration of the Muslims’ affairs. He had reached the conclusion that he no longer felt suited to the task, as he was unable to fulfill his duties. He was unequal to the responsibilities he had to shoulder. Thus he voluntarily withdrew from office, declaring himself free of the burden, removing it by means of abdication. He released from their oaths those of his entourage who had sworn allegiance to him. Likewise anyone else who had sworn before him an oath of allegiance, or covenants and compacts, or oaths of divorce, of the emancipation of slaves, the voluntary payment of alms \textit{[sadaqah]} or of pilgrimage, indeed every manner of oath, he redeemed these from them.

After it had become clear to al-Mu‘tazz that the best course both for himself and for all Muslims was to give up the caliphal office and to abdicate, he set free all those with obligations to him.

He called to witness for him, regarding everything that was cited and described in this document, all the witnesses named below and all those present after the document had been carefully read aloud to him and he had acknowledged freely and without compulsion his full awareness of its contents.

\begin{flushright}
[1713]
\end{flushright}

\textsuperscript{4} The word \textit{mawāli, pl. mawāli}, in the ‘Abbasid period refers mainly to military personnel employed by the caliphs and who were mainly, if not exclusively, of central Asian origin. See P. Crone, \textit{Slaves on Horses}. 
This occurred on Monday, the 27th day of Rajab in the year 255 (July 11, 869).5

In his own hand al-Mu'tazz signed his consent to its contents with the words, "I Abū 'Abdallāh acknowledge all that is contained in this document." It was dated Monday, the 27th day of Rajab, 255 (July 11, 869), and witnessed by the following persons: al-Hasan b. Muḥammad, Muḥammad b. Yahyā, Aḥmad b. Janāb, Yahyā b. Zakariyā' b. Abī Yaʿqūb al-Iṣbahānī, 'Abdallāh b. Muḥammad al-ʿĀmirī, Aḥmad b. al-Faḍl b. Yahyā, Ḥammād b. Iṣḥāq, 'Abdallāh b. Muḥammad, and Ibrāhim b. Muḥammad.6

In Baghdad at the end of Rajab of this year there were disturbances and riots among the populace against Sulaymān b. 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir.

An Account of the Causes and Consequences of [the]
Disturbances [in Baghdad]

One Thursday, toward the end of Rajab,8 Sulaymān, who was in Baghdad, received a despatch from Muḥammad b. al-Wāthiq in-

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5. The document, which is less a formal declaration of abdication than a report on the event itself, seems to end here. See Ṭabarī, III, 1709-12 for details of the deposition. Al-Mu'tazz's death was announced in public shortly afterward, on the 1st of Shā'ībān (July 16, 869).

6. Only the first name in this list has been identified. Al-Hasan b. Muḥammad b. Abī al-Shawārīb had been appointed chief judge in 252/866 (see Ṭabarī, III, 1684; his arrest is noted in Dhūl-Qa'dah 255 [October 11-November 9, 869], 1787; see also D. Sourdel, Le vizirat 'Abbāside, I, 307), and his presence would have been deemed necessary to give the abdication/deposition at least the appearance of legitimacy. He did not, however, draw up the actual abdication document, which was undertaken by another of the company mentioned, Yahyā b. Zakariyā' al-Iṣbahānī. Ibn Abī al-Shawārīb confirmed orally that the sister, son, and mother of al-Mu'tazz would be provided with safe-conduct. See Ṭabarī, III, 1710-11.

7. A scion of the famous Tahirid family from Khurāsān, which had long supported the caliphs from the days of al-Ma'mūn (d. 218/833). As well as supplying governors of the eastern provinces, which led to the founding of an autonomous dynasty with its capital at Naysābūr, the family was deeply involved in the affairs of Baghdad. Sulaymān had been governor of Tabaristān in 250/864-865 and, earlier in the present year, on the 6th of Rabi'ā'ah II [March 25, 869], he had been appointed chief of security in Baghdad and the districts of the sawād (see Ṭabarī, III, 1706). See El,' s.v. "Ṭāhirids"; also C. E. Bosworth, "The Ṭāhirids and Ṣaffārids."

8. The expression salkh, meaning "in the last stage of," is used when the precise date of an event is not known but only its approximate occurrence in a phase or stage of the lunar month. See M. Ocaña Jiménez, Nuevas tablas de conversión de datas islámicas a cristianas y viceversa, 45.
forming him of the people’s oath of allegiance to him as caliph. At the time Abū Ahmad, a son of al-Mutawakkil, was also in Baghdad. His brother al-Mu‘tazz had banished Abū Ahmad to al-Baṣrah when he quarreled with his brother al-Mu‘ayyad. Later, when factionalism erupted in al-Baṣrah, al-Mu‘tazz had him brought back to Baghdad, where he continued to reside. Sulaymān b. ‘Abdallah b. Ṭāhir, who was at the time in charge of the office of security in Baghdad, sent for Abū Ahmad and had him brought to his palace. The troops stationed in Baghdad and the mob (al-ghawgha) heard of the matter concerning the abdication of al-Mu‘tazz and Ibn al-Wāthiq’s accession to the caliphate. They gathered in front of Sulaymān’s palace, creating a great uproar, but broke up somewhat later when they were informed that there was no confirmation of the report of what had happened. On the following day, Friday, there were again disturbances, and once again people were told the same thing as on the previous day. Prayers were performed in the two main mosques of the city and invocations offered in the name of al-Mu‘tazz. Then, on the Saturday morning, troops attacked Sulaymān’s palace, calling out in the name of Abū Ahmad (b. al-Mutawakkil) and demanding that he be rendered the oath of allegiance. Confronting Sulaymān in his palace, they asked him to produce Abū Ahmad b. al-Mutawakkil. He brought him before them, and he promised to meet their wishes if there was delay in their fulfillment. The crowd departed, having been reassured of his guarantee.

Yārjūkḥ arrived and camped at al-Baradan. He was transporting thirty thousand dinars for the pay of the troops (al-jund) of Madinat al-Salam. He then advanced to al-Shammāsiyyah and the

9. He was later known by the honorific title al-Muwaffaq.
10. Akhi min ummihi. Ṭabari notes that Abū Ahmad and al-Mu‘ayyad were brothers by the same mother.
11. Abū Ahmad had been banished first to Wāsīt, thence to al-Baṣrah in 253/867. See Ṭabari, III, 1693.
12. See n. 17, below.
13. Ṭabari first mentions this Turkish officer during the course of events of this year in an engagement with the rebel Musāwir, who defeated him, forcing his flight to Sāmrā. See Ṭabari, III, 1706.
14. A town lying on the east bank of the Tigris just to the north of Baghdad. The road from it passed through the Baradān Gate on Baghdad’s eastern side. See Le Strange, Baghdad during the Abbasid Caliphate, 174.
15. At this time Madinat al-Salam was synonymous with Baghdad, and the expression has been retained here wherever it occurs.
16. One of the northern quarters of eastern Baghdad, Shammāsiyyah has the mean-
following morning entered Baghdad. When word of this got around, the troops \( \textit{al-nās} \) created an uproar as they rushed out to meet him. Yārjūkh was informed of their approach, and he returned to al-Ba- radān to remain there. Despatches were exchanged between him and the central authorities until he finally sent money to the troops \( \textit{ahl} \) of Baghdad, with which they were content. Al-Muhtadi was rendered the oath of allegiance by the inner circle \( \textit{al-nās} \) in Baghdad on Thursday, the 7th of Sha'bān (July 21, 869). Prayers were offered for him on Friday, the 8th of Sha'bān, following an outbreak of violence \( \textit{fitnāh} \) in Baghdad, during which some people were killed, others were drowned in the Tigris, while yet others suffered various injuries. This violence occurred because Sulaymān had his palace guarded with a group of armed Ṭabarīyyah, against whom the troops of Baghdad waged a pitched battle in Tigris Street and at the Bridge. Thereafter order and peace were restored.

In the month of Ramaḍān of this year (August 13 – September 9,
869] Qabihah\textsuperscript{22} went to the Turks and revealed to them the location of some of her possessions, including a hoard of treasures and jewels. That reportedly occurred because she had planned to assassinate Sālih [b. Waṣīf]\textsuperscript{23} and plotted to do so with a number of secretaries whom Sālih had already maltreated.\textsuperscript{24} When Sālih [again] submitted them to torture and Qabihah learned that they had withheld no information from Sālih, owing to the punishment he meted out to them, she became convinced her own life was in danger. She undertook to save herself and thus removed the contents of her treasure stores from inside the Jawṣaq palace,\textsuperscript{25} which included money, jewels, and other precious goods; she deposited them for safekeeping along with other goods of the same kind she had previously deposited.

Qabihah was unsure of being able to act swiftly in the event of such circumstances as eventually overwhelmed her and her son, so she devised a strategem for her escape. A tunnel was excavated leading from one of her private chambers inside the palace to a place that would not be detected. When she learned of the circumstances surrounding her son's abdication she hastened to the tunnel without a second thought and escaped from the palace confines. When those who had rebelled against her son had succeeded [in imposing the situation] they wanted, they then set out in search of Qabihah, confident of her capture. But they found the palace empty. She had vanished without a trace, leaving them no clue where to search. Finally, however, they stumbled across the tunnel. Realizing this must have

\textsuperscript{22} The mother of al-Mu'tazz.

\textsuperscript{23} Sālih was a prominent military leader, whose father had been murdered two years earlier by his Turkish rivals. He was now attempting to restore the power of his own faction and bore grievances against both the deposed Caliph, al-Mu'tazz, and some of his government officials. Qabihah clearly felt Sālih would not honor his pledge of securing her safety. See Sourdel, \textit{Vizirat}, I, 297–98.

\textsuperscript{24} Prominent among those who were subjected to Sālih's interrogation methods were Abū Ja'far Ahmad b. Isra'īl al-Anbārī, al-Mu'tazz's vizier, who, together with Abū Nūh ʿIsā b. Ibrāhīm and Hasan b. Makhlad, were the major pillars of the Caliph's administration. In addition, Hasan was also secretary to Qabihah. As such they became the target of Sālih b. Waṣīf's ambitions in his bid for power. See Tabari, III, 1706–9; Sourdel, \textit{Vizirat}, I, 295–98, for details of relevant parallel sources.

\textsuperscript{25} This palace, built by the Caliph al-Mu'tasim, was located on the eastern side of the Tigris at Sāmarra. See Le Strange, \textit{The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate}, 55. It should not be confused with the palace al-Jawṣaq al-Muhdath situated in Baghdad. See Le Strange, \textit{Baghdad}, 157. The architectural details of the palace are discussed in K. A. C. Creswell, \textit{A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture}, 259–60.
been her escape route, they followed it as far as the secret exit and became certain of her successful escape. They surmised that she would have sought a safe and secure refuge, and what better way than to seek shelter with Ḥabib, the wife of Mūsā b. Bughā, whom he had married from among the concubines of al-Mutawakkil? They set out for this quarter of the city, but being loath to expose themselves to any of her supporters, they organized a surveillance team to watch her. A threat was publicly announced against anyone with information of her whereabouts who then did not inform them of it. Thus matters stood until, in the month of Ramaḍān, she suddenly appeared and went to Șāliḥ b. Waṣīf. A female apothecary in whom she had trust acted as her intermediary with Șāliḥ. Qabihah had wealth in Baghdad, and so she sent written instructions for some of it to be brought to Sāmarra.

On Tuesday, the 11th of Ramaḍān in this year (August 23, 869), it was reported, a sum of five hundred thousand dinars arrived in Sāmarra. The money had been raised for Qabihah from the treasure she had in Baghdad and despatched according to her instructions. The central authorities profited greatly from this source, while in Baghdad itself the non-Arab troops (al-jund) and the Shākirīyyah who received regular stipends were assigned considerable sums from it as well. The sale of these hoards continued to raise money in Baghdad and Sāmarra for several months until, at last, they were depleted. Qabihah remained in Sāmarra until people departed for Mecca on that year’s pilgrimage. She was sent in the company of Raja’ al-Rabībī and Waḥash, a mawlā of al-Muhtadi. It was reported that someone heard her along the way imploring God in a loud voice

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26. Mūsā was the son of the army commander the elder Bughā. See EI, s.v. “Bughā al-Kabir.”

27. A name variously applied to a group or groups of soldiers who became rivals of troops commanded by the Turkish commanders in Sāmarra. See Mas‘ūdī, Murūj, VII, 276; also R. Levy, The Social Structure of Islam, 418, states the word is derived from the Persian chākir “servant or apprentice” and that, as a contingent, they were distinct from the jund, or regular soldiers. A more precise distinction may be found in the organization of military administration during the earlier reign of al-Mutawakkil (d. 248/861), when there existed a branch of the department of the army called the Diwān al-jund wa-al-Shākirīyyah; jund referred to non-Arab troops while Shākirīyyah meant mercenaries. See Sourdel, Vizirat, II, 596; EI, s.v. “Djund.” Thus, in instances where Ṭabarī uses these two terms in conjunction, the word jund will be rendered as “non-Arab troops”; otherwise it will be rendered variously as “soldiers,” “troops,” “army,” and the like.
against Ṣāliḥ b. Waṣīf, saying: "Oh God, humiliate Ṣāliḥ b. Waṣīf just as he has dishonored me, murdered my son, seized my property, squandered my goods, banished me from my home, and behaved obscenely toward me." When the pilgrims set out on their return journey, Qabīḥah was detained in prison in Mecca.

It was reported that, when the Turks became agitated and roused against al-Muʿtazz, they demanded fifty thousand dinars from him, promising in return to kill Ṣāliḥ b. Waṣīf and then become pacific. Al-Muʿtazz sent word to his mother of the Turks' grievances against him and of his fear for his life. She replied, "I have no liquid resources. We have received some promissory notes, and, if the Turks can wait until they are redeemed, we could then pay them."

When al-Muʿtazz had been killed, Ṣāliḥ made contact with a jeweler, who recounted the following story: "I went to Ṣāliḥ. Aḥmad b. Khāqān was present with him at the time. Aḥmad said to me, 'Woe upon you! This is it. Do you see what a fix I'm in?' Ṣāliḥ had been alarmed by the Turks, who had demanded money of him that he did not have. He said to me, pointing out one of the company present, 'I have been informed that Qabīḥah has treasure hidden in a place to which this man can guide you. Go, and take Aḥmad b. Khāqān with you. Should you uncover anything, make a record of it, hand it over to him, and come with him to me.'

When I had performed my prayers in the congregational mosque, this man took us to a tidy dwelling, which we entered and searched from top to bottom without finding anything. The man began to abuse Aḥmad b. Khāqān, who in turn menaced, threatened, and abused him and accused him of making an error. The man fetched an ax and commenced piercing the walls with it, searching for a place where the money might be hidden. He continued exploring in this fashion until the ax struck a spot in the wall that, by the sound it made, indicated that something was concealed there. By demolishing the wall, a door was revealed behind it. We opened it and entered. It led to a tunnel, and we found ourselves in a chamber built

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28. Safātīj.
29. See Ṭabarī, III, 1709, for slightly different details of these events.
30. This is Aḥmad b. Khāqān al-Wāthiqi, a freedman of the Caliph al-Wāthiq, who appears briefly later, p. 73, below.
31. ʿIla al-ṣufūf, the reading favored by the editor of the Leiden text. Although each of the recensions has a different reading, none of them is satisfactory.
beneath the dwelling we had entered above, identical in structure and floor plan. There, stored in baskets placed upon shelves, we located the money, amounting to something in the order of a million dinars. Ahmad and his companion removed three hundred thousand dinars. Then we discovered three baskets; one contained a makkūk, of emeralds, but of a kind that I could imagine neither al-Mutawakkl nor indeed anyone else possessing. Another smaller basket contained half a makkūk of large beads which, by God, I had never dreamed al-Mutawakkl or anyone else could possess. The third yet smaller basket contained a kaylajah of rubies, the likes of which I had never before seen or even imagined existing anywhere in the world. Estimating the market value of it all, it came to two million dinars. We removed the entire treasure and took it to Šāliḥ. When he heard of its value, he could scarcely believe it and remained unconvinced until he was shown the actual goods. He then remarked, 'May God do such-and-such to her! Al-Mu'tazz's mother condemned her son to death for want of the miserable sum of fifty thousand dinars, when she actually had in only one of her treasuries such wealth as this!'"

The mother of Mu'tazz b. al-Wāthiq [al-Muhtadi] died before the oath of allegiance had been rendered to him. She had been one of al-Musta'in's wives, and when he was slain al-Mu'tazz transferred her to the palace of al-Ruṣāfah, where he kept his harem. After al-Muhtadi became caliph he one day said to a company of his mawlus, "I now [unlike al-Mu'tazz] have no mother who requires the sum of ten million dinars every year as expenses for her maids and servants and hangers-on; as for myself and my children, I want only sufficient food and nothing extra, except for my brothers, as they have fallen upon hard times."

Ahmad b. Isrā'īl and Abū Nūh were killed on the 27th of Ramaḍān of this year (September 8, 869).

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32. Measures like this and kaylajah, below, were subject to regional variation. A makkūk in Baghdad and al-Kūfah weighed 5.625 kg., while in al-Baṣrah and Wāsiṭ it weighed 6 kg. In Iraq a kaylajah was one-third of a makkūk. See W. Hinz, Islamische Masse und Gewichte, 40, 44.

33. This was Qurb, the Byzantine woman mentioned above, p. 1.

34. Located in the northeastern quarter of Baghdad, the palace was orginally built by the Caliph al-Mahdi and probably restored or enlarged by Hārūn al-Rashid. See Le Strange, Baghdad, 189; Lassner, Topography, index, q.v.
An Account of [the] Deaths of Aḥmad b. Isrāʾīl and Abū Nūḥ

We have already mentioned the cause that led them to their deaths.\textsuperscript{35} As for the nature of their deaths, it is reported that, when ʿAlī b. Wāṣif had seized all their property and that of al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad as well, he did so by torturing them with beatings and chains and placing braziers of red-hot coals next to them, while depriving them of any respite the whole time they were in his custody. They were accused of grave crimes of treason, of intending to degrade the central authorities, and of attempting to prolong civil disorder by plotting dissent among Muslims. Al-Muhtadi did nothing to interfere with ʿAlī in these matters, though he disapproved of and did not accept his violent behavior toward them. Then, in the month of Ramdān (August 13 – September 11, 869), ʿAlī ordered al-Ḥasan b. Sulaymān al-Dūshābī\textsuperscript{36} to supervise the extraction of any remaining property that they had concealed from him.

Al-Ḥasan b. Sulaymān related that, when Aḥmad b. Isrāʾīl had been brought to him, he abused him, saying “You wretch, do you think that God will give you respite and that the Commander of the Faithful will not sanction your death, though you are the cause of discord, an accomplice in murder and treason, and a corrupter of purpose and character? For the very least of these crimes you deserve to be made an example of, just as those before you have deserved such treatment. Death in this life and torment and ignominy in the life hereafter are your lot if you do not receive God’s pardon and mercy, and your Imām’s pardon and forgiveness. Protect yourself from incurring the punishment you deserve by being truthful concerning your wealth; if you do so and your truthfulness is confirmed, you can save yourself.”

Aḥmad replied that he had nothing left, nor had anyone until then left him property or estates.

Al-Ḥasan said, “I then called for whips to be brought out and ordered that Aḥmad be stood outside in the sun. I assailed him with ferocity, though triumph could have slipped through my hands if he had shown a little courage and fortitude. Finally, however, he con-

\textsuperscript{35} See Taḥbīri, III, 1706–9.
\textsuperscript{36} No further information on this man has been found.
ceded to an amount of nineteen thousand dinars, and I accepted his bond on it."

Al-Hasan continued, "Thereafter I had Abū Nūḥ ʿĪsā b. Ibrāhīm brought to me and told him the same as I had to Āḥmad, or words to the same effect, elaborating somewhat upon them. 'Withal, you remain a Christian, violating Muslim women while proclaiming yourself free from Islam and its followers. What better indicates this than the fact that you remain a Christian in private among your family and children? God has permitted such persons to be lawfully killed. But Abū Nūḥ gave no reply to any of this, weak and miserable man that he was.'"

Al-Hasan continued: "As for al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad, I had him brought to me next, but when I addressed him I was speaking to someone already weak and humiliated. I chided him for appearing this way. I said, 'Someone who has grooms to accompany him on his shihri steed, who judges matters as you do, and desires what you do, should never appear humbled or impotent.' I kept up the pressure on him in this manner until he signed his bond for a jewel the value of which was some thirty thousand dinars. After this I departed, and they were then all returned to their places." Al-Ḥasan b. Sulaymān al-Dūshābī's examination of these men was the last involving them. According to the information that has reached me, no similar examination was held during the remaining days of al-Muhtadi.

On Thursday, the 27th of Ramaḍān (September 8, 869), Āḥmad b. Isrāʾīl and Abū Nūḥ ʿĪsā b. Ibrāhīm were brought to the Public Gate. Šāliḥ b. Waṣīf, who presided in the public audience hall, ordered Ḥammād b. Muḥammad b. Ḥammād b. Danqash to beat them. Āḥmad b. Isrāʾīl was prepared, and Ibn Danqash cried out "Scourge him!" Each flogger lashed him twice, then stepped aside for the next one until Āḥmad had received five hundred strokes. They next prepared Abū Nūḥ and administered five hundred severe lashes on him as well. The two wretches were then placed face down upon the backs of donkeys of water sellers, their heads toward the rear of the animals, so that their lacerated backs were plain for all to see. When

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37. At this time there were in the administration several scribes of Nestorian origin, some of whom had been recently converted. To this general group belonged Āḥmad b. Ismāʾīl, al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad, and Abū Nūḥ ʿĪsā b. Ibrāhīm. See Sourdel, Vizirat, I, 304.
38. No further information on this person has been found.
the procession reached Khashabat Bābak, Aḥmad died and Abū Nūh died when the procession came to an end. Aḥmad was buried between the walls [of the city] and, according to another account, Abū Nūh died the same day in the prison of al-Sarakhsi, who was the deputy of Talmajūr, in charge of the special police. For his part, al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad remained in prison.

Someone who had been present at these proceedings reportedly said, "I heard Ḥammād b. Muḥammad b. Ḥammād b. Danqash berate the floggers saying, 'Exert yourselves, you sons of harlots, may you never be addressed in respectful terms! Punish them! Change the whips and replace the teams of torturers with others!' Aḥmad b. Isrāʾīl and ʿĪsā [b. Ibrāhīm] cried out for mercy."

When news of this reached al-Muhtadi, he said, "Is there no choice of punishment other than either the whip or death? Is there nothing better? Is imprisonment not enough? We are God's, and to Him we shall return." He repeated this last phrase over and over again.

Al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad is reported to have said that their whole affair involving ʿAlī would have come to naught had ʿAbdallah b. Muḥammad b. Yazdād not been present and in such a ruthless mood. He urged upon ʿAlī to "beat and torture them; indeed it would be best to go beyond that and kill them. If they escape, you will never be sure their injustices will not visit you in the end, let alone what those seeking to avenge them might do." He then mentioned what vile things that he had heard concerning them, which delighted ʿAlī.

Ibn Makhlad continued: "Dāʿūd b. al-ʿAbbās al-Ṭūsī used to
bring us to Šāliḥ, saying, ‘May God give you strength, what are these people that they should have caused you such anger?’ We thought he might influence Šāliḥ to treat us leniently until he said, ‘But by God, I know that if they were set free they would perpetrate immense evil and corruption throughout the domain of Islam.’ Before he departed Dāʾūd provided a legal opinion (fatwā)45 justifying our execution and advised Šāliḥ to have us put to death. This legal opinion and the other things he said about us increased Šāliḥ’s anger and his willingness to do us harm.’

Someone who had some firsthand knowledge of these developments was once asked how al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad was spared the fate of his two companions. The reply was twofold. First, al-Ḥasan had at once truthfully revealed to Šāliḥ the information he required, also providing proof that what he said was true. Šāliḥ had promised to pardon al-Ḥasan if he told the truth and swore an oath to that effect. The second reason was that the Commander of the Faithful had mentioned his case to Šāliḥ, telling him of the esteem he had for his family and hinting that he desired to have al-Ḥasan rehabilitated. He thereby restrained him from doing anything too reprehensible to him. The informant also thought that, if Šāliḥ had held al-Ḥasan longer in custody, he would have released him in any case and treated him well. But in the matter of government secretaries, Šāliḥ was not content to sequester their wealth and that of their children. He went so far as to threaten their relatives and other near relations with sequestration of their wealth and extended his influence even over their hangers-on.

On the 13th of Ramadān of this year 255 (August 25, 869) the prison in Baghdad was breached. The Shakiriyyah and reserve soldiers (al-nāʿibah) in the city attacked Muḥammad b. Aws al-Balkhi.

An Account of [the] Events [of Ramadān 255]

The cause of these developments was the arrival in Baghdad of Muḥammad b. Aws,46 who was accompanying Sulaymān b. ʿAbdallāh
Muhammad was in charge of the army coming with Sulayman from Khurasan, in addition to the riffraff whom Sulayman had assembled while in al-Rayy but whose names were not recorded in the diwān of the central authorities in Iraq. Sulayman had been given no instructions concerning them. The prevailing practice for such recruits, however, was to pay those who accompanied him from Khurasan a rate of pay in Iraq equivalent to that paid to their like in Khurasan, to be drawn from the revenues of the [Iraqi] estates of heirs of the Tahirid family. Instructions were then sent to Khurasan concerning the matter, to arrange that the heirs there were compensated from the public treasury [in Khurasan] for what was paid out from their property in Iraq. When Sulayman b. 'Abdallāh arrived in Iraq, however, he discovered that the treasury of the heirs' property was depleted. Once this information was confirmed, 'Ubaydallāh b. 'Abdallāh b. Tahir had undertaken to transfer to his brother, Sulayman [responsibility for] the task to which he had been assigned. 'Ubaydallāh secured the amount accumulated in the coffers of the heirs of his father and grandfather while demanding payment...
of taxes in advance on immature crops. Payments\textsuperscript{54} from tax collectors were brought forward to a time when they were not yet due. Nevertheless, he managed to gather the entire amount required.

Thereafter ‘Ubaydallāh set out and established camp in al-Juwayth,\textsuperscript{55} which was situated on the eastern side of the Tigris. Later he crossed over to the western side. Thus Sulaymān found himself in dire straits as the Shākiriyyah and the non-Arab soldiers\textsuperscript{56} agitated for payment of their allotments. Sulaymān corresponded with Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Mu’tazz on the matter, estimating the amount of revenue required for these payments. He added an estimate as well for those who had accompanied him from Khurāsān. He instructed his secretary, Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kātib al-Khurāsānī, to deal with the matter. After some negotiations Sulaymān received a reply that funds under the control of the tax agents of the Sawād would be assigned to him,\textsuperscript{57} on condition of his assuming responsibility for their repayment. The funds would be for the pay of [troops] in Madinat al-Salām and the garrisons of the Sawād; they were not to meet needs of [Sulaymān’s] reserves or the troops accompanying them. Sulaymān was not able to get access to any of the funds. Ibn Aws, the riffraff, and his troops arrived, but the revenue was insufficient for his needs and the needs of those reserves who had anticipated receiving it. They thus found out about this situation and its harmful consequences to them.

The riffraff and others who had arrived in Baghdad with Sulaymān began to disturb the peace of the local neighborhoods, openly displaying foul behavior and attacking women, slaves (al-`abīd), and servants (al-ghilmān).\textsuperscript{59} They were able to assault these classes be-

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{Amwāl nujūm. Najm signifies the time when a payment falls due, hence also an installment.}
\footnote{The reading is uncertain, the name in manuscripts B and C being unpointed.}
\footnote{Ṭabari again employs the term al-jund here. See n. 27, above. It is, however, unclear whether he is referring to troops already stationed in Baghdad or to soldiers who accompanied Sulaymān.}
\footnote{Subbība lahu. Tasbīb was a form of direct payment made to soldiers either as a salary or as an assignment on a specific source of taxation. See Ībārī, Glossarium; cclxxxiv see also Bosworth, “Recruitment,” 75; Bosworth, “Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Khwārazmi on the Technical Terms of the Secretary’s Art,” 139–40.}
\footnote{On this term, pl. of ‘abd, see, EI\textsuperscript{1} s.v. “Abd.”}
\footnote{On the complex of meanings of this term, pl. of ghulām, see EI\textsuperscript{1} s.v. “Ghulām.” In the urban contexts of Sāmarrā and Baghdad the term may be rendered as “attendant, guard, servant, and page.” See also EI\textsuperscript{1} s.v. “Djaysh,” especially at 507, for the}
\end{footnotesize}
cause of their standing with the central authorities, and such behavior aroused against them the anger and fury of the people.

Now it happened that Sulaymān b. 'Abdallāh had developed a deep resentment against al-Ḥusayn b. Ismā'īl b. Ibrāhim b. Muṣ'ab b. Ruzayq because of the position granted him by 'Ubaydallāh b. 'Abdallāh, as well as the support and maintenance 'Ubaydallāh provided him. Sulaymān also resented al-Ḥusayn's separation from himself and his supporters. After al-Ḥusayn b. Ismā'īl had returned to Baghdad at the end of his appointment in charge of the non-Arab troops and the Shākiriyah on behalf of 'Ubaydallāh, Sulaymān imprisoned al-Ḥusayn's secretary in al-Matbaq and his chamberlain in the prison by the Syrian Gate. He also placed troops to guard the residence of al-Ḥusayn b. Ismā'īl under the command of Ibrāhim b. Ishāq b. Ibrāhim. Sulaymān had put this Ibrāhim in charge of the double bridge of Baghdad and the administrative districts (sg. ṭas-sūj) of Qatrabbul, Maskin, and al-Anbār. These were the very same duties that al-Ḥusayn b. Ismā'īl, on 'Ubaydallāh's behalf, had been responsible for previously.

Events transpired as they did in the wake of al-Muhtadi's accession to the caliphate with the revolt of the troops and the Shākiriyah in Madinat al-Salām and the outbreak of general unrest. During this period, Muḥammad b. Aws severely maltreated an inhabitant from Marv who was a partisan of the Shi'a. In Sulay-

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term "young soldier," which might at times also apply in these same contexts. For a contrasting usage, see n. 139, below.

60. One of the military commanders who had been in the service of Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir in Baghdad; he then served as one of 'Ubaydallāh's commanders. See Ṭabarī, III, 1664–68.

61. Built by the Caliph al-Mansūr, this prison is located by Le Strange in the southern part of the Round City at the intersection of roads leading to the al-Ḍarrah and al-Kūfah Gates. Le Strange, Baghdad, 27.

62. This prison, also built by al-Mansūr, was located by the Syrian Gate of the Round City. Le Strange, Baghdad, 130.

63. Jisrayn. From the use of this expression and from an earlier context (see Ṭabarī, III, 1663–64), it is possible to suggest that there existed a double pontoon bridge in Baghdad, even before the one known to have been erected in the mid-eleventh century. See Lassner, Topography, 173–76, 281 n. 6; and note 72, below.

64. These districts formed part of a larger suburban area to the north and west of Baghdad, extending as far as the Euphrates river. See Le Strange, Lands, 51; Le Strange, Baghdad, 50–51; Lassner, Topography, index, q.vv. On the ṭas-sūj, see Bosworth, "Abū 'Abdallāh," 140; F. Løkkegaard, Islamic Taxation, in the Classic Period, 164–65.
man's palace, Muḥammad administered to him three hundred brutal lashes and then imprisoned him at the Syrian Gate. It happened that the man was among al-Ḥusayn b. Ismāʿīl's inner circle. So when this unrest occurred, there was need of al-Ḥusayn b. Ismāʿīl, because of his fortitude and courage. The troops placed in charge of guarding his palace were removed, and he came out. His own troops, after having been distributed among the contingents of other army commanders, a large number of them being attached to the commander Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb, returned to him without orders.

It was reported that, when those who had been thus assigned to Ibn Abi Awn arrived at al-Ḥusayn's palace, he dispensed among them from his own resources ten dirhams for each foot soldier and a dinar for each horseman. After they thus returned to al-Ḥusayn, Ibn Abi Awn lodged a complaint regarding that, but no appointment or order regarding that was forthcoming.

The position remained the same, and the non-Arab soldiers and the Shākirīyyah clamored for the payment due to them upon the accession of the new caliph and for the remainder of their advance allotments. Arrangements for the distribution of their pay and their receipt of it had now passed again into the hands of al-Ḥusayn, along the same lines as in the days of ʿUbaydallāh b. ʿAbdallāh b. Ṭāhir. Al-Ḥusayn was continuously haranguing them about Muḥammad b. Abī Awn's behavior and that of those who had come with Suṭaymān, how these were trying to get their hands on the troops' money and keep it from them, until their hearts were filled with resentment.

On Friday the 13th of Ramadān (August 25, 869) a contingent of non-Arab troops and the Shākirīyyah assembled together with a crowd of the local populace. Under the cover of night they proceeded to the prison at the Syrian Gate, broke down its doors, and released most of the inmates, leaving behind only those criminals who were either too weak or sick or were loaded with fetters. Among those who managed to escape that night were a number belonging to the

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65. He had formerly been one of Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. Ṭāhir's commanders, and had been appointed by al-Muʿtazz in 252/866 to govern al-Baṣrah, Yamāmah, and al-Baḥrayn. See Taʾbari, III, 1658.
family of Musāwir b. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd the Khārijite.67 The man from Marv who had been maltreated by Muhammad b. Aws was also set free. So too was a group of those to whom the central authorities had sent some fifty million68 before being captured.69

When people went out on Friday morning, they found the prison gates opened. [The inmates] who could walk away did so; for those who were unable to walk riding animals were hired. They milled about without let or hindrance. This was one of the most significant events that caused both the privileged and the common people to lose any fear they had of Sulaymān b. ‘Abdallāh. Finally, the doors of the prison at the Syrian Gate were sealed with bricks and clay. No indication was known of any action whatsoever taken that night on the part of Ibrāḥīm b. Iṣḥāq70 or any of his associates. It was rumored among the people that the person suspected of planning the assault on the prison was someone acting on behalf of, and in order to release, the man from Marv whom Ibn Aws had badly beaten.

Scarcely five days had elapsed after these events when Ibn Aws quarreled with al-Ḥusayn b. Iṣmāʿīl over the matter of paying the reserve forces. Ibn Aws wanted the money for his own troops, but al-Ḥusayn would have none of it. Foul words were exchanged between them, and Muḥammad [Ibn Aws] departed livid with anger. The next morning he set out for Sulaymān’s palace; al-Ḥusayn b. Iṣmāʿīl and al-Shāh b. Mikāl, a mawla of Tāhir,71 did likewise. Among the

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67. Musāwir was one of the dihqāns of al-Bawāzīj, a town in the eastern part of the Jazīrah area, on the bank of the Lesser Zāb river (see Le Strange, Lands, 91). Tābari calls him a Khārijite (muḥakkim, meaning “one who asserts there is no judgment, hukm, but God’s,” a known Khārijite principle) where he notes the commencement of his rebellion in Rajab 253 (July 7–August 5, 876). Here, as in all later references, Tābari refers to him as al-Shārī, literally, “seller,” a Khārijite term meaning “one who sells his soul for the cause of God,” echoing Qur’ān 2:203.

68. Khamsin alf alf. The text does not mention to what the figure refers; indeed, the copyist may have inadvertently repeated the alf (thousand) and the figure intended may have been fifty thousand.

69. The translation of this last sentence is tentative; the entire passage is quite obscure.

70. This incident appears to have been the sequel to an earlier clash in Baghdad between the mob and the clients of Iṣḥāq b. Ibrāḥīm, who sided with Tāhir b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh against Muḥammad’s brother ‘Ubaydallāh in what was a petty interfamily squabble. See Tābari, III, 1691–92.

71. Al-Shāh b. Mikāl had been one of Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh b. Tāhir’s loyal commanders in Baghdad. He had a brother Muḥammad who was a commander in the service of another member of the Tāhirid family and who was killed in 250/864–65.
crowd gathered in front of Sulaymân’s residence some of Ibn Aws’s troops were engaged in loud, heated discussion with the reserves. Then the troops of Ibn Aws and the newcomers [from Khurāsān] hastened across to the island,72 followed by Ibn Aws himself and his sons. Men summoned one another to arms. Al-Ḥusayn b. Ismā‘īl, al-Shāh b. Mikāl, and al-Muẓaffar b. Sayyāl73 departed with their own troops, and the men called to the mob, “Join us, those who want to plunder!” It is said that during the day some hundred thousand of the populace crossed over the double bridge (al-jisrayn) of boats.74 The non-Arab troops and the Shakirīyyah arrived at the island armed, followed by the vanguard of the populace. Suddenly a man from Sarākhṣ attacked the eldest son of Muḥammad b. Aws and stabbed him, knocking him from the shihri horse he was riding. He received sword wounds while his supporters fled without raising a finger. Lying there injured, he was stripped clean and then dumped into a boat and carried across the river to the palace of Sulaymân b. ‘Abdallāh b. Ĥāhir, where he was left.

Someone who was present with Sulaymân at the time reported that, when Sulaymân saw the wounded man, his eyes filled with tears. A bed was prepared for him, and he was attended by physicians. Ibn Aws left immediately for his residence in a palace belonging to the family of Ahmad b. Šāliḥ b. Shirzād.75 This was situated in the quarter of al-Dūr,76 adjacent to the palace of Ja‘far b. Yahyā b. [1731]
The Caliphate of Ibn al-Wâthiq

Khâlid b. Barmak. The troops of Baghdad searched everywhere for them, along with the military commanders, until at last they were found. Fighting broke out between the two sides in al-Dûr, which lasted from about two in the afternoon until seven in the evening. Each side fired arrows at the other, tossed spears, and attacked with their swords. Ibn Aws was supported by his neighbors from the Qaṭūṭā market and boatmen from among the skiffs of al-Dûr. Fighting intensified until the Baghdâdî troops sent for some naphtha throwers from Sulaymân’s palace; but, when his chamberlain informed him of this, he forbade their use. Ibn Aws himself fought tenaciously until he was overcome by wounds from arrows and spear thrusts, at which point he and his troops were defeated. He had managed to evacuate his family from the palace, but the troops followed them until they were expelled beyond the Shammâsiyyah Gate. Ibn Aws’s residence was then ransacked of all its contents. It was reported that the value of its goods amounted to two million dirhams, or at least one million fifty thousand dirhams. The plunder included a hundred pantaloons lined with sable, beside those lined with camel or goat hair, which resembled the others. Furnishings of Tâbaristân silk, together with brocade material and rich vestments to the value of a million dirhams, were also taken. The crowd then left, as the regular soldiers began to throng the palace of Sulaymân, bringing with them their booty and creating a great clamor. No one restrained or checked their passage.

Meanwhile, Ibn Aws remained that night in the Shammâsiyyah quarter with those of his troops who had stuck by him. The Baghdâdî troops next took to attacking the dwellings where the riffraff from al-Rayy were quartered. They plundered their dwellings and dealt harshly with any of the inhabitants who happened to linger be-

77. On the Barmakids, the famous family of viziers who dominated the political scene during the first decade of the rule of the Caliph Hârûn al-Rashid (170–80/786–96), see EI, 3 s.v. “Barâmika”; and Sourdel, Vizirat, I, 127–81. When the family suddenly fell from favor, Já’far, who had been Hârûn’s closest companion, was murdered. See EI, 1 s.v. “Dja’far b. Yahyâ.”

78. Ahi Baghdâd. Here and several times in the following lines the expression is used; it literally means “people” or “populace,” and Tâbari could be using it deliberately in a somewhat pejorative sense.

79. See Lassner, Topography, 105.


81. Ša’dilik. See n. 48, above.
hind. Having been suddenly forced to flee, not one of them appeared openly in Baghdad the following day.

It was reported that during the same evening Sulaymān sent clothing, furnishings, and food to Ibn Aws. There is, however, disagreement as to whether he accepted them or sent them back.

The next morning al-Ḥusayn b. Ismāʿīl and al-Muẓaffar b. Saysal went to the palace of al-Šāh b. Mikāl, where they were joined by some of the leading Shākiriyyah, the reserves (al-nāʾibah), and others. They remained there, avoiding contact with Sulaymān b. ʿAbdallāh b. Ṭāhir. Indeed, his palace was practically deserted, only a handful of persons were present. Sulaymān sent word to them with Muḥammad b. Naṣr b. Ḥamzah b. Mālik al-Khuzaʿī,82 who was unaware of what agreement they had come to. This Muḥammad was to let them know that their behavior toward Muḥammad b. Aws was shameful and to instruct them in what was due him because of his honor and reputation. If they would apprise Muḥammad of what it was about Ibn Aws that they rejected, then progress could be made to rectify the situation in a manner satisfactory to them all.

At this the Shākiriyyah who were present in the palace of al-Šāh b. Mikāl raised a great hue and cry. They said, "We refuse to accept any clientship"83 with Ibn Aws or with any of his men or with the riffraff who have been assigned to him." Moreover, if anyone were to attempt to force them to do so against their will, they would conclude their own agreement, forsaking Ibn Aws and repudiating anyone who demanded their compliance to him. Al-Šāh b. Mikāl, al-Ḥusayn b. Ismāʿīl, and al-Muẓaffar b. Saysal reluctantly supported them. The messenger returned to Sulaymān with this information. Sulaymān sent him back on another matter and assured them that he was confident of their word and guarantee, without requiring oaths or formal pledges. Thereafter he retired in a dignified fashion.

Nevertheless, Sulaymān continued to regard Muḥammad b. Aws, the riffraff, and others of his crowd of hangers-on as an unwelcome nuisance. He was well aware of their covetousness and corrupt behavior and the fact that Muḥammad b. Aws prized himself so highly, in addition to his passion for meddling in anything that might insti-
gate dissension and division. Sulaymān’s musing upon these concerns led him to exaggerate greatly their import, to the point where he confessed that in his prayers he had been driven to plead for reprieve from Muḥammad b. Aws. Finally, he turned to Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Ṭāhir and ordered him to go to Muhammad b. Aws and present him with the decision that he must return to Khurāsān. He was to inform him as well that there was no way for him to return to Madinat al-Salām or to handle the affairs that he had been entrusted with on Sulaymān’s behalf.

When the news reached Muḥammad b. Aws, he left al-Shammasiyyah for Raqqat al-Baradān, situated on the Tigris. For some days he remained there while he reassembled those of his troops who had become dispersed. From Raqqat al-Baradān he moved to al-Nahrawān, where he established his camp and settled. He had written to Bāyakbāk and Ṣāliḥ b. Waṣīf, submitting his grievances to them at the way he had been treated. But he found no satisfaction from them.

Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (al-Kātib al-Khurāsānī) had stayed behind in Sāmarrā to carry out Sulaymān’s orders. Muḥammad loathed Ibn Aws and completely avoided him, while Ibn Aws, for his part, was greatly disturbed by the hostile presence of the secretary Muhammad b. ‘Īsā. So, when Ibn Aws and his troops were deprived of material support, they began to prey upon villagers and travelers, the attacks and plundering becoming more frequent until Ibn Aws settled in al-Nahrawān.

It was reported from someone whom Ibn Aws’s troops had gone off to plunder and who had reminded them of the afterlife and tried to instill in them a fear of God that they had replied to him, “If plunder and murder are acceptable in Madinat al-Salām, the shrine of Islam, and the renowned seat of the caliph, why should anyone disapprove of such things in the countryside and deserts?” After leaving the

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84. Another of the Ṭāhirid clan, he was last mentioned by Tabari, III, 1533, as unsuccessfully engaged in suppressing a Shi’ite revolt in al-Rayy in 250/864–65.
85. A town located to the north of Baghdad. Raqqah is the term for the swampy terrain beside a river that is subject to periodic inundation. See Le Strange, Lands, 59, 101.
86. This town was the first stage eastward out of Baghdad along the great Khurāsān Road.
87. Bāyakbāk had been one of the military chiefs and special bodyguard of the Turkish commander Bughā, from whom he later (in 254/868) became estranged. Tabari, III, 1694–95.
marks of his rapacious behavior on the district, Ibn Aws departed from al-Nahrawān. He relieved the populace of money and food, which he had transported by boat from al-Nahrawān to Iskāf Bani Junayd\textsuperscript{88} to sell there.

Muḥammad b. al-Muzaffar b. Sayṣal was in al-Madāʾin\textsuperscript{89} at the time he heard of Ibn Aws's arrival in al-Nahrawān. Fearing for his own safety because of his father's presence and role in the battle [against Ibn Aws], Muḥammad made for his residence in al-Nuʾmāniyyah in the district of the Zābs.\textsuperscript{90}

Muḥammad b. Naṣr b. Maṃṣūr b. Bassām, whose estate was in ‘Abartā,\textsuperscript{91} reported that his agent had fled the place after having given Ibn Aws, under duress and from fear of death, nearly fifteen hundred dinars. Ibn Aws remained in the district, coming and going, behaving in turns with closed fist and open hand, alternating severity with lenience. His campaign of intimidation lasted until he received a communication from Bāyakbāk granting him, on his behalf, control of the Khurāsān Road. The lapse of time between Ibn Aws's departure from Madinat al-Salām and the arrival of this letter of appointment was two months and fifteen days.

One of the sons of ʿĀṣim b. Yūnus al-ʿIjli reported that his father had been made steward of the estates belonging to al-Nūshurī\textsuperscript{92} in the district of the Khurāsān Road. He wrote to al-Nūshurī, mentioning what he had been able to learn of the strength of Ibn Aws's forces and the apparent state of their matériel. He advised that this information should be passed on to Bāyakbāk, describing as well the absence along the Khurāsān Road of any of the central authority's forces to control it and protect the people. Moreover, the army [of Ibn Aws] was already encamped in the district with infantry, equipment, and supplies.

\textsuperscript{88} Also known simply as Iskāf, this location was east of Baghdad on the Nahrawān canal. See Le Strange, \textit{Lands}, 59–60.

\textsuperscript{89} Located on the Tigris to the south of Baghdad, al-Madāʾin had been known as Ctesiphon under the Sāsānian emperors. See Le Strange, \textit{Lands}, 25, 32–35.

\textsuperscript{90} Situated on the western bank of the Tigris, al-Nuʾmāniyyah was about halfway between Baghdad and Wāsīṭ and thus farther to the south, away from the threat of Ibn Aws in al-Nahrawān. See Le Strange, \textit{Lands}, 37.

\textsuperscript{91} See Le Strange, \textit{Lands}, 59. The name means "crossing place" marked by a bridge of boats.

\textsuperscript{92} He was one of ʿṢāliḥ b. Waṣīf's commanders (see p. 71, below) and was also married to his sister (see p. 90, below).
Al-Nushuri mentioned these matters to Bayakbāk, advising him to appoint Ibn Aws over the Khurāsān Road, thus reducing the burden upon the central government. Bayakbāk accepted this advice and ordered Ibn Aws to be contacted by letter regarding it. He was entrusted with the Khurāsān Road in Dhū al-Qa‘dah of the year 255 (October 11 – November 9, 869).

Mūsā, the deputy of the Khārijite Musāwir b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, was stationed in al-Daskarah93 and its environs with around three hundred men. Musāwir had placed him in charge of the area from Bāb Ḥulwān up to al-ġus94 on the Khurāsān Road and Bāṭn Jūkhā,95 together with the nearby administrative districts of the Sawād.

During the course of this year al-Muhtadi banished the male and female singers96 from Sāmarrā. He exiled them to Baghdad after an order to this effect had been submitted from Qabīḥah. This was before misfortune had befallen her son. Al-Muhtadi had also ordered that the lions that were kept in the caliphal palace be killed, that the dogs be cast out, and that all frivolous entertainments cease. He reintroduced the court of appeals (maẓālim),97 and he himself sat and heard the cases of the commoners. During his reign all the domains of Islam were beset by faction and fighting.

Mūsā b. Bughā,98 his mawlās, and troops of the central authorities set out from al-Rayy, while Muflih99 departed from Ṭabāristān after his arrival there. This Muflih vanquished al-Ḥasan b. Zayd100 and drove him from Ṭabāristān into the land of al-Daylam.

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93. Also Daskarat al-Mālik; it was the next station after al-Nahrawān on the Khurāsān Road, northeast of Baghdad. See Le Strange, Lands, 62.
94. A stage on the road between Wāṣīṭ and Ahwāz in the province of Khūzistān. See Le Strange, Lands, 82.
95. Located in the district of Wāṣīṭ. See Le Strange, Lands, 42.
96. For a contemporary description of this profession, to which the Caliph objected, see Jāḥiz, The Epistle on Singing Girls.
97. A form of justice of last resort, derived from the absolute authority of the sovereign and from his fundamental competence to deal with all litigation and to right all wrongs. See Sourdel, Vizirat, II, 640–49, for details of its functioning in this period. More generally, see Emile Tyan “Judicial Organization,” 109–17.
98. The son of the famous Turkish army commander Bughā al-Sharābī. Mūsā was also the brother-in-law of Šāliḥ b. Wāsīf. See Taḥbīrī, III, 1694.
99. Muflih was one of Mūsā b. Bughā’s commanders. See Taḥbīrī, III, 1687.
100. In the account of events at the beginning of this year, 255/868–69, Taḥbīrī narrates Muflih’s defeat of the Shi‘ah rebel al-Ḥasan b. Zayd in Ṭabāristān, thus driving him into an alliance with the Daylamites. Muflih also destroyed al-Ḥasan’s residences in Āmul and then set out against him in Daylam. See Taḥbīrī, III, 1688.
An Account of Mūsā’s Departure

It is reported that, when Qabīḥah, the mother of al-Muʿtazz, became aware of the Turks’ unrest and was incensed by their behavior, she communicated with Mūsā b. Bughā, asking him to come and support her. She had hoped that he would arrive before events took the course they did, involving herself and her son, al-Muʿtazz. Mūsā resolved to set out to help her. Qabīḥah’s letter had arrived while Mufliḥ was in Ṭabaristān, and Mūsā wrote to him ordering him to join him in al-Rayy.

One of our acquaintances from Ṭabaristān informed me that Mufliḥ had received Mūsā’s letter when he had already set out for the region of al-Daylam to hunt down al-Ḥasan b. Zayd al-Ṭālibī. When Mufliḥ received the letter, he returned to his point of departure, much to the distress of a group of notables from Ṭabaristān. They were fleeing from al-Ḥasan b. Zayd before Mufliḥ came to their aid. They thus expected Mufliḥ’s arrival would settle the problem of al-Ḥasan b. Zayd and enable them to return to their towns and homes. Mufliḥ had indeed promised to pursue al-Ḥasan b. Zayd wherever he was, until he either defeated him or was himself vanquished. According to the account I heard, Mufliḥ had boasted to them that, if he tossed his cap down anywhere in al-Daylam, none of Ibn Zayd’s followers would have the courage to come near it. But when the notables of Ṭabaristān saw him returning from his expedition without any of al-Ḥasan’s [captured] army, indeed not even a single Daylamite, they demanded to know the reason for his failure to fulfill his promise to pursue Ibn Zayd. According to what I was told, they went on speaking to him, while he seemed confused and perplexed and failed to answer their queries. When they persisted, Mufliḥ said, “I have received a despatch from the commander, Mūsā, insisting that his instructions be carried out and for me to join him at once. Although I am concerned to settle matters uppermost in your minds, there is no way of disobeying the commander.”

Mūsā had not completed his preparations to leave al-Rayy for Sāmarrā when he received a despatch concerning the death of al-Muʿtazz and the establishment of al-Muḥtadī as caliph. Because he could not now attain what he had hoped for from al-Muʿtazz, Mūsā’s resolve to leave for Sāmarrā was dampened. When he received the news that al-Muḥtadī had been rendered the oath of allegiance, his

Later, the mawlās in Mūsā’s army learned of Šāliḥ b. Waṣīf’s extraction of money from the secretaries and supporters of al-Mu’tazz and al-Mutawakkil. They begrudged the enjoyment of this money by the troops stationed in Sämarra, and they urged Mūsā to depart with them for the city. Muṣliḥ then joined Mūsā at al-Rayy, having left Ṭabaristān to al-Ḥasan b. Zayd.

Al-Qāshānī reported that his cousin wrote to him from al-Rayy, mentioning that he had met Muṣliḥ there and had enquired of him his reasons for departing from al-Daylam. Muṣliḥ said that the mawlās had refused to stay and that, when they left, he was unable to manage without them.

On Sunday, at the time of the new moon in Ramadān 255 (August 13 – September 11, 869), Mūsā demanded the collection of the tax (kharāj)101 for the year 256 (December 9, 869 – November 29, 870). According to reports, he raised that day five hundred thousand dirhams.

The inhabitants of al-Rayy assembled and said to him: “May God honor the commander! You claim that the mawlās wish to return to Sämarra because they have the prospect of greater pay there, while you and your troops here are better off than the troops there. If you desire to [continue] manning this frontier post102 and expect your reward to come from its people, and impose on us as taxes on our private property whatever you think we can bear from which to pay your followers, then you should do so.” But Mūsā did not comply with their requests. However, they persisted; “May God guide the commander. If he has decided to leave us, what is the sense of extracting the taxes (kharāj) for an agricultural year in which we have not even begun cultivation? Moreover the bulk of the crop of this current year upon which the commander has levied taxes is situated in open areas (ṣahārā), to which we would not have access after he had departed from us.” But Mūsā paid no attention to any of their arguments or requests.

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101. See El, s.v. “Kharāj,” for details on the perception of this tax and the method of collecting it; cf. Levy, Social Structure, 309–16.
102. This is, at al-Rayy.
Now, when al-Muhtadi received word of Mūsā’s imminent departure, he sent several letters to him which made no impression. When he heard that Mūsā was actually on his way from al-Rayy, without al-Muhtadi’s despatches having had any effect, the caliph sent two men of the Banū Hāshim bearing a message for Mūsā and for those mawlās attached to his army. They were to state frankly to the arrivals the true situation in the capital, the lack of resources there, and the general apprehension that what they left behind would be lost and that Tālibīs would take control of it and their influence spread to the territory of al-Jabal. One of these Hāshimites was called ‘Abd al-$amād b. Mūsā, and the second was Abū 'Īsā Yahyā b. Ishāq b. Mūsā b. 'Īsā b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abbās. The two men, with a number of mawlās, set out to fulfill their commission, as Mūsā and those accompanying him approached. Meanwhile Šāliḥ b. Waṣīf made much of Mūsā’s departure with al-Muhtadi, attempting to ascribe to him dissent and rebellion. Indeed, he imputed far worse than this to him and declared before God his own innocence of anything Mūsā did.

A despatch from the master of the post (ṣāhib al-barid) in Hadadhān concerning Mūsā’s departure from there reportedly reached al-Muhtadi. Al-Muhtadi raised his hands to the sky and, after expressing his thanks to God and extolling Him, he exclaimed, “O God! Before You I am free of any guilt for the actions of Mūsā b. Bughā and his neglect of the defense of the frontier and his leaving it open to the enemy. I am absolved of any bonds between us. O God! Remove the artifice of (this) deceiver of Muslims. O God! Make the armies of Muslims victorious wherever they may be. O God! Wherever Muslims are afflicted, I shall freely venture forth with a firm resolve and give them support and defend them. O God! Reward my

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103. The Banū Hāshim were kinsmen of the Prophet Muḥammad by common descent from Hāshim, his great-grandfather. During the ‘Abbāsid period they enjoyed certain privileges, such as pensions paid by the state, exemption from payment of the alms tax, and having a special magistrate appointed by the caliph to attend their affairs. See EI, s.v. “Hāshimid.”

104. That is, the Shi’ite rebels led by al-Hasan b. Zayd.

105. Literally, “the mountains,” referring to the mountainous region stretching from the Mesopotamian plain on the west to the large desert region of Persia on the east. See Le Strange, Lands, 185.

106. The master of the post also fulfilled the function of intelligence officer, gathering, and sending information to his superiors. See EI, s.v. “Barid.”
intention since I am deprived of effective supporters." He then broke into tears, weeping.

Someone who was present at al-Muhtadi's assemblies reported what he had said on this particular occasion. Sulaymān b. Wahb was also present and he asked, "Is the Commander of the Faithful ordering me to write to Mūsā what I have heard?" Al-Muhtadi replied that this was so, saying, "If you could engrave my words in stone, then [I would tell you to] do so!"

The two Hāshimite messengers met with Mūsā on the road [to Sāmarrā], but without achieving anything. The mawlas began to clamor and nearly set upon the envoys. Mūsā replied to the caliph's communique, presenting as his excuse that his troops would fail to pay any attention to what he said to them before reaching the Commander of the Faithful's court. Were he to try to go against them, he would not feel safe from them, and he adduced in his defense what the envoys themselves had witnessed. The messengers arrived with the reply, Mūsā having sent with them a delegation from his army. They reached Sāmarrā on the 4th of al-Muḥarram, 256 (December 12, 869).

In this same year Kanjur left 'Ali b. al-Ḥusayn b. Quraysh. In the days of al-Muʿtazz he had been banished to Fārs, where 'Ali b. al-Ḥusayn was placed in charge of him and imprisoned him. After 'Ali had decided to wage war against Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth, he released Kanjur from prison and gave him command of cavalry and infantry. When 'Ali b. al-Ḥusayn's supporters were defeated, Kanjur escaped

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107. Sulaymān, one of a number of "Nestorian scribes" in the administration, was descended from a Christian family in Wāsit. Formerly secretary to the military commander Mūsā b. Bughā, he was briefly vizier under al-Muhtadi and again for brief intervals during 263–65/877–79 under al-Muʿtamid. See Sourdel, Vizirat I, 300–303, 310–13; El, s.v. "Sulaymān b. Wahb."

108. Kanjur was the chamberlain (bāji) of al-Muʿtazz's brother Ibrāhīm al-Muʿayyad at the time the Caliph imprisoned the two of them in the Jawṣaq palace in 252/866. Later Kanjur was sent in chains to Baghdad and was finally imprisoned in al-Yamāmah. See Ṭabarī, III, 1668–69.

109. The battle in which 'Ali b. al-Ḥusayn, another contemporary Shi'i rebel, was defeated occurred near Shirāz, and he was taken prisoner by Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth. See Ṭabarī, III, 1702–3.

The Events of the Year 255 (cont'd)

to the district of al-Ahwáz, where he made a considerable impact on Rámhrumuz. He then joined Ibn Abi Dulaf111 in Hamadhán, but he treated Waṣīf's112 dependents badly, as well as his estates and agents in the district. Next he joined the army of Mūsā (b. Bughā). When Mūsā approached Sāmarrā with the troops who had joined him, word of this reached Šālīh. On the authority of al-Muhtadi he sent instructions that Kanjur be brought to the caliph's palace bound in chains, but the mawlās refused to do this.

Communications on this matter continued to go back and forth until Mūsā's army reached and encamped in al-Qāṭul.113 It soon became apparent that Šālīh was nursing a deep dislike of Mūsā and that Mūsā had set out for Sāmarrā determined to avoid Šālīh and those who sympathized with him. Mūsā stayed in al-Qāṭul for two days, during which time Bāyakbāk joined his forces. Al-Muhtadi sent his brother on his mother's side, Ībrāhim, to tell Mūsā that the mawlās in Sāmarrā had unanimously refused to allow Kanjur to enter the city. The Caliph ordered Mūsā to place him in chains and take him to Madīnat al-Salām, but things did not turn out as Šālīh had anticipated. Mūsā's reply was that, when they entered Sāmarrā, they would obey whatever the Commander of the Faithful ordered regarding Kanjur or anyone else.

The First 'Alawite Rebellion in al-Baṣrah114

In the middle of Shawwāl of the year 255 (September 10–October 8, 869) a man who claimed to be 'Ali b. Muḥammad b. Āḥmad b. 'Alī b. Īsā b. Zayd b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭalib115 appeared in Furāt al-Baṣrah.116 He assembled his forces from among the Zanj,117

[1742]

111. See Ṭabarî, III, 1605.
112. The Turkish commander, killed in 253/867, he was the father of Šālīh. See Ṭabarî, III, 1687.
113. In the vicinity of Sāmarrā. See Yāqūt, Muṣ'jam al-buldān, III, 174; Yaʿqūbī, Kitāb al-buldān, 256.
115. See Popovic, Révolte, 71–81; El, s.v. “‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Zandji.” See also Masʿūdī, Murūj, VIII, 31–33.
116. See Yāqūt, Muṣ'jam, III, 861–62; El, s.v. “al-Furāt.”
117. The word is not Arabic, and, although its plural is zunūj, the expression is used here in its collective sense to refer to a class of people. See Popovic, Révolte, 54–56, for a discussion of the origin of the word. The generally accepted view of the origin of the Zanj is that they were blacks imported from East Africa at a time that
who labored in removing the nitrous topsoil (sibākh)\textsuperscript{118} of the marshland districts. Thereafter he crossed over the Tigris river and established himself in al-Dinārī.\textsuperscript{119}

An Account of \textquote[\textit{Baḥrīn}]{\textit{Alī b. Muḥammad b. \textit{Abd al-Rahīm}'s}} Expedition and What Determined Him to Revolt There

According to reports, his name and his origin were \textquote[\textit{Alī b. Muḥammad b. \textit{Abd al-Rahīm}]\textit{Alī b. Muḥammad b. \textit{Abd al-Rahīm}},\textsuperscript{120} and he was descended from the \textquote[\textit{Abd al-Qays}]\textquote[\textit{Abd al-Qays}]. His mother's name was Qurrah, a daughter of \textquote[\textit{Ali b. Raḥīb}]\textquote[\textit{Ali b. Raḥīb}]. Muḥammad b. Ḥakīm of the Banū Asad b. Khuzaymah, who were inhabitants of a village in the vicinity of al-Rayy called Warzanīn, where \textquote[\textit{Ali}]\textquote[\textit{Ali}] was born and grew up.

\textquote[\textit{Ali}]\textquote[\textit{Ali}] himself was reported to have said: "My ancestor Muḥammad b. Ḥakīm of al-Kūfah was one of those who took part in a rebellion against [the Caliph] Hīshām b. \textquote[\textit{Abd al-Malik}]\textquote[\textit{Abd al-Malik}] with Zayd b. \textquote[\textit{Ali}]\textquote[\textit{Ali}] b. al-Ḥusayn.\textsuperscript{121} But, when Zayd was slain, Muḥammad fled to al-Rayy, and finding refuge in Warzanīn, he remained there." \textquote[\textit{Ali}]\textquote[\textit{Ali}]'s paternal grandfather, \textquote[\textit{Abd al-Rahīm}]\textquote[\textit{Abd al-Rahīm}], who was of the \textquote[\textit{Abd al-Qays}], was born in al-Tilīgān.\textsuperscript{122} He went to Iraq and took up residence there and bought himself a concubine from Sind. She gave birth in Iraq to a son, Muḥammad, who was the father of our \textquote[\textit{Ali}].\textsuperscript{123}
Earlier in Sāmarrā‘Ali was associated with a group attached to the family of the Caliph al-Muntaṣir, among them Ghānim al-Shiṭranji (the Chessplayer), Sa‘īd the Younger, and Yusr the Eunuch.124 ‘Ali derived his livelihood from them and from some of the Caliph’s entourage and secretaries, seeking their favor by praising them in poetry.125

In the year 249/863–64, he reportedly left Sāmarrā for al-Bahrayn. There he claimed that his genealogy was as follows: ‘Ali b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḍāl b. Ḥasan b. ‘Ubaydallāh b. al-ʿAbbās b. ‘Ali b. Abi Ṭālib.126 At Hajar he summoned people to obey him, and a large number did so. However, others refused to do so. As a result, violent partisanship between them led to a number in each camp being killed. In the wake of these events ‘Ali left Hajar and moved to al-Āhsā’.127 There he took refuge with a section of the Banū Tamīm, a branch of the Banū Sa‘d128 called the Banū al-Shammās, among whom he made his residence. The people of Bahrayn had regarded him as a prophet, so much so indeed that, according to report, taxes were collected in his name. He exercised judicial authority over them, and on his behalf they fought against the supporters of the central authorities. A substantial number, on the other hand, were afraid and, becoming embittered against him, caused him to withdraw into the desert. Even then, many in Bahrayn joined him. Among them was a man from al-Āhsā’, a grain weigher (kayyāl) called Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad al-Azraq, but known simply as al-Bahrini, who was a mawlā of the Banū Dārim.129 Another was Yaḥyā b. Abi Tha‘lāb, a merchant from Hajar. There was also a black mawlā130 of the Banū

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124. These three figures remain unidentified.
125. Popovic notes in Révolte, 74, that a later source, Ibn Abī al-Ḥadid (d. 655/1257), in Sharḥ nāḥi al-balāghah, adds that ‘Ali also earned his living teaching children the arts of writing, grammar, and astronomy.
126. See reference n. 123, above.
127. See El, 1’s.v. “al-Ḥasa.”
129. These were descendants of Dārim b. Mālik b. Ḥanẓalāh, a segment of the Banū Tamīm.
130. Mawlā aswād. See n. 4, above.
Hanżalah named Sulaymān b. Jāmi‘. This latter was a commander of ‘Ali’s army. Thus ‘Ali moved about in the desert, from one tribe to another.

It was reported that ‘Ali used to say: “In the course of this period I received signs of my leadership as imām, which were manifest to the people.” According to his own account, among such signs was this one: “I received sūrah of the Qur‘ān, which I had not learned by heart, and yet I was able to recite them in a flash. They included Subḥān, al-Kahf, and Ṣād.” He continued: “A further example was the time I was lying down, musing about the place I should be heading for to set up residence. The thought of the desert and its recalcitrant inhabitants dejected me, but then a cloud cast a shadow upon me; thunder crackled and lightning flashed. A thunderclap resounded in my ears, and a voice addressed me saying, ‘Head for al- Başrah.’ I said to my companions who were assisting me, ‘A voice from the thunder has commanded me to go to al- Başrah.’”

According to report, when ‘Ali had gone into the desert he caused people to believe that he was Abū al-Husayn Yahyā b. ‘Umar, who had been slain in the neighborhood of al-Kūfah. There he deceived some of them, and, as a consequence, a great many joined his ranks. He then made his way with them toward a place in al-Baḥrayn called al-Radm. A major battle broke out among them, which swung against ‘Ali and his troops, and many were swiftly killed. The Arab tribesmen abandoned him in disgust and renounced any association with him. Once the tribesmen had left, ‘Ali found the desert wearisome, and he next set out for al-Baḥrah and settled among the Banū  Ḍubay‘ah. A group of them joined him there, among them ‘Ali b. Abān, known by the epithet of al-Muhallabī, included, too, were his brothers Muḥammad and al-Khalīl and others. ‘Alī arrived in al- Başrah in the year 254/868 at the time when Muḥammad b. Rajā‘ al-Ḥiḍārī was the Caliph’s governor there. His arrival also coincided with the civil disturbances between the two rival Baṣran factions of al-Sa‘diyyah and al-Bilāliyyah. ‘Ali’s ambition was to secure the

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131. Sūrah 18, 38, and 17(1), respectively.
132. This apparently occurred during the reign of the Caliph al-Musta‘īn. See Popovic, Révolte, 75.
133. See Yāqūt, Mu‘jam, II, 774.
134. Precise identification of these two factions, who appear at a number of points in the story of the Zanj operations in al-Baṣrah, has proven elusive.
support of one of the factions. Thus he commissioned four of his associates, with whom he had been in league in al-Baḥrayn and who had campaigned on his behalf. Their names were Muḥammad b. Salm al-Qaṣṣāb al-Hajarī, Buraysh al-Qurayṣi, ʿAlī al-Ḍarrāb, and al-Ḥusayn al-Ṣaydanānī; they proclaimed their revolt in the ʿAbbād mosque. 135 No one, however, responded to the appeal. Indeed, some soldiers chanced upon them, and they were forced to disperse without having won anyone over. ʿAli fled al-Ǧaṣrah, with Ibn Rajāʿ in search of him, albeit in vain. Ibn Rajāʿ was informed of a number of Baṣrans who sympathized with Ali, and he had them arrested and imprisoned.

Among those jailed were Yaḥyā b. Abī Thaʿlab, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Iyādī, and the eldest son of the Zanj leader himself, ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Akbar, together with his wife, the mother of their son, and another daughter of his and a pregnant servant girl. ʿAlī, however, set out for Baghdad, accompanied by his associates Muḥammad b. Salm, Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad, Sulaymān b. Jāmīʿ, and Buraysh al-Qurayṣi.

When they had reached the marshlands (al-baṭīḥah)136 one of the mawlās of the Bāḥilis, 137 who administered the area, was on the lookout for them. His name was ʿUmayr b. ʿAmmār. He arrested them and conveyed them to the governor of Wāsīt, Muḥammad b. Abī ʿAwn. ʿAlī employed all his cunning and persuasion with Ibn Abī ʿAwn until at last he and his companions were released. From there ʿAlī traveled to Madinat al-Salām, where he remained for a year. While in Baghdad he claimed to be related to Ahmad b. ʿĪsā b. Zayd. 138 He alleged that during his sojourn in the city signs appeared to him, allowing him insight into the minds of his companions and what each of them was doing. He besought his Lord for some token

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135. See H. Halm, Die Traditionen über den Aufstand ʿAlī Ibn Muḥammad's, des “Herrn der Zang.” 44–49, where he notes that, apart from the Shiʿite character of the revolt, the Zanj leader's following was comprised almost exclusively of mawlas.

136. See EI, s.v. “al-Baṭiha.” The word, which frequently occurs in the plural, baṭīḥ, applied to a very extensive area of swampland located on the lower course of the Tigris and Euphrates between al-Ǧaṣrah and Wāsīt in the north and al-Ǧaṣrah, in the south. See also the articles in EI, s.vv. “al-Ǧurāṭ,” “Didjla,” Le Strange, “Ibn Serapion's Description of Mesopotamia and Baghdad,” 297–99.

137. On this ancient Arabian tribe, see EI, s.v. “Bāḥila.”

revealing the true state of his own situation, and he saw on a wall a message being written to him by an invisible hand.

One of his followers reported that, during his stay in Madinat al-Salām, 'Ali won over to his side a number of persons. Among them were Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣuhānī, who was a descendant of Zayd b. Ṣūhān, Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim, and two servants139 of Yaḥyā b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Khāqān,140 who were named Mushriq and Rafīq. He renamed Mushriq Ḥamzah and gave him his agnomen Abū Ahmad. Rafīq he renamed Ja'far, his agnomen becoming Abū al-Fadl.

During 'Ali's stay this year in Madinat al-Salām Muḥammad b. Rajā' was removed from his post in al-Baṣrah. When he left the leaders of the Bilāliyyah and Sa'diyyah factions responsible for the civil disorder attacked and opened the prisons, releasing all the inmates. When the news reached 'Ali that his family was among those freed, he departed for al-Baṣrah, returning there in the month of Ramadān 255 (August 11 – September 9, 869). Accompanying him was 'Ali b. Abān, who had joined up with him in Baghdad. Also with him were Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad, Muḥammad b. Salm, Sulaymān b. Jāmi', and the two servants (ghulāms) of Yaḥyā b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Mushriq, and Rafīq. A soldier called Abū Ya'qūb, who later adopted the sobriquet Jurbān, met with the other six, and they all set off together. Finally arriving at a place called Barankhal,141 they settled there in a castle called al-Qurashi,142 which was located on a canal called 'Amūd ibn al-Munajjim, as it was the Banū Mūsā b. al-Munajjim who had excavated it. Now 'Ali gave out that he was acting as an agent on behalf of one of [the Caliph] al-Wāthiq's sons, handling the sale of sibākh; he thus ordered his companions to treat him as such, and there he remained.

139. On the various meanings of the word ghulām (plural ghilmān) see EI, s.v. "Ghulām." The present narrative on the Zanj treats of a different context from that of the ruling circles in Baghdad or Sāmarrā, thus the renderings "attendant," "guard," "servant," and "page" are not always appropriate where the Zanj are concerned. See also EI, s.v. "Djaysh," especially p. 507, for the term "young soldier." In what follows relating to affairs of the Zanj, unless otherwise noted, the word ghulām is translated loosely as "slave." See n. 59, above.


141. The reading is uncertain. Halm, Traditionen, 76, adopts the reading Branhal.

142. Following Mas'ūdī, Murūj, VIII, 32, Popovic, Révolte, 78, locates al-Qurashi at a place called Bi'r Nakhl.
It was reported from Rayhān b. Sālih, one of the slaves (ghilmān) of the Shūrajyyin, who was the first of their number to join `Ali, that he said: "I was in charge of my master's slaves (ghilmān), transporting flour from al-Baṣrah to the Shūrajyyin and distributing it among them. I had conveyed a cargo to them as usual on the way passed by the place where `Ali was staying, that is, at Barankhal in the castle al-Qurashi, when his supporters seized me and took me to him. I was ordered to greet him as amīr, which I did. He asked me where I had come from, and I told him that I had come from al-Baṣrah. He asked whether I had heard any news about them in al-Baṣrah, and I replied that I had not. He then asked me if there was any news of al-Zaynabī, and I told him I knew nothing about him. Then he said: 'Tell me of the activities of the Bilāliyyah and Sa`diyyah factions.' I replied that I had no information on them either. Finally, he inquired whether I knew anything of the slaves of the Shūrajyyin and what each was doing in the business of transporting flour, sawīq, and dates and also about those among both the freedmen (al-aḥrār) and slaves (al-`abid) who worked in the salt steppe (shūraj). I told him what I knew of these matters. He appealed to me to join him, to which I agreed. He then said to me, 'Induce as many slaves as you can to join, and bring them to me.' He promised to extend various benefits to me and make me their commander. He also made me solemnly vow that I would not disclose his whereabouts to anyone and that I would return to him. He then allowed me to proceed on my way. I delivered the flour that I was carrying to its intended destination. I was away for the whole of that day and returned to Ali's camp the next morning.'

When I arrived Rafīq, the servant of Yahyā b. `Abd al-Rahmān, had also arrived at the camp. He had been sent to al-Baṣrah with

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143. Tabari, Glossarium, s.vv. shūrajī, k.s-h. The Shūrajyyin were blacks engaged in the removal of the nitrous topsoil (sibākh) in the marshland. Although it is admittedly impossible to determine whether this group was comprised exclusively of freedmen or slaves, I have adopted the view that both were to be found in their ranks, though with the exception of certain explicit contexts (for example, see nn. 146 and 156, below) I have preferred for the purposes of this translation to indicate their status as servile.

144. His full name was Abu Mansur `Abdallāh b. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Zaynabī, who will be noted on p. 752, below, leading a force of Baṣrans against the Zanj.

145. A prepared dish of parched barley meal often carried by travelers, as it can be reconstituted from its dried form by adding water or milk.

146. See n. 143, above.
some of his business goods. He arrived with Shibl b. Sālim, one of the slaves of the al-Dabbāsin,147 who had with him a piece of silk material, which 'Ali had commissioned him to purchase to have it made into a banner (liwā').148 Written upon it in red and green characters were the following words: "God has purchased the souls of believers and their property, for they have attained to paradise fighting in the way of God," to the end of the verse.149 'Ali's name and that of his father were also inscribed upon it, and the banner was fastened to the top of a barge pole.

In the early morning of Saturday, the 28th of Ramaḍān (September 9, 869), 'Ali set out from [the castle al-Qurashi]. When he had reached the farthest end of the castle precinct, some slaves of one of the Shūrajīyyin known as al-'Aţṭār met him as they were setting about their business. 'Ali ordered them to be seized, along with their agent, who was placed in fetters. They numbered in all some fifty slaves. 'Ali next proceeded to a place where al-Sanā'i worked, and there around five hundred slaves were seized, among them one who was known as Abū Ḥudayd. Their agent was likewise bound with fetters and taken along as well. The place where this occurred was called Nahr al-Mukāthir. 'Ali proceeded next to a place belonging to al-Sirāfī and captured there another one hundred fifty slaves, among them an individual called Zurayq and another known as Abu al-Khanjar. Then, at a place belonging to Ibn 'Atā', Ṭariq, Ṣubayḥ al-Aʿsar, Rāshid al-Maghribi, and Rāshid al-Qarmatī were captured along with eighty more slaves. The next place was that of Ismāʿīl, who was known as a slave of Sahl al-Ṭahhān. 'Ali continued to operate in this fashion all day until he had amassed a large number of the Shūrajīyyin slaves.

Assembling them together, 'Ali rose and addressed them, raising their spirits by promising to lead and command them and to give them possession of property. He swore a solemn oath to them that he would neither deceive nor betray them and that they would experience only kind treatment from him. 'Ali then summoned their

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147. Sellers of dibs, the juice pressed from fresh dates.
148. On the uses of banners and flags, see EI, s.v. "Alam."
149. Qurʾān 9:111. Although the symbolism of the Zanj revolt was 'Alid, this verse has associations with the early Khārijite rebels, who may have referred to themselves as al-Shūrāt [pl. of Shārī] "vendors," i.e., those who have sold their souls for the cause of God. See EI, s.v. "Khārijites."
masters and said to them: "I wanted to behead you all for the way you have treated these slaves, with arrogance and coercion and, indeed, in ways that Allah has forbidden, driving them beyond endurance. But my companions have spoken to me about you, and now I have decided to set you free."

They replied that the slaves were merely habitual runaways, who would flee from 'Ali [at the first opportunity], and then both he and they would be the losers. They said, "Turn them over to us, and let us pay you compensation for them." But 'Ali ordered their slaves to bring whips of palm branches and, while their masters and agents were prostrated on the ground, each one was given five hundred lashes. 'Ali extracted a vow from them, on penalty of having to repudiate their wives, that they would neither divulge his whereabouts to anyone nor reveal the size of his following. They were then released and sent on their way to al-Basrah.

One of their number, a man named 'Abdallāh and known as Karikhā, crossed over the Dujayl and warned the Shurajjyyin to guard their slaves carefully. There were some fifteen thousand there at the time.

After performing the afternoon prayer 'Ali ventured forth again, and upon reaching the bank of the Dujayl he found there boats laden with compost of dung and ashes (samād) entering port on the rising tide. Together with his partisans he traversed the river in them and then went on to the Nahr Maymūn. He established his quarters in the mosque situated in the middle of the market that stretched along the Nahr Maymūn. He continued efforts to gather blacks (aswād) to his camp right up to the time of the prayer breaking the fast of Ramadan (ṣalāt al-fitr). On the day of the celebration of the feast he summoned his followers to assemble for prayer. When they

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150. On the gravity of this oath, see El, s.v. "Ta'alah."
151. Or, in an alternative reading, Karankha.
152. Literally, "Little Tigris," but here referring to the river Dujayl in al-Ahwāz, in order to distinguish it from the Dujayl canal of the Tigris to the north of Baghdad. See Le Strange, Lands, 252.
153. Yāqūt, Mu'jam, IV, 719. The Arabic word nahr can mean both "river" and "canal," and it is not always possible to distinguish them, given the nature of the primary sources; here, however, the term means canal.
154. See El, s.v. "Abd." Although it is not entirely clear from Tābari's usage, the term aswād (pl. of aswad) may be intended by him as synonym for the Zanj.
had done so, the pole flying his banner was set into the ground. 'Ali prayed with them, and in a sermon (khuţbah) he recalled the wretched state from which, through him, God had rescued them. 'Ali said that he wanted to improve their condition, giving them slaves (al-'abid), money, and homes to possess for themselves, and that by them they could achieve the greatest things. He then swore a solemn oath, and when his prayer and sermon were complete he ordered those who had followed his words to instruct those non-Arabic speakers among them who had not understood, in order [also] to raise their spirits. That was done, and 'Ali entered the castle.

A day later he set out for Nahr Bûr, where a detachment of his troops encountered a detachment of the [commander] al-Ḥimyari and drove them off into the desert. The Zanj leader, accompanied by some more troops, joined forces with the others and defeated al-Ḥimyari and his troops, driving them back as far as the Tigris flats. One of the superintendents of the blacks, called Abû Ŝâlih and known as "the Short," sought protection for himself and three hundred Zanj. 'Ali graciously granted this and promised them good fortune. When the numbers of Zanj who had been thus gathered together increased significantly, he appointed leaders for them and said that, for each of them who brought another Zanj, he would be attached to him.

It is also said that 'Ali did not appoint his commanders until after the battle of slaves (al-khawâl) in Bayân and his move to Sabkhat al-Qandal.

155. El.2 s.v. "'Īd al-Fîr".
156. M. A. Shaban, Islamic History, II, 101, argues that 'Ali b. Muhammad's movement was not a slave revolt but rather an ethnic Zanj or black revolt. He notes that some of the first to fight against 'Ali were themselves employed in working the salt marshes [see, e.g., n. 163, below]. In his view there were only a few runaway slaves, the vast majority of rebels being Arabs, with the support of free East Africans who had made their homes in the region. Certainly the interpretation of these events rests upon one's understanding of such highly ambiguous words as ghulâm, sudân, 'abid, and khawal. Indeed Tabari himself is far from consistent in his use of the word ghulâm. In the present context 'Ali's words and actions clearly suggest that those he was dealing with at this stage of his movement were of a relatively depressed, if not entirely servile, condition. Popovic in his detailed study of the revolt is unable to commit himself firmly on the question, and the truth most likely lies somewhere between Shaban's interpretation and the earlier view represented by T. Nöldke in "A Servile War in the East."
157. See Lane, Lexicon, s.v. kh-w-l; n. 156, above.
158. A village situated on a canal of the same name was located on the eastern side
Ibn Abi `Awn was transferred from the governorship of Wāsiṭ to that of al-Ubullah and the districts of the Tigris. On the day that [`Ali b. Muḥammad] appointed his commanders news-reportedly reached him that al-Ḥimyari and `Aqil, along with Ibn Abi `Awn's deputy, who had been stationed in al-Ubullah, had advanced toward him and were encamped at Nahr Ṭin. `Ali ordered his troops to move to al-Raziqiyyah, which was located at the far side of al-Bādhāward. He reached there at the time of the midday prayer, which they performed and then prepared for battle. At the time where were only three swords in `Ali's so-called "army"—namely, his own, that of `Ali b. Abān, and that of Muḥammad b. Salm. Between the time of the midday and afternoon prayers, `Ali departed [from al-Raziqiyyah] with his troops and hastened back toward al-Muḥammadiyyah, placing `Ali b. Abān in their rear with orders to report on anyone following them. He himself proceeded at the head of the company [of blacks] until they reached al-Muḥammadiyyah. He sat by the water's edge and ordered the company to quench their thirst. When the troops arrived, `Ali b. Abān said to him that they had seen swords glistening and heard the sounds of people moving behind them but that they could not tell whether they were moving away or heading toward them. He was still speaking when the enemy arrived. The Zanj called one another to arms and Abū Ṣāliḥ Mufarraj al-Nubi hastened forth with Rayḥān b. Ṣāliḥ and Fath al-Ḥajjam. Fath had been eating [at the time], and so he went into the fray holding his plate. As his companions advanced, one of the Shūrajiyin called Bulbul encountered Fath, who attacked him with his plate and beat him with it, causing Bulbul to drop his weapon, turn, and flee. He and four thousand other men were put to flight, some being killed and others dying of thirst on the way. A number, too, were

of the Tigris estuary, on the way to al-Ahwāz. See Le Strange, "Ibn Serapion's Description," 307–9.

159. The salt flat (sabkha) situated by the Nahr al-Qandal (or al-Qandil), one of the nine major canals flowing into the estuary at al-Baṣrah. See Le Strange, "Ibn Serapion's Description," 304.

160. A town located between Wāsiṭ and al-Baṣrah. Yāqūt, Mu'jam, 1, 318, vocalizes the word Bādhāward.

161. Ibn Serapion speaks of a great lagoon (hawr) called al-Muḥammadiyyah, the largest one of four in the swampland (bata'īh) near al-Baṣrah. See Le Strange, "Ibn Serapion's Description," 197, 199.
taken captive and brought to the leader of the Zanj who ordered them beheaded. Their heads were stacked on the backs of mules seized from the Shūrajīyyīn, who had used them for transporting the nitrous topsoil (shūraj). The procession set out and reached al-Qādisiyyah by the time of the evening prayer. A *mawlā* of the Hāshimites attacked ‘Ali’s company outside the village and killed one of the blacks. The news was brought to ‘Ali, and his companions asked him for permission to sack the village and search for the culprit who had killed their comrade. He replied saying, “That would be impossible without our knowing what the villagers intended and whether the killer acted with their consent. We will ask them to deliver him to us. If they do so, fine, but, if not, then it would be lawful for us to slay them.”

‘Ali urged them to prepare quickly for departure, and they returned to Nahr Maymūn, where he established himself in the same mosque that he had initially used. He ordered the heads [of the Shūrajīyyīn] to be brought as well and publicly displayed. He instructed Abū Śāliḥ al-Nūbi to make the call to prayer. This he did, saluting ‘Ali as the *amīr*. Then ‘Ali prayed the late evening prayer with his companions and spent the night there. The following morning ‘Ali set out again, first passing by the [village] of al-Karkh, before arriving at a village called Jubba. It was the time of the midday prayer. He crossed over the Dujayl [al-Ahwāz] by way of a ford he had been shown, but rather than entering the village he camped outside it. He sent a message to the inhabitants. Their elders, along with those of al-Karkh, came to meet him. He ordered them to provide hospitality for himself and his companions, which was done as he wished, and he spent that night among them.

The next day one of the inhabitants of Jubba offered ‘Ali a bay horse, but he could find neither bridle nor saddle for it; thus he had to make do with a rope and a cinch of palm fibers. He set out and

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162. A village in the marshlands (*bātālih*), not to be confused with a location of the same name north of Baghdad. See Le Strange, *Lands*, 50.
163. See nn. 139 and 156, above.
164. See Le Strange, *Lands*, 243. Situated to the east of the Dujayl, it was noted for its sugarcane.
166. Halm, *Traditionen*, 30–32, considers that this description conveys an eschatological sense — referring to the horse without saddle and bridle belonging to the Mahdi.
finally reached a place called al-‘Abbāsī al-‘Atiq, where he secured the services of a guide as far as al-Sib,\(^{167}\) a canal upon which was situated the village of al-Jāfariyyah. The villagers were alerted to his arrival and fled. ‘Ali entered and settled in the house of Ja‘far b. Sulaymān,\(^ {168}\) which was located in the market, while his companions scattered throughout the village. They brought to him a villager they had discovered, and ‘Ali asked him the whereabouts of the Hāshimites’ agents. The man said they were in the thickets [outside the village]. ‘Ali sent the one nicknamed\(^ {169}\) Jurbān to fetch their headman, Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā al-Zubayrī\(^ {170}\) a mawlā of the Ziyādiyyin. He was asked whether he had any money, and the man replied that he did not. So ‘Ali ordered him beheaded. Fearing now for his life, the man confessed to having hidden some money away; he sent for it and brought to ‘Ali the amount of two hundred fifty dinars and one thousand dirhams, the first such booty he had gained. ‘Ali next asked the headman about the animals owned by the agents of the Hāshimites, and he pointed out three pack animals, one a bay, one chestnut, and one gray. One was given to Ibn Salm, another to Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad, while the third was given to Mushriq the servant of Yaḥyā b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. Rafīq rode upon a donkey, loaded with baggage. Some of the blacks discovered a cache of arms in a house belonging to one of the Banū Hāshim, they were seized. Al-Nūbī the Younger brought a sword, which the Zanj leader then gave to Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad. In this way there fell into the hands of the Zanj swords, spears, daggers, and shields.

That evening ‘Ali spent in al-Sib, and in the morning he was given news of the arrival there of Rumays, al-Ḥimyari, and ‘Aqil al-Ubulli. He despatched Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad with five hundred men, among them Sulaymān, Rayḥān b. Ṣāliḥ, and Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Nūbī the Younger. They engaged the enemy and routed them, seizing a galley\(^ {171}\) and arms in the process. After everyone had fled Yaḥyā b.

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167. Yāqūt Mu‘jam, III, 209; Le Strange, “Ibn Serapion’s Description,” 271, 274. The canal, which flowed through land [al-jawāmid, pl. of jāmidah “drained lands”] reclaimed from the swamps, itself finally disappeared into the great swamp, al-Bāṭā‘īyah.


169. See El, s.v. “Lakab,” on the meanings and application of sobriquets.

170. The reading of the nisbah is uncertain.

171. Sumayriyyah. See Lane, Lexicon, s.v. s-m-r.
Muḥammad returned to `Ali and told him the news. Remaining in al-Sib that day, he set out the following morning for al-Madhār,172 after reaching a pact with the inhabitants of al-Jaʿfariyyah that they would not engage in hostilities against him or aid or protect any of his enemies.

`Ali then traversed the canal al-Sib and made for a village known as al-Yahūd, which lay along the Tigris. There he again encountered Rumays with a contingent of troops. Fighting between them continued throughout the day. A number of Rumays’s troops were captured, while many others received arrow wounds. A servant belonging to Muḥammad b. Abī ʿAwn who had been with Rumays was killed. A galley with an oarsman aboard capsized; the man was seized and beheaded. Leaving the field of battle, `Ali continued toward al-Madhār. He reached the canal called Bāmdād173 and crossed over it and into an open plain, where he saw an orchard and a small hill, known as Devils’ Mountain.174 He headed for the hill, positioned himself on the top, and settled his troops in the plain below while preparing for himself a scouting party.

Shibl b. Sālim reported that he had acted as scout for `Ali along the Tigris. “I sent word to him,” he said, “that Rumays was on the bank of the Tigris, looking for someone to convey a message for him.” So `Ali sent off `Ali b. Abān, Muḥammad b. Salm, and Sulaymān b. Jāmi’, and when they reached Rumays he said to them, “Convey greetings to your master, and tell him that he shall have safe-conduct to go anywhere without hindrance from anyone.” In exchange, he should return the slaves (al-ʿabīd) to their owners (al-mawālīhim),175 for which he would be paid five dinars per head. `Ali’s men returned to him with Rumays’s offer. `Ali became incensed at this and swore that he would come, rip open the belly of Rumays’s wife, raze his home to the ground, and cause blood to flow everywhere. This response was duly delivered to Rumays, who then set off to station himself on the Tigris opposite `Ali’s own camp.

That same day Ibrāhīm b. Jaʿfar al-Hamdānī176 arrived to meet...
"Ali with correspondence for him to read. It was only at that moment that he joined 'Ali's side. Following the last evening prayer, Ibrāhīm told 'Ali that he did not think he should head for al-Madhar. When asked what he should do then, Ibrāhīm said that, as the inhabitants of 'Abbādān, Mayān Rūdān, and Sulaymānān had rendered allegiance to him, he should return there. And he added, "You have also left behind a group of the Bilāliyyah at the mouth of the Qandal and at Ab rasān" waiting for you."

Now when the blacks heard of Ibrāhīm's advice, along with what Rumays had proposed to 'Ali that day, they feared that 'Ali would betray them and hand them over to their masters. Thus some of them fled, while the rest became very disturbed. Muḥammad b. Salm reported their distress to 'Ali and the fact that some had taken off. So that very night 'Ali ordered them to be assembled together. Separating the Zanj of the Euphrates [from the others], he summoned an interpreter to announce that none of them would be returned to his owner. 'Ali swore a most solemn oath on this, adding, "Some of your number should watch me closely, and, if they sense any treachery on my part, they could kill me." Then 'Ali assembled the remainder of the Zanj together — namely, the Furātiyyah, the Qarmāṭiyyūn, the Nūbah, and others who understood Arabic — and made the same solemn oath to them as well, which he personally pledged and confirmed. Moreover, he said that he had not revolted to achieve earthly goods and glory, but only for the wrath of God and against the corruption and decay of the faith that he saw among the people. He concluded saying, "I shall share personally in every battle with you and assume the same risks as you." The Zanj were pleased by these words and wished him well.

At dawn the next day 'Ali commanded one of the slaves of the Shūrajīyyin named Abū Manārah to blow the horn, as a signal for the

177. Ibrāhīm appears here for the first time in Tabari's account without an indication of who he is (an agent?) or even a comment on the nature of the correspondence he carries.

178. See Le Strange, Lands, 44. The abrupt nature of the information in this paragraph, without prior reference to it, suggests that Tabari's work as we have it may have been abridged from a longer text. See n. 177, below.

179. The reading is very uncertain, Abūsān, Anūshār being among other possibilities.

180. The text of the Leiden edition has al-Furātiyyah, but the critical apparatus notes the uncertain status of the reading, other manuscript copies provide al-Qawāniyyah, al-Maghāribah, and al-Fazzāniyyah as alternatives.
Zanj to assemble. He then set out again for al-Sib, where he found al-Himyari, Rumays, and the associate of Ibn Abi `Awn. `Ali sent a secret message to them with Mushriq, who later returned with their reply. The leader of the Zanj reached the canal, and the associate of Muhammad b. Abi `Awn approached, greeted [`Ali] and said, "It is no fit reward for our master from you that you cause his administrative district to be despoiled, given what you know he did for you in Wāsīt." `Ali replied, "I have not come here to fight you, so tell your troops to make way for me so that I may pass by you."

`Ali departed from the canal [al-Sib] and made for the Tigris. Shortly thereafter soldiers arrived accompanied by the inhabitants of al-Ja`fariyyah, all fully armed. Abū Ya`qūb, who was known as Jurbān, approached them and said, "People of al-Ja`fariyyah! You are well aware that you have given us your solemn oath that you would neither fight against us nor provide assistance to anyone against us; indeed, you swore to assist any one of us if he came to you." They raised a great clamor and din, shouting as they fired stones and arrows at Jurbān.

There was a place nearby where there were some three hundred zarrūqs, which Jurbān ordered dismantled and tied together like rafts. They were launched onto the water, each with a single fighter astride it, and in this way battle with the enemy was joined.

Someone said that before the rafts were constructed, `Ali b. Abān swam across the canal. When the rafts had been made, the Zanj crossed the canal. They moved away from the bank of the canal and engaged the enemy with swords, killing a great number of them. Prisoners were first threatened, then released. One of the slaves of the Shūrajīyyin called Salīm al-Zaghawī was sent to bring back the troops who had entered the village of al-Ja`fariyyah. He called out to them, "Anyone caught stealing anything from this village or taking any captives will have to answer for his actions and will be subject...

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181. That is, the governor of Wāsīt, Muhammad b. Abi `Awn, had been persuaded to release `Ali and his companions from custody. See p. 33, above.
182. Lane, Lexicon, s.v. z-r-n-q, describes them thus: two pillarlike structures constructed by the head of a well, across which is placed a piece of wood, from which the pulley for drawing water is suspended. The plural is zarānīq. See also Ṭabari, Glossarium, CCLXXVII; and S. Fraenkel, Die aramaischen Fremdwörter im Arabischen, 134, who calls it a Wasseraufzug.
183. Al-shāshāt, although the vocalization is uncertain. From the context "raft" seems a likely approximation.
to a painful punishment.” ʿAli b. Abān then recrossed the [al-Sib] canal from the west to the east bank. After regrouping his troops under their chiefs, he had just passed beyond the village by the distance of a bowshot when he heard a great uproar coming from the direction of the canal. Carefully, the Zanj made their way back.

When Rumays, al-Ḥimyari, and the associate of Ibn Abī ʿAwn, who, having heard of the situation at al-Jaʿfariyyah, had arrived on the scene, the blacks attacked them and seized four galleys, together with their crews and fighters. The personnel were disembarked and ʿAli b. Muḥammad summoned the fighters for interrogation. They informed him that Rumays and Ibn Abī ʿAwn’s associate had not let them go before compelling them to march on him and that the villagers had urged on Rumays, promising the two men large sums of money. The Shūrajyyin guaranteed to pay the associate in return for their slaves the sum of five dinars each. ʿAli then inquired about a certain slave called al-Numayrī and another called al-Ḥajjam. They replied that al-Numayrī was being held as their prisoner, while the local people said that al-Ḥajjam had taken to robbing and murdering throughout their district, although eventually he had been [caught] and beheaded, his body having been strung up publicly on the Abū al-Asad canal.184 After ʿAli had gleaned this information, he ordered the prisoners beheaded, all that is save one called Muḥammad b. al-Hasan al-Baghdādi, who swore that he had come with a safe-conduct, unarmed, and without hostile intent; he was set free. The severed heads and flags were borne away upon mules, while the ships were ordered destroyed by fire. ʿAli then set out for Nahr Farīd, finally arriving at a canal named after al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Qāḍī, across which stretched a dam lying between al-Jaʿfariyyah and the cultivated area [rustāq]185 of al-Quṣ.186 Villagers from the Banū ʿIjl welcomed ʿAli b. Muḥammad, offering him their lives and extending generously to him whatever they possessed. ʿAli returned their kindness, ordering them to keep what they had offered.

185. Spelled also as ruḍdāq, ruṣṭāq, and ruṣdāq, the word signifies a rural district consisting of cultivated lands with towns and villages. See Lane, Lexicon, s.v r-z-d-q.
186. A town between Baghdad and ‘Ukbarā’, but nearer the former, famous for its places of pleasure and entertainment, including fine wines. Yāqūt, Muʿjam, IV, 150.
He next proceeded to Nahr Bāqthā and camped outside the village, which was on the canal itself and stretched along the bank of the Dujayl. The inhabitants of al-Karkh came to him, greeted him, prayed for his good fortune, and extended to him all the hospitality he required. A Jew from Khaybar called Māndawayh came to ‘Ali, kissed his hand, bowed before him, and then professed his gratitude for seeing him. Then he asked ‘Ali a number of questions, which he answered. The Jew claimed that he had found a description of him in the Torah and that he had foreseen fighting alongside him. He also queried ‘Ali about certain marks on his body, which he stated he knew about. The two men spent the evening discussing matters.

When ‘Ali set up his camp he [always] withdrew from his army with his six comrades. At that time wine was not forbidden in his army. He had placed Muḥammad b. Salm in charge of watching carefully over the troops. Late that night one of the villagers of al-Karkh came and informed ‘Ali that Rumays, [leading] the inhabitants of al-Maftah and the adjoining villages, and ‘Aqil [accompanied by] the people of al-Ubullah, had arrived with fully armed Dabilā. Al-Himyari had also arrived that night with a group of Euphrates villagers at the Nahr Maymūn bridge, which they had destroyed to prevent ‘Ali’s crossing. The following morning ‘Ali ordered it to be proclaimed to the Zanj to cross over the Dujayl. Then from the outskirts of al-Karkh he went to the Nahr Maymūn, where he found the bridge cut, with the enemy on the eastern side of the canal and galleys containing the Dabilā in the middle, while the villagers sailed in flat-bottomed vessels (jarībiyyāt) and reed boats (mujawniḥāt).

187. The reading is conjectural.
188. Nabidh. The word is a general term for various kinds of intoxicating beverages, which could be made from dates, raisins, barley, honey, or spelt. Nabidh was considered synonymous with khamr, which is forbidden in the Qur‘ān [2:219, 16:67, and 5:90, where it is described as the work of Satan]. See El, s.v. “Nabidh”; El, s.v. “Khamr.”
189. See Le Strange, Lands, 48; Le Strange, “Ibn Serapion’s Description,” 299, 303; it was a village in the province of al-Baṣrah, lying between the city of al-Baṣrah and Wāsit.
190. The critical apparatus of the Leiden edition notes, without supporting sources, that this was a group of Indian origin living in al-Baṣrah. See also Ṭabarī, Glossarium, ccxxxvi. The reference is probably to people from the Indian coastal trading port Daibul, located east of Mihran, who had extensive commercial links abroad. See Ibn Hawqal, Configuration de la Terre, II, 316.
191. On these types of rivercraft, see Ṭabarī, Glossarium, CLXII, CLXXII.
‘Ali ordered his troops not to engage the enemy but to withdraw from the canal to protect themselves from arrows. ‘Ali retreated to a distance of about one hundred meters from the village. When the enemy saw that no one was about to attack them, a detachment left to make a reconnaissance. Now ‘Ali had commanded a group of his men to slip into the village and conceal themselves in ambush. When they spotted the enemy detachment, they attacked, and twenty-two prisoners were taken, while the remainder were pursued and a number of them were killed along the canal bank. They returned to ‘Ali with heads and prisoners and, after interrogating them, he had them beheaded as well. He ordered them to be guarded carefully, and for half the day their cries could be heard. A tribesman of the desert arrived seeking protection, and ‘Ali asked him about the depth of the river. The man told him he knew of a place that could be forded and informed him that the people were solidly against him and prepared to fight him. ‘Ali went with the man to the ford, about a mile distant from al-Muhammadiyah, and he traversed the river with the rest of the company following behind him. Nāsiḥ, known as al-Ramli, supported ‘Ali, and he crossed over with the animals. Once on the eastern bank, ‘Ali turned again toward the Maymūn canal. Establishing himself there in the mosque, he gave orders for the heads (of the prisoners) to be planted on stakes. He remained there the whole day while Rumays’s entire army traveled along the Dujayl and camped at a spot called Aqshā, opposite the Bard al-Khiyār canal.

‘Ali b. Muhammad sent out a scout, who returned with news of Rumays’s location. Immediately, he despatched a thousand men to encamp on the salt marsh at the mouth of the [Bard al-Khiyār] canal, telling them to inform him if the enemy had not approached them by the time of the sunset prayer. He wrote to ‘Aqil, reminding him that he had formerly rendered him allegiance, along with a group of inhabitants from al-Ubullah. He wrote also to Rumays, reminding him of the pact that they had concluded at al-Sib: that they would not fight each other and that he would send news of the central authorities to him. He entrusted these two letters to a peasant, after first exacting an oath from him to deliver them.

‘Ali next moved from Nahr Maymūn and set out for the salt

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192. One Arabic mil equals two km., three mil making six km., or one farsakh. See Hinz, Islamische Masse, 63.
marsh, where he had prepared a scouting party. Upon reaching the villages of al-Qādisiyyah and al-Shifiyā, he heard a great commotion and saw shooting taking place; his practice when on the march was to give villages a wide berth. He commanded Muḥammad b. Salm to lead a party of men to al-Shifiyā and ask the inhabitants to deliver to him the man who had murdered one of his troops as he was passing through. Muḥammad returned to inform ‘Ali that the villagers claimed they had no power to surrender the man, owing to his clientship with the Ḥashimites and their protection of him. ‘Ali thus ordered his slaves to plunder the two villages, from which a great deal of currency in gold and silver, jewelry, ornaments, and gold and silver vessels were seized. On the same occasion slaves and women were captured, this being the first booty of its kind that they took. Muḥammad b. Salm’s party happened upon a house in which there were fourteen Shūrajāyyīn slaves. Their exit was blocked, and they were captured. The Ḥashimites’ mawlā who had murdered the Zanj soldier was brought, and Muḥammad b. Salm ordered him beheaded. The execution was carried out.

At the time of the afternoon prayer Muḥammad left the two villages and set up camp by the salt marsh called Bard al-Khiyār. One of ‘Ali b. Muḥammad’s six companions came to him at the sunset prayer time and told him that his soldiers were indulging in inebriating drink, which they had discovered in al-Qādisiyyah. Accompanied by Muḥammad b. Salm and Yahyā b. Muḥammad, ‘Ali went to inform the troops that intoxicants were not permitted, and from that day he declared wine (nabīdḥ) illegal. He addressed them saying, “You will be engaging armies in battle, so cease this indulgence in drink!” And they assented to his demand.

The following day one of the slaves of the blacks named Qāquwayh came and told ‘Ali that Rumays’s troops had set out for the eastern side of the Dujayl and proceeded toward the riverbank. The leader of the Zanj summoned ‘Ali b. Abān to advance with the Zanj and attack Rumays. ‘Ali b. Muḥammad then summoned

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193. Ghilmān min ghilmān al-Shuraj. See nn. 139, 146, 146, above.
194. The text refers to khamr and nabīdḥ, both of which could loosely be rendered by wine. See n. 188, above. The context here clearly intends intoxicating drink, although nabīdḥ (and likely khamr as well) could be prepared in both alcoholic and nonintoxicating versions. See Ibn Sayyār, Kitāb al-tabīk, 309–10.
195. The expression is ghulām min al-suḍān.
Mushriq to bring him an astrolabe, with which he took a reading of the sun, in order to determine the precise time. Then he, followed by his troops, crossed over the bridge spanning the Bard al-Khiyār canal. When they had arrived on the eastern side, they overtook 'Ali b. Abān and found that the forces of Rumays and 'Aqil were on the river bank, while the Dabilā were aboard boats from which they could shoot their arrows. The Zanj forces attacked and killed a great number of the enemy. Then a gust of wind from the western shore carried the boats to the nearest bank, and the blacks fell upon them, slaying all they found aboard.

Rumays and those with him retreated to Nahr al-Dayr on the Aqshā road. He abandoned his boats without moving them, leaving the impression that he was staying there. 'Aqil and Ibn Abi 'Awn's associate left in haste for the Tigris without paying heed to anything. The Zanj leader ordered that the contents be removed from the boats that carried the Dabilā; they were joined one to another. Qāquwayh went down to inspect them and found one of the Dabilā. He tried to force him out, but the man resisted. Then he rushed the man with a trumpet (ṣurnay) he was carrying and struck him a blow on the shoulder, severing one of the veins. A second blow cut a tendon in his leg. Then Qāquwayh grabbed the man and struck him on the crown of the head, and he collapsed. Seizing the man's hair, Qāquwayh cut off his head and took it to the Zanj leader, who ordered that he be given a dinar. Then he commanded Yahyā b. Muḥammad to make Qāquwayh commander of one hundred blacks.

Thereafter the Zanj leader headed for the village of al-Muhallabī, which lay opposite Qayyārān. The blacks, who had meanwhile been pursuing 'Aqil and Ibn Abi 'Awn's deputy, returned. They had captured a galley with two oarsmen still aboard. 'Ali b.
Muḥammad asked the blacks for a report about it. They told him that, while [they were] chasing the galley, most of the crew had thrown themselves into the river and abandoned the craft, which they were then able to retrieve. ʿAli then interrogated the oarsmen, who informed him that ʿAqil had coerced them into joining him, as he held their wives prisoner until they did so; he had used the same tactic with all the oarsmen. On the question of the arrival of the Da-bilā, the oarsmen said that ʿAqil had promised them money, and so they followed him. Concerning the boats stationed at Aqshā, ʿAli was informed that they belonged to Rumays, who had abandoned them, fleeing at the first light of day.

ʿAli b. Muḥammad then returned to a position opposite the boats [at Aqshā], and the blacks were ordered to bring them to him across the canal. The boats were then plundered and set on fire.

The Zanj next proceeded to the village of al-Muhallabiyyah, also called T.ngh.t. ʿAli camped nearby and gave the order for the place to be plundered and razed, which was done. As he moved along the Mādiyān canal, he found quantities of dates, which he also had burned. After these events the Zanj leader and his followers perpetrated outrages in this region, which we have not mentioned since none was especially atrocious, considering that every act he committed was atrocious.

Among the momentous encounters that he later had with the forces of the central authorities was one against the Turk Abū Hilāl in Sūq al-Rayyān. One of the Zanj commanders called Rayḥān reported that this Turk had arrived in Sūq al-Rayyān at the head of a force of some four thousand men or more. They were preceded by a group of people wearing bright clothes and sporting flags and drums. The blacks led a ferocious attack against the Turk. One of the...
blacks fell upon the people’s standard-bearer, felling him with blows from the two cudgels he was carrying. The crowd fled, while the blacks pursued their onslaught on Abū Hilāl’s troops, slaying nearly one thousand five hundred of them. One of the blacks chased after Abū Hilāl, who managed to save himself by escaping on a horse bareback. Then the darkness of night descended between the blacks and those who had escaped. In the morning the pursuit resumed, and the blacks returned with heads and prisoners, all of whom were then killed.

Following this engagement there occurred another involving the Zanj against the troops of the central authorities, in which ‘Alī b. Muḥammad was also victorious. According to what one of the Zanj leader’s commanders206 reported, the affair commenced as follows. The commander, whose name was Rayḥān,207 said, “One night during the course of the year,” (which we have mentioned was one in which his rebellion commenced) “‘Alī b. Muḥammad heard the sound of a dog barking at the gates [of a dwelling owned by] ‘Amr b. Mas‘adah. 208 He ordered an inquiry into the source of the barking and sent one of his followers to investigate. He later returned with the news that he had seen nothing at all, and then the barking resumed.”

Rayḥān continued: “‘Alī then called for me to go to the source of the barking, for it seemed as though the dog barked only at someone it could see. So I set out and suddenly came upon the dog, standing on a breakwater (al-musannah),209 although I could see nothing else. And then I spied a man sitting on some steps. I spoke to him, and, when he heard me addressing him in Arabic, he replied, introducing himself as Sayrān b. ‘Afwīllāh. He said he had brought letters for ‘Alī b. Muḥammad from his partisans in al-BAṣrah; he had been one of his associates during ‘Alī’s sojourn in al-BAṣrah. So I took him to ‘Alī, who read the correspondence he was carrying. ‘Alī asked

206. Qā‘id li-ṣāhib al-zanj min al-sudān. Ṭabarî here seems to make a distinction between the Zanj as an ethnic/racial term and blacks (al-sudān) other than the Zanj.
207. Although it is not immediately apparent from the context here, this is the same Rayḥān b. Šālīh who has already appeared on p. 35, above, as one of the slaves of the Shūrājīyyīn.
208. Ṭabarî’s editors identify this individual as ‘Amr b. Mas‘adah al-Kātib al-Rāwī, about whom nothing else is known; see Index.
209. See Lane, Lexicon, s.v. s-n-w(y).
Sayrān about al-Zaynābī and the numbers of men he had. He said that al-Zaynābī was mustering a large force of slaves, volunteers, and the factions of the Bilāliyyah and the Saʿdiyyah, which was going to be despatched against ʿAlī at Bayān. ʿAlī told Sayrān to lower his voice lest the slaves be frightened by his news. He then inquired who was to lead this army and was told that one Abū Maṣūr, a Ḥashimite mawlā, had been selected for the post. Asked whether he had seen this force, Sayrān replied that he had and added that they were also equipped with ropes to bind the hands of any blacks they captured. ʿAlī then told Sayrān to return to the place where he was staying, and he wandered off to ʿAlī b. Abān, Muḥammad b. Salm, and Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad and engaged in discussing matters with them until the dawn broke."

The Zanj leader then set out to spy upon this new force. When he reached the far side of Tūrsā, Barsūna, and Sandādān Bayān,210 a detachment came out to do battle with him. ʿAlī b. Abān was ordered to engage the enemy, and he routed them, capturing from among them one hundred blacks.

Rayḥān resumed: "I heard ʿAlī b. Muḥammad say to his followers that what they had witnessed was one of the signs of perfection of their mission—that is, the arrival of the detachment with their slaves, who were surrendered into their hands, God increasing thereby the numbers of his own forces. Then the Zanj proceeded until they reached Bayān."

Rayḥān continued: "ʿAlī b. Muḥammad sent me, accompanied by a contingent of his troops to al-Ḥajar in search of transport boats (al-kārawān)211 and [the rest of] their army in the palm belt on the western side of the [Nahr] Bayān.212 We reached the designated spot and there found one thousand nine hundred boats, protected by a detachment of volunteers. When they saw us they abandoned the boats and crossed over the Sulbān without their arms, heading toward Jūbak. We boarded the vessels and sailed them back to ʿAlī's camp. Also aboard these craft were a number of pilgrims who had intended to

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210. Although the location of these places cannot be identified, the action of the narrative is moving toward the environs of al- Başrah.
211. Arabized from the Persian kārabān. See Ṭabarī, Glossarium, CDXLII, s.v. qayrawān.
212. A broad artificial channel that joined the estuary of the Tigris with the Dujayl. See Le Strange, Lands, 44, 48.
follow the road to al-Baṣrah. When we arrived with the boats ‘Ali had a carpet laid out on a rise of ground, and, seated upon it, he examined the pilgrims for the rest of the day until sunset, by which time they had begun to believe all that he told them. They said that, if they had had any spare resources, they would remain with him, with that he sent them back to their boats. In the morning ‘Ali fetched them from the boats and made them swear not to reveal to anyone the size of his forces; indeed they should, if asked, make as little of his circumstances as possible. The pilgrims presented ‘Ali with one of their carpets, and he reciprocated, giving them one of his own. ‘Ali also asked them to swear that they were carrying neither money nor commercial goods for the central authorities. However, they indicated that one man was a government agent, carrying dried fruits to al-Baṣrah. The master of the boat in which the man was found swore to ‘Ali that he was engaged only in ordinary commerce, and so he was released. The pilgrims were also free to leave.”

The inhabitants of Sulaymānān appeared on the eastern bank of the Bayān opposite the Zanj, who were conversing with them. Ḥusayn al-Ṣaydanānī was among the inhabitants. He had been a close associate of ‘Ali b. Muḥammad in al-Baṣrah and one of the four persons who had declared their revolt in the ‘Abbād mosque. On this day Ḥusayn rejoined ‘Ali.

‘Ali asked Ḥusayn what had caused him to be absent for so long. He replied that he had been in hiding and that, when this army had left [al-Baṣrah], he had joined in with the masses of troops. ‘Ali then inquired about the army, its composition and numbers. Ḥusayn said that he had seen the army depart and that it comprised one thousand two hundred slave fighters, a thousand of al-Zaynābī’s own troops, about two thousand from the Bilāliyyah and Saʿdiyyah factions, and two hundred cavalry. However, when this force had reached al-Ubullah a dispute had broken out between the army and the town’s inhabitants, and each side had begun cursing and abusing the other. The slave troops had even vilified Muḥammad b. Abi ‘Awn. Ḥusayn continued, “I left them behind at Shāṭi’ ‘Uthmān, and I reckoned that they should arrive in the morning.” ‘Ali asked what they intended to do upon arriving. Ḥusayn replied that they

213. See p. 33, above.
214. Khawal. See n. 156, above.
were intending to send the cavalry into Sandādān Bayān, while their infantry would approach from both banks of the canal.

The following morning 'Alī sent out a scout to gather intelligence. He chose an old, feeble man, in order that attention would not be drawn to him. But the scout did not return. When he had been away a long time 'Alī despatched Fatḥ al-Ḥajjām with three hundred men and Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad to Sandādān. He ordered Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad to pass through the market of Bayān. Fatḥ al-Ḥajjām reported to 'Alī that the enemy was approaching en masse along both sides of the canal. 'Alī inquired about the tide and was told that it had not yet come in. 'Alī then observed that the enemy’s cavalry could not have arrived as yet. He ordered Muḥammad b. Salm and 'Alī b. Abān to lie in wait for them among the palm trees, while he occupied a higher vantage point on a hilltop overlooking them. Presently the [enemy] banners and foot soldiers came into view as they approached the territory of Abū al-ʿAlā’ al-Balkhi, situated on a bend of the Dubayrān canal.215.

The Zanj raised the battle cry “Allāhu Akbar” and then launched their attack on the enemy, confronting them at Dubayrān. The enemy’s slave contingent attacked under the leadership of Abū al-ʿAbbās b. Ayman, who was otherwise known as Abū al-Kubāsh and Bashīr al-Qaysī; the Zanj were forced to retreat to the hill were 'Alī b. Muḥammad was stationed. The Zanj then counterattacked and this time held their position firm. Abū al-Kubāsh assaulted Fatḥ al-Ḥajjām and killed him. He also surprised one of the black slaves called Dīnār and delivered him several blows. Next the blacks charged the enemy facing them on the shore to the Bayān and were engulfed in sword fighting.

Rayḥān resumed: “I encountered Muḥammad b. Salm when he struck Abū al-Kubāsh a blow, causing him to fall into the mud, where one of the Zanj came across him and severed his head. 'Alī b. Abān, however, claimed Abū al-Kubāsh’s death for himself, as well as that of Bashīr al-Qaysī. Chatting about that day, 'Alī (b. Abān) said, ‘Bashīr al-Qaysī was the first person I encountered, and we struck each other blows. His blow landed on my shield, whereas mine caught him squarely in the chest and abdomen. I had pierced his ribs and slit open his stomach. He collapsed, and I slashed off his

215. The reading is conjectural.
head. Then I faced Abū al-Kubāš, who gave me his full attention. One of the blacks came up behind him and struck his legs with a club, breaking them both. He fell and offered no resistance to my finishing him off and beheading him. I brought both heads to the leader of the Zanj.'"

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Sahl said, "I heard the Zanj leader stating that ‘Alī had brought him the head of Abū al-Kubāš and that of Bashīr al-Qaysī.'" Muḥammad added that he knew neither of them. Moreover, ‘Alī had told him that both men had been in the vanguard of their forces and, when he slew them, the troops had fled at the sight of their fallen leaders.

Rayḥān continued, according to what was reported from him, that the enemy fled using every avenue of escape while pursued by the blacks up to the Nahr Bayān. The water level in the canal had dropped, and, as the enemy attempted to cross, they sank in the mud, and most perished.

Some blacks passed by their comrade Dīnār, whom Abū al-Kubāš had struck down. He was lying there wounded. The blacks mistook him for one of the enemy’s slaves (al-khawal), and so they commenced to beat him with sickles, leaving him severely wounded. A passerby who recognized Dīnār carried him to the Zanj leader, who ordered his wounds attended to.

Rayḥān continued: "When the enemy had reached the mouth of the Nahr Bayān, they had lost many drowned and their boats with the animals aboard had been seized. Someone signaled us from a boat, and when we reached him he told us to enter the Nahr Sharīkān, where the enemy had set up an ambush. Yahyā b. Muḥammad and ‘Alī b. Abān set out along the canal, Yahyā taking the western and ‘Alī the eastern side, when they came across about a thousand Maghāribah troops lying in wait. Ḥusayn al-Saydanānī was being held their prisoner.

When the enemy saw us, they fell upon Ḥusayn and cut him to pieces. They then advanced upon the Zanj with their spears extended, and fighting ensued until the time of the noon prayer. The blacks in their turn threw themselves upon the enemy, slaying them all and seizing their weapons. The blacks returned to camp and found their leader sitting on the bank of the Bayān. Some thirty-odd
flags and about a thousand heads had been brought to him, among them heads of the brave and courageous slaves [al-khawal]. That same day Zuhayr was brought to him as well."

Rayhān continued: "I did not know him, but Yaḥyā, who arrived while Zuhayr was standing before the leader of the Zanj, recognized him and said to me, 'This is Zuhayr the slave [al-khawal]; why should you spare him?' And the order was given for Zuhayr to be beheaded."

The Zanj leader remained in his camp that day and night. The following morning he sent a scout to reconnoiter the Tigris shore. The scout returned to inform him that there were two barges218 moored to the island, which was then located at the mouth of the al-Qandal canal. When the afternoon [prayer] was finished the scout set out again for the Tigris, to ascertain developments. At sunset Abū al-ʿAbbās came to ʿAli b. Muḥammad; he was his wife's brother and was accompanied by a soldier called ʿUmran, who was married to the mother of this same Abū al-ʿAbbās. ʿAli placed his troops on parade for them and requested that they [review them]. ʿUmran handed him a communication from Ibn Abī ʿAwn, demanding that he cross over the Bayān and leave the district of his jurisdiction. For his part, Ibn Abī ʿAwn informed ʿAli that he had removed the barges blockading the way out. ʿAli gave the command to take the boats from Jubbā, which could traverse the Bayān. His troops went to al-Ḥajar219 and found in Sulbān two hundred boats loaded with flour. The boats were commandeered; clothing, some barr.kanat,220 and ten Zanj were discovered on board. The troops were ordered to embark upon the boats and, when the tide came in at sunset, he crossed over [the Bayān] with them opposite the mouth of the Qandal canal. One of the boats carrying flour, which was in the charge of Abū Dulaf, was blown off course by a strong wind. He arrived the next morning and reported to the Zanj leader that the wind had carried him as far as

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217. The sudden introduction into the account of this individual, as if the reader were already familiar with him, suggests that the text we possess may contain lacunae or has been abridged. See Popovic, Révolte, 89; n. 178, above.

218. Shadhah, also shadhawah, a kind of war boat. See Ṭabari, Glossarium, CCCVIII; Lane, Lexicon, s.v. sh-dh-w.

219. A location near al-Baṣrah.

220. Like Popovic, Révolte, 89 n. 5, I have been unable to identify this word, which is unvocalized in manuscripts B and O.
Hasak 'Imrân. There the villagers had shown an inordinate interest in him and the boat's cargo, and he had had to fend them off.

Fifty blacks joined 'Ali's side, and, with their arrival and the acquisition of the boats, he entered the Qandal canal [district] and ventured as far as a village belonging to al-Mu'alla b. Ayyūb, where he set up camp. He spread out his troops up to Dubbā,221 where they discovered three hundred Zanj, whom they brought back to 'Ali. They also found an agent of al-Mu'alla b. Ayyūb, and, when they demanded money of him, he replied, "Let me cross over to Bursān, and I will bring you money." So he was released, and he went. He failed, however, to return, and when his absence became prolonged 'Ali gave the order to plunder the village. And this was done.

Rayḥān continued this report: "On that day I saw the leader of the Zanj taking part in plundering with the rest of us. My hand and his fell at the same time upon a quilted woolen jacket; we each had hold of a part of it, tugging it toward us, when I finally let him have it."

Later 'Ali b. Muḥammad set out for al-Zaynabi's garrison, situated on the western bank of the Qandal canal. The defenders were defiant, and, although they believed they could resist, they actually did not possess sufficient strength to do so, and all, some two hundred persons, were killed, to the last man. 'Ali b. Muḥammad remained in the castle that night and set out on the morning tide for the salt flat of al-Qandal. His troops proceeded along both sides of the canal and, arriving at the village of Mundhirān, they entered and plundered it. A number of Zanj were found in the village, and 'Ali had them apportioned among his commanders. From there 'Ali reached the far end of the Qandal [canal] and directed his boats into a canal called al-Ḥasani, which opened onto another canal called al-Ṣālihi, which led directly to Dubbā. He camped there on the flats.

One of his followers reportedly said that it was there that 'Ali b. Muḥammad named his commanders, and he denied his having done so previously.

'Ali b. Muḥammad dispersed his troops among the canals until they converged upon the main square of Dubbā. They found there a man belonging to the harbor dwellers in al-Baṣrah who sold dried dates. His name was Muḥammad b. Ja'far al-Muraydī. He was

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221. The name of one of the subdistricts of al-Baṣrah, through which ran many canals. Yāqūt, Mu'jam, II, 544.
brought to ‘Ali who, recognizing Muḥammad, greeted him. He asked him about the Bilāliyyah faction [in al-BAṣrah]. The man replied, “I was bringing you a message from them when the blacks met me and brought me to you. The Bilāliyyah are seeking certain conditions from you; if you grant them, they will follow and obey you.” ‘Ali consented to the conditions. He also authorized the man to be responsible for them until they were able to reach him. ‘Ali then let Muḥammad go and sent with him an escort that would take him as far as al-Fayyād222 and then return. For four days the Zanj leader waited in vain for Muḥammad’s return. On the fifth day ‘Ali disbanded the boats he had with him on the canal and proceeded by land between the canal called al-Dawardānī and the Nahr al-Hasani and the Nahr al-Ṣālihī. He had scarcely moved from one canal to the next, when he saw about six hundred horsemen approaching from the direction of the Nahr al-Amir.223 His troops hastened along the Dawardānī, with the horsemen proceeding upon the western bank. A lengthy discussion took place, and it transpired that the horsemen were Arab tribesmen, among whom were ‘Antarah b. Ḥajanā and Thumāl.

‘Ali sent Muḥammad b. Salm to talk to ‘Antarah and Thumāl, and they in turn inquired who the Zanj leader was. Muḥammad pointed out ‘Ali, and the two Arabs said they wished to talk with him. Muhammad returned to report to ‘Ali what they had said. He added, “If you would speak to them . . . ,” but ‘Ali interrupted him abruptly and said, “This is a trap.” He ordered the blacks to attack the tribesmen. When the blacks crossed the canal, the tribesmen turned away from them and raised the black flag.224 Then there appeared in their midst Sulaymān, the brother of al-Zaynabi, who had been with them all the time. The Zanj troops returned, while the tribesmen withdrew. ‘Ali said to Muḥammad b. Salm, “Did I not tell you that they had set a trap for us?”

The Zanj arrived in Dubbā, and ‘Ali scattered his troops among the palm groves. They had found sheep and cattle, which they pro-

222. Yāqūt, Mu‘jam, III, 926, describes this as an ancient, broad canal in al-BAṣrah, with villages and cultivated fields along its banks.

223. A canal in al-BAṣrah (not to be confused with another of the same name in Wāṣīṭ) dug by order of the ‘Abbāsid Caliph al-Manṣūr and thus originally known as Nahr Amir al-Mu‘minin. See Yāqūt, Mu‘jam, IV, 835.

224. Indicating their support for the government.
ceeded to slaughter and gorge themselves on, spending the entire night there. The following morning they reached the narrow water-way (al-arkhanj)\textsuperscript{225} called al-Muṭahhiri, which joined the Nahr al-Amir opposite al-Fayyāḍ from both sides. There they encountered Shihāb b. al-‘Ālī al-‘Anbarī with a detachment of slaves (al-khawal). In the ensuing action Shihāb escaped with a small troop, but many of his forces were slain. Shihāb was pursued into the center of al-Fayyāḍ. There the Zanj came across six hundred slaves of the Shūrajīyyīn; they captured them and brought them to ‘Ali’s camp, while their agents were killed. ‘Ali advanced as far as a castle called al-Jawhari, situated on the salt flats of the Barāmikah, and spent the night there. In the morning he reached the flats that began at the Dinārī canal and the farthest reaches of which extended to the Nahr al-Muhdath. ‘Ali reunited his troops and ordered them not to press on toward al-Baṣrah until the signal was given. Thereafter they were set loose to plunder the countryside, while ‘Ali spent the night there.

\textit{An Account of the Zanj Leader’s Advance upon al-Baṣrah with His Army}

After the Zanj leader had mustered his troops, they reportedly set out for al-Baṣrah from the salt flats stretching beside the Dinārī canal, the farthest reaches of which extended to the Nahr al-Muhdath. When they had arrived opposite the Nahr al-Riyāḥī, a party of blacks arrived and informed him that they had seen armed men in the al-Riyāḥī area itself. Moments later the Zanj assembled at a call to arms, and the Zanj leader ordered ‘Ali b. Abān to cross the canal against the foe, who were on the eastern side of the Dinārī canal. ‘Ali b. Abān took about three thousand men with him while the Zanj leader collected together his remaining troops, telling ‘Ali [at the same time] that, if he required reinforcements, he need only ask for them. After ‘Ali b. Abān had left, the Zanj called for their weapons, for they had spotted another movement [of troops] from a direction different from the one ‘Ali had taken. The Zanj leader inquired about the troop movement and was told that they were coming from the direction of the village of al-Ja’fariyyah, which lay be-

\textsuperscript{225} See Ṭabari, \textit{Glossarium}, cxi.
side the Nahr Ḥarb. So he despatched Muḥammad b. Salm in that direction.

It was reported from Rayḥān (b. Ṣāliḥ), one of ‘Ali b. Muḥammad’s followers, that he said, “I was among those accompanying Muḥammad (b. Salm) when we set out at the time of the noon prayer. We confronted the enemy in al-Jaʿfariyyah, and a fierce battle developed between us, which lasted until the late afternoon.” The blacks next led a ferocious assault, forcing the enemy to turn heel and flee. Around five hundred persons were killed from among the soldiers, the Arab tribesmen, and the Baṣrān factions of the Bilāliyyah and the Saʿdiyyah. Among the enemy that day was one Fath, a slave of Abū Shith, and he too fled, with Fayruz the Elder in pursuit. When Fath realized that Fayruz could not be shaken off, he flung his metal helmet at him, albeit in vain. He next threw his shield at Fayruz, but this also did not cause him to retreat. Finally, he heaved a metal oven he had been carrying at Fayruz, again without the desired effect. They reached the Nahr Ḥarb, and Fath jumped into the canal and escaped, leaving Fayruz to return to the Zanj leader bearing the weapons that Fath had discarded.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan — Shībl said, “It was related to us that Fath had leaped across the Nahr Ḥarb that day.” Shībl continued, “I related this tale to al-Faḍl b. ‘Adī al-Dārimī, and he said that he had been with the Saʿdiyyah that day and that Fath had not been carrying a metal oven with him. In fact, he was wearing only a yellow-silk tunic. He fought until there remained no one else in the battle, and then he made his way to the Nahr Ḥarb and leaped across it to the western bank.” He seems not to have known Rayḥān’s story about Fayruz.

Rayḥān said, “I met Fayruz before he had returned to the Zanj leader, and he told me the story of his encounter with Fath and showed me the weapons. The Zanj had resorted to recovering spoils as I made my way along the Nahr al-Dīnārī. Suddenly I came across

226. The expression is tannūr ḥadīd, which suggests an implement designed for battlefield conditions or a journey, as the common domestic tannūr was constructed of baked earth or clay. If the implement was shaped like the Beduin metal cooking implement, the sāj, round and concave as a shield, it could have easily been carried. This interpretation seems confirmed by another occurrence of the term, at n. 374, below.

227. See n. 226, above.
a man sitting under a palm tree. He was wearing a silk hat (al-qalansuwa), red shoes, and a woolen tunic (al-durrawa). I seized him, and he showed me letters he was carrying, which he said were from a group of people in al-Basrah who had sent them with him. I threw a turban (al-'amamah) around his neck and led him to the Zanj leader and reported the man's news. 'Ali b. Muhammad asked the man's name, and he replied, 'I am Abū al-Layth Muḥammad b. Abdallāh from lṣfahān, and I have only come to you from a strong desire to be in your company.' 'Ali accepted him.'

Moments later the cry "God is greatest" was heard, and 'Ali b. Abān appeared in possession of the head of one of the Bilāliyyah called Abū al-Layth al-Qawāriri (Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan — Shibl said that Waṣīf al-Zuhrī was the person who killed Abū al-Layth al-Qawāriri, one of the celebrated members of the Bilāliyyah) and in possession of the head of another Bilāliyyah member named 'Abdān al-Kasībi who had a voice among them, as well as the heads of a number of others from them. 'Ali b. Muḥammad queried 'Ali b. Abān about the incident, and he told him that no one had fought him more tenaciously than these two men, meaning Abū al-Layth and 'Abdān. 'Ali b. Abān forced them to flee and finally drove them into the Nahr Nāfīdih, where they had a barge, which he capsized.

Muḥammad b. Sālim later arrived with a prisoner from the Bilāliyyah whom Shibl had captured. His name was Muḥammad al-Azraq al-Qawāriri. Muḥammad was also carrying a number of heads. 'Ali b. Muḥammad called the prisoner over and asked him about the commanders of these two armies. The man replied that those in al-Riyāhī were commanded by Abū Manṣūr al-Zaynabī and the others along the Nahr Ḥarb were commanded by Sulaymān, the brother of al-Zaynabī, who stationed himself on their rear flank in the outlying areas. To a query about their numbers, he replied that he did not know the figures, only that they were a considerable force. 'Ali then had Muḥammad al-Qawāriri released and attached to Shibl's group.

'Ali and the Zanj next made for the salt flats of al-Jaʿfariyyah. He remained there that night among the slain. The following morning he gathered together his troops and cautioned them [again] against their entering al-Basrah. Regardless, some of them, including Ankalwayh, Zurayq, Abū al-Khanjar — who had not yet been made a commander — Salīm and, Waṣīf al-Kūfī hastened on ahead. When
they reached the Nahr al-Shādhānī, a number of Başrans came out to meet them, the number swelling quickly into a multitude. ʿAli b. Muḥammad received news of this and sent off Muḥammad b. Salm, ʿAli b. Abān, and Mushriq, Yaḥyā’s slave, with a large contingent. He went along with them, accompanying the boats that were loaded with pack animals and the wives of the slaves. He established camp at the bridge on the Nahr Kathīr. ʿAbdallah al-Salmi, who, as governor of the city, had it dug during the last years of the Umayyad period. See Yaqūt, Mu’jam, IV, 843–44.

Rayḥān continued: ‘I joined ʿAli b. Muḥammad, having received a wound on my leg from a rock. He asked about developments and I told him that the battle was well underway. He then ordered my return and accompanied me until I reached the high ground overlooking the Nahr al-Sabābījah. He said to me, ‘Go to our troops and tell them to disengage and fall back.’ I told him that he should get as far away from the place as possible, for I was unsure of his safety from the enemy’s slave troops. So he withdrew.

I myself went and informed the commanders of his orders, and they retreated. The Başrans pressed the Zanj hard, and a complete rout was the result. That happened in the late afternoon. Many fell into the Kathīr and Shayṭān canals. ʿAli b. Muḥammad called to his followers to come back, but they could not return. A number of them drowned in the Nahr Kathīr and many were slain on the canal bank as well as on the Shādhānī. Among the commanders who drowned that day were Abū al-Jawn, Mubārak al- Bahrānī, ʿAṯār al-Barbarī, and Salām al-Shāmī. The slave of Abū Shīth, Ḥārith al-Qaysī, and Suḥayl caught up with ʿAli b. Muḥammad, and together they mounted the arched bridge (qantṭaraḥ) over the Nahr Kathīr. ʿAli then turned back to [challenge] them, and they retreated before him until they were back on the ground. On this day ʿAlī was wearing a woolen tunic, a turban, sandals, and a sword, and he carried a shield. When he had left the bridge, the Başrans mounted it again in pursuit. ʿAlī turned back and killed a man on the fifth step of the bridge. He called out to his men to alert them to his position,

228. A canal in al-Baṣrah named after Kathīr b. ʿAbdallāh al-Salmī, who, as governor of the city, had it dug during the last years of the Umayyad period. See Yaqūt, Mu’jam, IV, 843–44.
229. A canal in al-Baṣrah named after a client of Ziyād b. Abīhi, the Umayyad governor of Iraq. See Yaqūt, Mu’jam, IV, 840.
230. Named Fatḥ; see p. 60, above.
231. That is, off the bridge.
but none of them remained in that spot save for Abū al-Shawk, Muşlih, and Rafiḳ, Yahyā’s slave.”

Rayhān said, “I was with ‘Ali b. Muḥammad at the time. He fell back to al-Mu‘allā and camped on the western side of the Shayṭān canal.”

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan said that he had heard the leader of the Zanj himself relate the following: “That day I had found myself at one point completely out of touch with my troops and they with me. Only Muşliḥ and Rafiḳ remained with me. I was wearing a pair of Sindi sandals and a turban, a twist of which had become unraveled and trailed along the ground. I was in too much of a hurry to pick it up, as I was carrying a sword and shield. Muşliḥ and Rafiḳ hurried ahead on foot, and as I lagged behind they disappeared from sight. I spotted two Başrans behind me, one carrying a sword, the other with a rock in his hand. They saw me and recognized me and redoubled their efforts to catch me, so I turned upon them and they backed off. I finally made it back to the spot where my troops were gathered. They had become perturbed at my loss, and seeing me again calmed them down.”

Rayhān continued: “‘Ali b. Muḥammad returned to al-Mu‘allā on the western side of the Nahr Shayṭān and camped there. He discovered upon inquiry that many of the men had fled and, after an inspection, he found there were a total of only five hundred men left. A horn was blown, the sound of which used to be the signal for the slaves to assemble, but no one returned. ‘Ali b. Muḥammad spent the night there, in the course of which Jurbān arrived. He had escaped in the general flight, taking with him thirty slaves. ‘Ali asked him where he had vanished to, and he replied that he had made a reconnaissance of al-Zawāriqah.”

Rayhān continued: “‘Ali b. Muḥammad sent me to find out for him who was still at the Nahr Harb bridge. I found no one around. The Başrans had plundered the boats that ‘Ali had brought there, removing the pack animals and taking possession of his other goods, his letters and astrolabes. The following morning, when ‘Ali b. Muḥammad inspected the troops again, he discovered that a thousand men had made their way back during the night.”

232. Probably the same village as that belonging to Mu‘allā b. Ayyūb. See p. 57, above.
Rayhān said that Shibl was among those who had fled, but Nāṣīḥ al-Ramli denied that.

Rayhān continued: "Shibl returned [to camp] in the morning with ten slaves. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad rebuked him harshly. He demanded to know what had happened to a slave called Abū Naʿjah Nādir and another, ʿAnbar al-Barbari. Shibl reported that they had both fled with the others. The leader of the Zanj remained stationed where he was and gave the order for Muḥammad b. Salm to venture to the arched bridge of the Nahr Kathir and there preach to the people, informing them of the reasons for his revolt. Muḥammad set out, accompanied by Sulaymān b. Ḫāmiʿ and Yahyā b. Muḥammad; they stopped [by the river] while Muḥammad crossed over and made his way into the midst of the troops of al-Baṣrah. 233 As he commenced to address them, they caught him off guard, fell on him, and killed him."

Al-Faḍl b. ʿAdi said that when Muḥammad b. Salm crossed the river to preach to the Baṣrans, they were assembled at a spot called al-Faḍl b. Maymūn. Fath, the slave of Abū Shīth, was the first person suddenly to confront and strike him down with a sword; then Ibn al-Tūmānī al-Saʿdi severed his head. Sulaymān and Yahyā returned to report to ʿAlī b. Muḥammad, who ordered them to say nothing to the Zanj until he had a chance to do so himself. Following the afternoon prayers, he announced the death of Muḥammad b. Salm to those troops who had not heard the news. He said to them, "Tomorrow you shall slay ten thousand Baṣrans to avenge him." He sent Zurayq and his slave Saqlabṭūyā with orders to prevent anyone from crossing the river. That was on Sunday, the 13th of Dhū al-Qaʿdah in the year 255 (October 23, 869).

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan — Muḥammad b. Simʿān al-Ḵāṭib: On Monday, the 14th of Dhū al-Qaʿdah (October 24, 869), the people of al-Baṣrah 235 assembled together and went forth in the wake of what they regarded as a triumph over the Zanj the previous day. The man

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233. The expression is ahl al-Baṣrah, which could signify either the populace or troops; the latter seems preferable here. See n. 235, below. Clearly this incident did not take place in al-Baṣrah itself but rather on the outskirts of the city. See Popovic, Révolte, 92.

234. The reading is conjectural.

235. The expression once again is ahl al-Baṣrah. See n. 233, above. Here, however, Tabari indicates a much broader participation in the expedition against the Zanj than just military personnel.
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selected to lead the expedition was a Başran by the name of Hammād al-Sāji, a sailor experienced in operating and fighting from barges. The force comprised volunteers, archers, people from the main mosque, those from the Bilāliyyah and Sa’diyyah factions prepared to follow Hammād, and onlookers from the Hāshimites, Qurayshites, and other sections of the populace. Three barges were loaded with archers who crowded on board, eager to get to the scene of battle. A mob proceeded on foot, some bearing arms while others were mere spectators without weapons. The barges and boats entered the Umm Ḥabib canal on the tide after sunset that same day. The procession of foot soldiers and spectators along the canal bank was so dense and numerous that they blocked from view everything in front of them. The Zanj leader had stationed himself on the canal known as al-Shayṭān.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan said the Zanj leader told him that, when his scouts had arrived and he knew of the approaching crowd, he sent off Zurayq and Abū al-Layth al-Iṣbahānī with a detachment of troops along the east bank of the [Shayṭān] canal, and Shibl and Ḥusayn al-Ḥammāmī with another detachment along the western bank. Both parties were to set up ambushes. ‘Ali b. Abān was ordered to take the remainder of his troops to intercept the enemy. They should, however, crouch down facing the enemy, guarding themselves with their shields, allowing no one to attack until the adversaries were close enough to brandish swords at them. When the situation had developed in this way, the Zanj attacked the enemy. The Zanj leader gave orders to the two ambushes that when the throng [on the banks] were abreast of them and they heard their own troops on the attack, they should emerge on both sides of the canal shouting at the enemy. The Zanj women were ordered to gather bricks and keep the men supplied with them.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan said that after this incident the leader of the Zanj told his followers, "That day, as I beheld the mob approaching, I was gripped by a terrible fear, such an overwhelming terror that I appealed [to God] for help. I was accompanied by only a few troops, among them Muṣliḥ, and there was not one among us who did not imagine that he was going to meet his doom. Muṣliḥ marveled at the size of the multitude and I motioned to him to contain himself. As the enemy neared, I cried out, 'Oh God, this is the hour of trial, so come to my aid!' I had scarcely finished saying this when I saw white
birds sweep down upon the enemy, and one of the galleys over-
turned, and all on board were drowned.\textsuperscript{236} The barges met the same fate. My troops then fell upon the enemy they were heading for, shouting at them.’ The ambushers emerged from their hiding places on the canal banks behind the boats and the foot soldiers, clubbing those among them and onlookers on shore who tried to flee. A group here was drowned, a group there was killed, while others who fled toward the canal seeking rescue were overtaken by the sword. Those who resisted were slain, while those who ventured into the water were drowned. The foot soldiers on the canal’s edge who sought escape in the water were either killed or drowned until most of the en-
emy forces had been annihilated. None but the odd fugitive was saved. The numbers of Baṣrans missing soared as their wives raised a chorus of lament.

People spoke of this day as the Day of the Barges (\textit{yawm al-
shadhāh}).\textsuperscript{237} They were horrified by the number killed that day. Among the innumerable host killed were a number of sons of the Hāshimite Ja’far b. Sulaymān and forty famous archers.

The abominable one\textsuperscript{238} had the heads [of the slain] collected. He displayed them so that relatives of the deceased who came to him could claim those they recognized. For the rest, which no one claimed, he put aboard a flat-bottomed boat (\textit{jaribiyyah}), filling it up. The boat was released on the falling tide from the Umm Ḥabib canal, where it drifted toward al-Baṣrah, stopping at Mashra‘ah\textsuperscript{239} al-Qayyār. People came and recovered the heads of those they recognized.

After this day the enemy of God became ever more powerful as fear of him gripped the Baṣrans’ hearts. They abstained from further battle with him, but the central authorities were informed of his es-
capades, and Ju‘lān al-Turki was sent with reinforcements to the

\textsuperscript{236} On this incident, see Halm, \textit{Traditionen}, 26.

\textsuperscript{237} \textit{Shadhāh} being the name of the type of vessel employed by the Baṣrans.

\textsuperscript{238} Ṭabari suddenly changes his tone toward the Zanj leader, employing the epi-
thet \textit{al-khabith} here for the first time. On the following page he calls him “enemy of God.” Lane, \textit{Lexicon}, s.v. \textit{kh-b-th}, gives a rich variety of words to choose from, among them “base, corrupt, artful, cunning, and wicked”; “abominable one” has been used here consistently to render \textit{khabith}.

\textsuperscript{239} Mashra‘ah, as part of the place name, signifies a place to which people come to drink or draw water, and where animals are also watered. See Lane, \textit{Lexicon}, s.v. \textit{sh-r-‘}. 
Baṣrans. Juʿlān ordered Abū al-Aḥwaṣ al-Bāhili to proceed to al-
Ubullah as governor, sending as support a Turk called Jurayḥ.

The abominable one alleged that his followers had boasted to him
in the wake of this [recent] battle that they had slaughtered the en-
tire fighting force of al-Baṣrah save for the weak and incapacitated.
"Give us permission to storm the city," they demanded. ʿAli b. Mu-
ḥammad berated them and decried their request. "On the contrary,"
he scolded, "get as far away from al-Baṣrah as possible; we have in-
stilled fear and terror in them, and now you are safe. The thing to do
now is forsake war with them until they come looking for you." Then he withdrew his forces to a salt flat at the farthest edge of the
network of canals and then went on to the al-Ḥājir canal.

Shibli said that this place was the salt flats of Abū Qurrah, which
lay between the Nahr Abū Qurrah and the Nahr al-Ḥājir. ʿAli b. Mu-
ḥammad stationed himself there and gave the command to his
troops to construct huts from the reeds (akwākh).240 These salt flats
were surrounded by palm groves, villages, and cultivated fields. The
Zanj soldiers spread out right and left, raiding the villages, murder-
ing the farmers, stealing their property, and leading their livestock
away.

Such was the news of ʿAli b. Muḥammad and of the people who
were affected by his rebellion this year.

Al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Abī Shawārib al-Qādī241 was impris-
oned on the 28th of Dhū al-Qaʿdah [November 7, 869], and ʿAbd al-
Rahmān b. Nāʿīl al-Baṣrī was appointed to the judgeship of Sāmarrā
in Dhū al-Ḥijjah [November 10 – December 8, 869] of this year.

Leading the pilgrimage this year was ʿAli b. al-Ḥasan b. Ismāʿil b.
al-ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī.242

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240. See G. Young, A Reed Shaken by the Wind, for a modern account of life among the marsh Arabs.
241. See n. 6, above.
242. He had led the pilgrimage the previous year as well.
Among the significant events of the year was the arrival in Sāmarra of Mūsā b. Bughā. Śāliḥ b. Waṣīf was driven into hiding, while some of Mūsā’s military commanders transferred al-Muhtadī under escort from the Jawsaq palace to the palace of Yājūr.\(^{243}\)

It was reported that Mūsā b. Bughā entered Sāmarra with those accompanying him on Monday the 11th of al-Muḥarram of this year (December 19, 869). Upon his arrival, Mūsā commenced a review of his troops, the left and right wings and the central sector presented together with their arms, which took place in al-Hayr, and continued up to the point where they reached the Gate of al-Ḥayr adjacent to the Jawsaq palace and the Qaṣr al-Ḥmar. This was on the very day that al-Muhtadī was holding a session of the court of appeal (maẓālim). Āḥmad b. al-Mutawakkil b. Fityān\(^{244}\) was among those summoned to attend that day, because of the court. He was still there at

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\(^{243}\) The copyist of manuscript C reads for Yājūr the name of another Turkish commander, Yārjūkh.

\(^{244}\) The future Caliph al-Mu’tamid; see p. 115, below, for his accession date. His patronymic was Abū al-ʿAbbās, though he was also known by his mother’s name, Fityān, or, according to Ibn al-Athir (Kāmil, VII, 235), Qityān or Qinin.
the palace when the mawlas [of Mūsā b. Bughā] entered and took al-Muhtadi off to the palace of Yājūr. Aḥmad b. al-Mutawakkil followed and continued the court of appeal session, deputizing for al-Muhtadi, in the tent of Muṣliḥ, until the business with al-Muhtadi was cleared up and he had been returned to al-Jawsaq and released.

Bāyakbāk had been in charge of affairs in the caliphal palace and had been replaced a few days previous by Sātikin. This was owing, people thought, to al-Muhtadi’s confidence in him, which meant Sātikin would also control both the palace and the Caliph’s person at the moment of Mūsā (b. Bughā’s) arrival. On that day Sātikin remained in his own quarters, leaving the palace vacant. Mūsā arrived at the palace while al-Muhtadi was in session of the court of appeal; he was informed of Muhtadi’s arrival but delayed giving him permission to enter for a while. When he and his company were finally allowed an audience, there first occurred a discussion like that on the day that [Mūsā’s] delegation and messengers had arrived.245 However, when such discussion became prolonged, the Turks began to mutter impatiently among themselves in their own tongue. Al-Muhtadi was then forced to leave the assembly and he was borne away on one of the animals of the Shakiriyyah, while the Turks plundered what was available in the Jawsaq palace in the way of riding beasts belonging to the elite. They then headed for al-Karkh246 and upon reaching the Gate of al-Ḥayr in the fiefs attached to the palace of Yājūr, they brought him into the palace itself.

One of the mawlas who was present that day recounted the reason for their seizure of al-Muhtadi. One mawla had remarked to another that the delays [created by al-Muhtadi] were merely a device to allow Šāliḥ b. Waṣīf to take them by surprise with his forces. This prospect frightened them and caused them to remove al-Muhtadi to another spot.

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245. As described p. 28, above.
246. This is the Karkh of Sāmarrā, also known as Karkh Firūz, to distinguish it from the southern quarter of Baghdad of the same name. It lay ten miles north of Sāmarrā. See Le Strange, *Lands*, 52; also Yāqūt, *Mu’jam*, III, 17. The Caliph al-Muṭtaṣim constructed al-Karkh beyond the built-up area of Sāmarrā, where the Turkish military personnel held lands (qatā’ī), in order to keep them separated from the ordinary population of the city and from certain other contingents of the army that were housed there. See D. Ayalon, “Preliminary Remarks on the Mamluk Military Institution in Islam,” especially 55, quoting al-Ya’qūbi.
Someone reported that he had heard al-Muhtadi say to Müsä, "What do you wish? Mercy on you! Honor God, and fear Him, for it is a momentous matter that you undertake." Müsä replied, "We desire nothing but good. I swear by the grave of al-Mutawakkil, absolutely no harm will befall you from our part." The one who had overheard this remark was prompted to say to himself that, had Müsä really sought only [the Caliph's] good, he would have better sworn on the grave of either al-Mu'tasim or al-Wāṭhiq.247

When al-Muhtadi had been transferred to Yājur's palace, the mawlās extracted vows and promises from him that he would not side with Śalih against them and that he would not harbor toward them ulterior intentions different from the way he treated them openly. Al-Muhtadi agreed, and the mawlas renewed their oath of allegiance to him on Tuesday the 12th of al-Muharram (December 20, 869). Later the same morning they sent for Śalih to come to them for discussions, and Śalih promised to appear.

One of the chiefs of the Farāghinah248 reported that, when he was asked what they were demanding of Śalih b. Waṣīf, he replied, "The blood of the government secretaries and their property and the blood of al-Mu'tazz and his entourage and property."249

The commanders accepted after pondering these matters, while their troops remained outside by the Gate of al-Ḥayr next to the palace of Yajur. Then, on the Tuesday evening, Śalih went into hiding.250

Ṭalmajur recounted the following. "On the evening of Tuesday we assembled together with Śalih. After he had ordered the distribution of periodic payments (arzāq) to those assigned to guard duty (aṣḥāb al-nawbah), he ordered one of the company present to review251 the

247. Both al-Mu'tasim and al-Wāṭhiq had died of natural causes while al-Mutawakkil had been murdered by Müsä's father in league with Waṣīf, the father of Śalih. For brief accounts of these events, see Kennedy, Age, 171–75; Sourdel, Vizirat, 1, 271–86.

248. A regiment of soldiers from the province of Farghanah, a large area lying on the north and south sides of the upper Jaxartes river. The region first supplied soldiers as guards for the Caliph al-Mu'tasim [d. 227/842]. See Le Strange, Lands, 476–80, El, s.v. "Farghana."

249. Tabari here means that the chief was seeking recompense for the blood of those mentioned, that is, vengeance. The Caliph al-Mu'tazz had been killed some five months previously.

250 That is, within a day of Müsä b. Bughā's arrival in Sāmarrā.

251. On the formal procedures of the military review, see Bosworth, "Recruitment," especially 70–77.
number of troops at hand. That morning their number had been some five thousand. Returning to Šâliḥ, the man said that there were now only eight hundred men, most of whom were his freed-men (ghilmān and mawlas). For a while Šâliḥ was silent, then he rose and left us without any further instructions. This was his last act.’’

It was reported from someone who had overheard that Bukhtîshu’ (b. Jibrîl) said, alluding to Šâliḥ before Mûsâ’s arrival, ‘‘First we roused this unruly force and incited them; then, when finally they did come to us, we were preoccupied with drinking and playing backgammon. It was as if we were here one moment, then just vanished when he (Mûsâ) reached al-Qāṭîl.’’

In the early hours of Wednesday morning, Ťughtâ arrived at the door of Yâjūr’s palace, where Mufîlîh confronted him and delivered him a blow with his battle-ax, striking him on the right temple. Those who remained with Šâliḥ the night he went into hiding included, from among the senior army commanders, the said Ťughtâ b. al-Šayghûn, Ťalmajûr who was al-Mu’ayyad’s associate, Muḥammad b. Türksh, Khamûsh, and al-Nûshûrî, while from among the ranking secretaries there were Abû Šâliḥ ‘ Abdallâh b. Muḥammad b. Yâzdâd, ‘ Abdallâh b. Mañsûr, and Abû al-Faraj.

On the Wednesday morning, which was the 13 th of al-Mubarram (December 21, 869), Šâliḥ had already gone into hiding, while Abû Šâliḥ made for the palace of Yâjûr. ‘ Abdallâh b. Mañsûr arrived there too with Sulaymân b. Wahb, who disclosed to those present that he had drafts for five thousand dinars, which Šâliḥ had wanted him to handle. He refused to do so until the whole affair [concerning Šâ-
The cause of this was as follows. On Wednesday, the 27th of al-Muḥarram of the year 256 (January 4, 870), al-Muhtadi publicly disclosed the contents of a letter. He said that Sima al-Sharābi claimed a woman had brought it from somewhere near al-Qaṣr al-Āhmār and given it to Kāfūr, a eunuch (khādim) in charge of the harem. She had told him that it contained some valuable information and mentioned also where she lived, should anyone wish to make contact with her. The letter was then delivered to al-Muhtadi. When in fact it became expedient to question the woman about the letter, she was not to be found at the address she had given, and no one had any news about her.

It was reported that al-Muhtadi himself had discovered the letter but did not know who was responsible for delivering it.

Al-Muhtadi then summoned Sulaymān b. Wahb to attend him,
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along with a group of the mawlas, among whom were Mūsā b. Bughā, Musliḥ, Bāyakbāk, Yājūr, Bakālabā, and others. He showed the letter to Sulaymān and asked him if he recognized the handwriting. Sulaymān replied that it was the hand of Śāliḥ b. Waṣīf, whereupon al-Muḥtādi ordered Sulaymān to read the letter to the assembled company.

Śāliḥ stated in it that he had gone to ground in Sāmarrā. He had done so preferring safety for himself but also to spare the mawlas and in fear that skirmishes between them might erupt into full-scale hostilities. His intention was that everyone should sleep on the matter, so that whatever happened would be after reflection upon what he had set out in his letter. Śāliḥ went on to detail what he had seized of the secretaries’ property. He said that al-Ḥasan b. Makhlaḍ had that information, and he was one of the secretaries still in their custody. Next he noted who had delivered money to him and to whom he had entrusted its distribution. He remarked upon the affair of Qabīḥah and indicated that information on that was possessed by Abū Śāliḥ b. Yazdād and Śāliḥ al-‘Aṭṭār. Among other matters that he touched upon Śāliḥ attempted to justify his behavior for certain actions, while apologizing for others. In any event, his words expressed the strength of his feelings.

When Sulaymān had finished reading the letter, al-Muḥtādi followed by urging upon the company reconciliation, harmony, and agreement, as he sought to stimulate an aversion for dissension, mutual hatred, and destruction. This only caused them to suspect that al-Muḥtādi knew of Śāliḥ’s whereabouts and that he might deliver them into Śāliḥ’s hands. This suspicion created much discussion among them and lengthy examination of the matter. On Thursday morning, the 28th of al-Muḥārram 256 (January 5th, 870), the Turkish commanders went together to the residence of Mūsā b. Bughā inside the Jawṣaq compound, muttering and discussing matters among themselves. News of this reached al-Muḥtādi.

Aḥmad b. Ḥaqqān al-Wāṭhiqī reported that he had been the one to bring this news to al-Muḥtādi’s attention. He said that he had heard someone present at the meeting of commanders say, “The troops are unanimous in their decision to depose this man.” Aḥmad continued: “I went to his brother İbrāhīm [al-Muwaqqaf] and informed him of developments, and he in turn passed on the information from me
The Caliphate of Ibn al-Wāthiq

to al-Muhtadī. I nevertheless feared that the Commander of the Faithful might hasten to inform the Turks about me; but God granted me security."

Aḥmad reported further that the brother of Bāyakbāk addressed the assembly once they had disclosed to him the course of action they had decided upon. He said: "You have slain the son of al-Mutawakkil, who was handsome, generous, and kind, and now you want to murder this man, who is a good Muslim who fasts, does not drink forbidden wine (nabīdḥ), and had done no wrong. By God, if you do kill him, then I shall take off for Khurāsān and spread notice of this whole affair of yours far and wide."

When news of this meeting reached al-Muhtadī, he entered his audience chamber girt with sword, dressed in clean robes, and perfumed. He then summoned the Turks into his presence, but for a while they refused. When finally they stood before him he said to them, "I have heard what you intend to do with me. I am not like my predecessors, such as Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Musta’in, or even like the son of Qabīḥah. By God, I have not come to confront you without being prepared to die. I have already entrusted my brother with my son to succeed me. This is my sword, and by God I shall fight with it so long as I can hold onto it. And by God, if one hair of my head is touched, the lot of you shall surely perish. Have you no religion? Have you no shame? Have you no piety? How long will this dissension against the caliphs, this boldness and effrontery against God, go on? It is all the same to you whether one wants to spare you or, hearing such a tale as this about you, calls for gallons of drink to celebrate joyously your misfortune and rejoices in your ruin! Tell me from what you yourselves know: Are you aware of any of this wealth of yours that has reached me? You, 0 Bāyakbāk, don’t you realize that just one of your company is more fortunate than all of my own family? If you really want to know, just take a look! Will you see in any of their residences furniture, servants, and slaves or whether they possess estates and revenues (ghallāt)? Fie on you! And now

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261. This meeting, according to Ibn al-Athir (Kāmil, VII, 219), took place in the apartment of Mūṣā b. Bughā, which was located in the Jawsaq palace. Ibn al-Athir, however, puts the words into the mouth of Babakiyāl, rather than Bāyakbāk’s brother.

262. The word ghallāḥ (pl. ghallāt) means the produce, revenue, or income from a wide variety of sources: produce of the land or income from its rent, rental of a house, or hire of a slave. See Lane, Lexicon, s.v. "gh-1-l".
you come and say that I know what Shāliḥ is up to! Is he not just another mawlā like yourselves? How then would I put up with him, if you all think ill of him? If you should choose to make peace, that is what I heartily desire for all of you. But, if you persist in pursuing this course, that is your business. Seek out Shāliḥ, and satisfy your blood lust! But, as for myself, I have no knowledge of his whereabouts."

They demanded that he swear an oath upon that, to which al-Muhtadi replied, "I will give you my right hand on it, but I shall postpone doing so until tomorrow when I perform the Friday prayers in the presence of the Hāshimites, religious judges, conciliators, and other men of rank."

The Turks seemed to relent a little at this. Al-Muhtadi sent for the Hāshimites, and they arrived in the evening. When al-Muhtadi gave them permission to enter and greetings were exchanged, he made no mention to them of these matters and simply ordered them to be at the palace for the Friday prayers, and they departed. The next morning, Friday, they (the Turks) had made no move. Al-Muhtadi performed his prayers; everyone was calm and departed in peace.

Someone who had overheard the quarrel on Wednesday reportedly said that, when Shāliḥ had been denounced as a traitor, al-Muhtadi had observed that Bāyakbāk had also been around when Shāliḥ was embroiled in the affair of the secretaries and the wealth of Qabīḥah's son (al-Muʿtazz). Thus, if Shāliḥ had gained anything from the business, Bāyakbāk must have profited as well. This remark infuriated Bāyakbāk.

Someone else who had heard this remark reported that al-Muhtadi had also observed that Muḥammad b. Bughā, too, had been around and was fully cognizant of what had happened and indeed had participated in the whole affair. This gibe provoked Abū Naṣr (Muḥammad b. Bughā's) anger.

It has been said that for a long time the Turkish commanders held their counsel about the insult implicit [in al-Muhtadi's words] but that in their hearts they harbored rancor against him, though they were prevented from doing anything from fear of disorder and the lack of financial resources. When, however, the revenue arrived

263. That is, "I won't try to stop you."
264. Literally, from the time of the age of Moses.
from Fārs and al-Ahwāz on Wednesday, the 27th of al-Muḥarram (January 4, 870), they were roused to action. The total amount of these revenues was 17.5 million dirhams.

On Saturday, news spread among the populace that the army was about to depose and murder al-Muhtadi, an end they sought by provoking him to anger. They had leaflets written and distributed in the congregation mosque and in the streets. Someone who claimed to have read one said it contained, in part, the following words:

In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful. O community of Muslims! Pray to God for your Caliph, the just, the favored, the second Ṭūlān ibn Muḥammad b. Qaṣim al-Khaṭṭāb. Pray that God grant him victory over his enemies, that He spare him the trouble of enduring his oppressor, and that He fill him and this community with bounty by extending his life. The mawlus have been urging al-Muhtadi to abdicate, and for some days he has been submitted to torture. Those conducting this campaign are Ahmad b. Muḥammad b. Thawābah and al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad. May God show mercy upon those with pure intentions and pray for Muḥammad (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him).

On Wednesday, the 4th of Šafar of this year (January 11, 870), the mawlus in al-Karkh and al-Dūr265 became agitated. They dispatched a spokesman, Ḥisā, to tell al-Muhtadi that they needed to discuss certain matters with him. They requested that the Commander of the Faithful send one of his brothers to them. So al-Muhtadi sent his oldest brother, Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbdallāh, along with Muḥammad b. Mubāshir al-Karkhī, and they set out to inquire what was troubling the mawlus. First, the mawlus professed their obedience and loyalty to the Commander of the Faithful. They had heard that Musā b. Bughā, Bāyakbāk, and a number of their commanders were seeking to depose al-Muhtadi. While they would freely sacrifice their lives, they would not do so for that.

The mawlus continued, saying that they had read the leaflets distributed in the main mosque and in the streets. In this regard they complained of their straitened circumstances, the delay [in the pay-

265. Another settlement for the Turkish soldiery, lying farther to the north of al-Karkh. See Le Strange, Lands, 52.
ment of their allotments, and the damage done to estates and the land tax as a result of the commanders' acquisition of fiefs (iqṭā'). Moreover, most of the revenue from the land tax had been swallowed up by their chiefs and their bonuses and extras from previously established practices, as well as allotments for women and other interlopers. They talked at length in this vein. Abū al-Qāsim 'Abdallah b. al-Wāthiq finally said to them, "Write all this down in a letter to the Commander of the Faithful, and I will ensure that it is delivered to him on your behalf." So a letter was drafted. The secretary responsible for writing it was Muḥammad b. Thaqīf al-Aswad, who acted as a secretary for 'Īsā, on occasion master of al-Karkh.

Abū al-Qāsim and Muḥammad b. Mubāshir left and delivered the letter of al-Muhtadi, who replied in his own hand, sealing the letter with his own seal. On the following morning Abū al-Qāsim went to al-Karkh, where he met the mawlsīs. They went together to the palace of Ushnās, which had been turned into a congregational mosque for them. In the public square they halted, the assembled mawlsīs comprising some one hundred fifty cavalry and about five hundred infantry. Abū al-Qāsim read out Muhtadi's greetings to them, saying, "The Commander of the Faithful says that this is his personal letter to you, written and sealed by himself, so listen to it, and weigh carefully what it says." Abū al-Qāsim then handed the epistle to their secretary, who read it out:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praised be God, and His manifold blessings be upon Muḥammad the Prophet and his family. May God guide us and you rightly, and be to us and to you both friend and protector. I have taken note of your message and rejoice in your expression of loyalty and obedience. May God reward you and protect you well. It distresses me greatly to hear of your misery and your needs. By God, would that I could arrange for your welfare by eating and feeding my children and household only the necessary minimum amount of food and clothing my children only in what suffices to hide their modesty. But

266. See EI, s.v. "iqṭā'."
267. The system of military payments was open to abuse by the commanders' inclusion in the registers of persons not entitled to such stipends. The formal military reviews were occasions intended to weed out such interlopers (al-dukhalā'), although this did not always work in practice. See Bosworth, "Recruitment," especially 71.
no, by God! May He protect you! Since I accepted rule over you, I have had only fifteen thousand dinars for my own needs and those of my household, children, servants, and retinue. You have access to what [amounts] have arrived and shall arrive, and everything has been disbursed to you with nothing held back. As for what you mention hearing and reading about in the leaflets distributed in the mosques and streets and about your unstinting service, this is indeed worthy of you. So why apologize for bringing the matter up? We and you are as one. May God compensate you well for your pledges and your fidelity. But the situation is not as you have heard; knowing this, act accordingly, God willing. As for what you mention about fiefs, bonuses, and other matters, I shall examine these questions and, God willing, shall earn your affection in doing so. Peace be upon you. May God rightly guide us and you, and be protector to us both. Praised be God, Lord of the worlds. Manifold blessings be upon Muhammad the Prophet and his family.

When the man who was reading the letter reached the point where al-Muhtadi had said that he had only received a sum of fifteen thousand dinars, Abū al-Qāsim motioned to the man, and he stopped. And then he (Abū al-Qāsim) said, "What is this [paltry sum]? During his reign, the Commander of the Faithful has deserved more than this amount for a shorter period for [expenditure] on his allotments, provisions, and assistance. Surely you know what previous caliphs have spent on gifts for effeminates, singers, musicians, building villas and such like! So pray to God for the Commander of the Faithful!"

The man resumed reading the letter, and when he had finished there was much discussion. Then the mawlās made a statement of their own. Abū al-Qāsim replied, advising them to express their views in a letter, commencing it in the customary manner of correspondence to caliphs and addressing it from "the commanders, their deputies, and chiefs in al-Karkh, al-Dūr and Sāmarrā."

They did so, first praying to God for the Commander of the Faithful. Then they requested the following: that all matters pertaining

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268. Al-quwwād wa-khulāfā‘ihim wa-al-‘urafā‘. For the use of these ranks, see p. 79, below.
to rank, both high and low, be referred back to the Commander of the Faithful without interference from anyone else, that arrangements of military administration revert to what they had been in the days of al-Musta‘in, namely, that every nine men be under a chief, every fifty men under a deputy (khalīfah), and every hundred men under a commander (qā‘id); that women, extras, and bonuses be excised from the register; that a mawlā not be included as part of a qabālah contract or any other; that they be paid regularly every two months; that the practice of granting the fiefs be discontinued; and, finally, that the Commander of the Faithful be able to increase [the pay] of whomsoever he wished and promote whom he liked.

The mawlās added that immediately following their letter they were going to proceed to the residence of the Commander of the Faithful and remain there until their needs were met. Moreover, if they heard of anyone interfering with him concerning these matters, they would have his head. If anyone touched a hair of the Commander of the Faithful’s head, they would kill Mūsā b. Bughā. Bāyakbāk, Muṣliḥ, Yājūr, Bakālabā, and others. And with that they prayed to God for the Commander of the Faithful.

They gave the letter to Abū al-Qāsim and he departed and delivered it. In Sāmarrā the mawlās became unsettled and the commanders very disturbed. Al-Muhtadi had already taken his seat in the court of appeal, and the jurists and judges were allowed to enter and take theirs. The commanders stood according to their ranks while Abū al-Qāsim entered ahead of the plaintiffs. Al-Muhtadi read the letter and withdrew with Mūsā b. Bughā. The caliph next ordered Sulaymān b. Wahb to endorse their copy of the letter, approving what they had requested. When Sulaymān had done this in a paragraph or two, Abū al-Qāsim said, “O Commander of the Faithful,

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169. ‘Ārif. As a term applied to certain military and civilian offices, see EI, s.v. “Ārif.”

270. On the nature of the juridical term “guarantee” as used in the practice of fiscal contracts, see EI, s.v. “Kabāla”; Sourd, Vizirat, II, 585–86. Military commanders sought such contracts in anticipation of benefits accruing from speculation on the differential between the sum contracted by a guarantor with the central treasury and the amount the guarantor was actually able to collect from taxes levied on the harvest. Here the intention seems to be a limitation of the abuse of the system by exclusion of mawlās as guarantors. Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, VII, 222, however, has là yudkhal mawlā fi mālihi, which suggests that mawlās were not to be included as part of their commanders’ property. Neither reading provides an entirely satisfactory understanding of the passage.
only your endorsement in your own hand will satisfy them.” So al-Muhtadi took the paper and struck out what Sulaymān had written, endorsing each article of their requests with his approval, stating that each would be fulfilled. He then composed a separate communication in his own hand, sealing it himself, and gave it to Abū al-Qāsim. The latter spoke to Mūsā, Bāyakbāk, and Muḥammad b. Bughā, “Send messengers accompanying me to them, to plead your excuses before them concerning what has reached them about you.” So each of them appointed a man to go along with Abū al-Qāsim. He found the mawlās assembled in their usual places, numbering around a thousand cavalry and three thousand infantry. The time was noon on Thursday, the 5th of Șafar (January 12, 870) of this year.

He read to them greetings from the Commander of the Faithful, saying, “The Commander of the Faithful has responded to everything you have asked for. So pray to God for him.” He handed the letter over to their secretary who first read out al-Muhtadi’s endorsements, then read them the second letter from the caliph. It went as follows:

In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful. Praised be God, He alone. God’s blessings and peace be upon Muḥammad the Prophet and his family. May God guide you aright and protect you. May He give you plenty and restore your circumstances and through you and by means of you those of Muslims as well. I have taken note of your despatch and I also read it to your chiefs. They reported the same things as you have and have asked for the same things as you have. I have already consented to everything that you requested, out of love for your welfare and friendship, and to rally your support. I have ordered your allotments to be so stipulated that they will accrue to you on a regular basis; thus, there is no need for you to be unsettled. Be of good heart. Peace! and may God guide you aright and protect you; may He provide you with plenty and restore your circumstances and, through you and by means of you, those of Muslims as well.

When the man reading the letter had finished, Abū al-Qāsim said to them, “These men are messengers from your chiefs who have
come to plead their excuses before you for what you may have heard about them. They say that your are all brothers and belong to each other." Then the messengers spoke along the same lines. The mawlās themselves engaged in lengthy discussion and at the end of it drafted a [further] communication to the Commander of the Faithful, setting forth in it the same kind of justification as they had in their first letter. They dissociated themselves from what they had asserted in the previous communication. Now, they would be satisfied with nothing less than the Caliph's endorsement of five points. These were to reduce the increases; the restoration of fiefs to their former conditions [of tenure]; the demotion of mawlās who were gatekeepers from the status of the "elite" to that of the lower-ranking palace guards (barrāniyyin);271 reversion to the military administrative practices of the days of al-Musta‘in; and, finally, restoration of talāji properties,272 so they could be placed in control of someone to whom were attached fifty men from the troops of al-Dūr and fifty from Sāmarrā, all of which could be successfully carried out by the diwāns. In addition, the Commander of the Faithful should turn over the army to one of his brothers, or someone else [of his choice] who could act as intermediary between them in their affairs; but this person should not be from among the ranks of the mawlās. Šāliḥ b. Waṣiṭ and Mūsā b. Bughā should each be held responsible for his wealth. Thus, nothing would content them short of having all the requests in their communications dealt with; this, as well as having their pay (al-`aḍ‘ā') expedited, their regular pay (arzdq)273 being made every two months. The mawlās also informed the Caliph that they had written to the troops of Sāmarrā and the Maghāribah troops to join them, and that they would be going to the res-

271. Tabari, Glossarium, cxxx.
272. Dozy, Supplément, II, 524. These properties referred to ownership of land ceded to another person, who undertook to protect the original owner's right to work the land; see also Lane, Lexicon, s.v. 1-i-‘, for a variant meaning.
273. The difference between the two terms for pay or stipend, as explained by Lane, seems to be founded upon the time between payments; whereas, for example, the ‘āḍ‘ā' could be an allowance paid once a year, the rizq (pl. arzdq) was paid more frequently, the period stipulated being two months. In both instances payment appears to have been made both in money and in provisions and equipment. See Lane, Lexicon, s.v. ‘-t-w. The word ‘āḍ‘ā', which means "gift," was originally applied to pensions paid to Muslims and then became the term for troops' pay, where it could also be an ad hoc payment. See El.' s.vv. "Atā'," "Djaysh."
idence of the Commander of the Faithful to seek fulfillment of their demands.

Their letter of demands was given to Abū al-Qāsim, the Caliph's brother. Meanwhile they wrote another to Mūsā b. Bughā, Bāyakbāk, Muḥammad b. Bughā, Muflīḥ, Yājūr, Bakālabā, and the other commanders, reporting their communication with the Caliph, and its contents.

They noted, moreover, that the Commander of the Faithful had accepted their request so long as the commanders did not interfere with his decisions; were the commanders in fact to do so and oppose the mawlās, then no agreement could be arranged with them on anything. The letter added that, if the Commander of the Faithful were wounded or if a hair of his head was disturbed, they the mawlās would have the heads of all of them. They would now only be satisfied with the reappearance of Šāliḥ b. Waṣīf who would, together with Mūsā b. Bughā, examine the matter of the whereabouts of the [disputed] wealth; for before he vanished Šāliḥ had promised to pay them their allotments (arzāq) for six months.

This letter was given to Mūsā's messenger, while the mawlās despatched several of their colleagues with Abū al-Qāsim to deliver the other letter to the Commander of the Faithful and to await his response.

When Abū al-Qāsim returned, Mūsā sent some five hundred horsemen to stand by the al-Ḥayr Gate situated between al-Jawṣaq and al-Karkh. Abū al-Qāsim turned aside to them along with the soldiers' messengers and those of Mūsā's forces. Mūsā's messenger gave him the mawlās' letter intended for himself and his associates. Among this group were Sulaymān b. Wahb and his son, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Thawābah, and some other secretaries. When Mūsā had read the letter to them, Abū al-Qāsim said that he bore another letter from the mawlās, this one of the Commander of the Faithful; he did not, however, disclose it to them. They then all rode off together to al-Muḥtadi whom they found seated on a carpet in the sun, having just finished his prayers. In the palace he had destroyed every musical instrument and gadget of pleasure and amusement. Once the letters were delivered, he was left alone for a while. Later, he instructed Sulaymān b. Wahb to compose replies to the matters raised by the mawlās in five brief notes. Al-Muḥtadi passed these on, enclosing them in a letter of his own, and gave [the roll] to his brother.
The commanders also composed a reply to the *mawlās* and gave it to Mūsā's associate. By sunset Abū al-Qāsim had returned to the Turks with al-Muhtadī's greetings and he read out to them the Caliph's letter:

In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful. May God find us worthy to obey and please Him. I have noted your letter, May God protect you. I have sent to you the five endorsements meeting the terms that you stipulated. So now delegate agents to those in the government bureaus who will successfully execute the promises, God willing. As for your request to turn your affairs over to one of my brothers so that your news may be brought to my attention and your needs conveyed to me, by God I would have been content to review these matters personally, and observe every matter that concerns your welfare. However, I shall, God willing, select for you one of my brothers or someone else suitable, as you have asked for. But do keep me informed as to your needs and also what you deem appropriate for yourselves, and I shall do what I can to meet your wishes. God willing. May God find us worthy to obey and please Him.

Then Mūsā's messenger delivered the epistle from Mūsā and his colleagues. In it he said:

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. May God preserve and keep you, and perfect His bounty upon you. We have noted your letter. You are brothers to us and our cousins, and we are set upon meeting what you desire. The Commander of the Faithful, may God strengthen him, has ordered your wishes in all that you seek to be dealt with, and he has sent the endorsements concerning them to you. As for the matter you mention concerning Šāliḥ, the *mawlā* of the Commander of the Faithful, and our change of attitude toward him, [be assured that he is to us] as a brother and cousin, and we did not seek anything on this matter that you would find objectionable. If he had promised you six months payment of allotments, then [know] that we have raised the matter in messages to the Commander of the
Faithful seeking the very terms that you have requested. As for what you have stated regarding not obstructing the Commander of the Faithful, leaving him with full authority to govern, we ourselves are obedient and loyal to the Commander of the Faithful. Sovereign power is God's alone; He is our Master and we His slaves, and we are in no way recalcitrant toward Him in the governance of affairs. You state that we wish the Commander of the Faithful misfortune. May God surround whoever wishes that with a ring of misfortune and humiliate him in both this world and the hereafter. May God preserve and keep you and perfect his bounty upon you.

When Abū al-Qāsim had read these letters to the Turks, they said to him that, as it was evening, they would consider their situation during the night and return to him in the morning with their decision. At which point they split up and Abū al-Qāsim returned to the Commander of the Faithful.

The following day was Friday. Mūsā b. Bughā rode out in the early morning from the palace of the Commander of the Faithful accompanied by one thousand five hundred troops. He camped outside the al-Ḥayr Gate, which was adjacent to the fiefs of al-Jawṣaq and al-Karkh. Al-Muhtadi's brother, Abū al-Qāsim left with al-Karkhi,274 reaching the assembled Turks, who numbered around five hundred horsemen and three thousand foot soldiers.

Now when Abū al-Qāsim had gone the previous night to address the Turks, he had with him the Caliph's endorsements. Upon arriving, he extracted a message from al-Muhtadi, the copy of which resembled the letter containing the endorsements rolled inside it. So when Abū al-Qāsim read the message, his audience went into an uproar of conflicting views. The crowd increased with numbers of mawla infantry from around the district of Sāmarrā' joining them in al-Ḥayr.

Abū al-Qāsim kept waiting, expecting to go off with a response that he could write up and then convey to the Commander of the Faithful. Nothing had happened, however, by four o'clock. They then broke up. One group said they wished that God would

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274. This is Muḥammad b. Mubāshir al-Karkhi, mentioned p. 76, above.
strengthen the resolve of the Commander of the Faithful to provide the full amount of the allotments owed them, as they had suffered great hardship because of the delays. Another faction stated that they would not be content until the Commander of the Faithful appointed his brothers over them, one in al-Karkh, another in al-Dūr, and a third in Sāmarrā; they did not want any of the mawlās to govern them. A third party stated that they wanted Śāliḥ b. Waṣif to reappear. They were the smallest party of the three.

As the debate dragged on, Abū al-Qāsim left for al-Muhtadi with all the news, first picking up Mūsā where he had camped and setting off with him. After completing his Friday prayer, al-Muhtadi transferred the army to Muḥammad b. Bughā, with orders to go with his brother Abū al-Qāsim to the mawlās; they rode out with about five hundred cavalry. Mūsā meanwhile returned to the camp he had set up that morning. Abū al-Qāsim and Muḥammad b. Bughā reached the mawlās and mingled with them in their midst. Abū al-Qāsim spoke to them, saying that the Commander of the Faithful had issued documents endorsing everything they had asked for. There now remained none of their requests that the Commander of the Faithful had not gone all out to fulfill. In addition, a safe-conduct was issued for Śāliḥ b. Waṣif to come out of hiding. Abū al-Qāsim then announced the safe-conduct for Śāliḥ, which Mūsā and Bāyakkāk had sought from the Commander of the Faithful, who had responded to them with his firmest assurances.

Abū al-Qāsim then asked, "What are you agreed upon?" Discussion intensified and when Abū al-Qāsim departed, the agreed-upon demands were stated by them as follows: Mūsā should hold the same rank of Bughā the elder; Śāliḥ should hold the rank that Waṣif (his father) had held in the days of Bughā (the Elder); and Bāyakkāk should be restored to his previous rank. Moreover, the army should remain in its present hands until Śāliḥ b. Waṣif emerged from hiding. And finally, an allowance ['atā'] should be assigned to them, as well as their periodic allotments [arzāq]275 expedited according to the Caliph's agreement. To these points they all assented. The mawlās departed but had scarcely gone a hundred fifty cubits' distance before they were quarreling again, some saying they were satisfied, others claiming they were not. Al-Muhtadi's messengers de-

275. Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, VII, 214, mentions only the allowance [al-‘atā’].
parted to him, as the soldiers had split up and were about to depart [for Sāmarrā]. Mūsā at that point returned as well, and the troops dispersed to their usual places in al-Karkh, al-Dūr, and Sāmarrā.

The next morning was Saturday. The Waṣif clan along with a group of their freedmen (mawlās and ghilmān) rode forth calling out, "Arms!" Foot soldiers belonging to Šaliḥ b. Waṣif’s troops stole pack animals of the public infantry and proceeded to camp in Sāmarrā at the edge of the river valley of Ishāq b. Ibrāhim beside the mosque of Lujayn, the mother of al-Mutawakkil’s children. Abū al-Qāsim had set out at the same time heading for al-Muhtadi’s palace. On his way to al-Muhtadi’s palace he passed Šaliḥ’s forces; they joined him, his accompanying retinue, and pages and asked Abū al-Qāsim if he would take a message from them to the Commander of the Faithful. He told them to state their message but their response was such a confused babble that all he understood was that they wanted Šaliḥ [to return]. And so this was what he passed on to the Commander of the Faithful as well as to Mūsā in the presence of a group of commanders.

It was reported from someone present at this assembly that Mūsā b. Bughā said, "They demand that I give up Šaliḥ as though he were with me and I were the one who had hidden him away! If they have him, they should bring him forth!"

News of the gathering of the Waṣif clan was confirmed and also that [Mūsā and his troops] broke out from the palace of the Commander of the Faithful and rode fully armed into the quarter of al-Ḥayr, assembling finally in the area between al-Dakkā and the rear of the main mosque. News [of this] reached the Turks and those who had taken refuge with them, and they ran helter-skelter, horseman, foot soldier, young, and old, none waiting for the other, until they reached the narrow streets and alleyways and the safety of their homes. Mūsā and his troops marched forward in a body toward the Caliph’s palace, every commander in Sāmarrā riding with him. Proceeding steadily through the quarter, they left where the two city walls adjoined it. Mufliḥ and Wājin and those attached to them went along Baghdad street until they reached the sheep market; they then turned into Abū Aḥmad street, where they met up with Mūsā’s army. Mūsā and the commanders accompanying him, including Ya-

276. The reading is uncertain.
jur, Sātikin, Yārjūkh, and 'Isā al-Karkhī, headed along Abū Aḥmad street as far as the river and then made their way toward the Jawṣaq palace. The estimated size of Mūsā's army that day, which was Saturday, was four thousand horsemen armed with bows at the ready, breastplates,²⁷⁷ spears, and battle-axes²⁷⁸. Most of the commanders who in al-Karkh had demanded Šāliḥ were now with Mūsā's army, prepared to take on anyone else who demanded him.

Someone who had inquired into these events reported that most of those riding with Mūsā were sympathetic toward Šāliḥ. There was no commotion that day among the troops of al-Karkh or al-Dūr. The first thing the troops did upon arriving at the Jawṣaq palace was to issue a proclamation to the following effect: Anyone on the following morning, which was Sunday, from among all of Šāliḥ's commanders, his family, servants, and supporters who had not presented himself at the palace of the Commander of the Faithful would have his name dropped from the payroll and his house destroyed; and he would be flogged and led in chains to the Maṭbaq [prison].²⁷⁹ Whoever emerged after having been in hiding after three days would be liable to the same punishment. Whoever stole an animal from a civilian or molested such a one in the public way would likewise be liable to a painful punishment. Mūsā and his company spent Sunday night, the 8th of Ṣafar [January 15, 870] still pursuing this matter.

On Monday morning al-Muhtadi received intelligence that the rebel Musāwir had been committing murder in and setting fire to Balad.²⁸⁰ In his council meeting, al-Muhtadi proclaimed a call to arms and ordered Mūsā, Muftih, and Bāyakbāk to leave [for Balad]. Mūsā evacuated his camp, but on Wednesday, the 11th of Ṣafar [January 18, 870], the order to Mūsā, Muḥammad b. Bughā, and Muftih was canceled. They said, "We should all stay until our business and Šāliḥ's is settled." On that they were all agreed, fearing that Šāliḥ would cause them mischief in their absence.

²⁷⁷ Al-jawāšīn [sg. jawshan]. See Lane, Lexicon, s.v. j-w-sh-n.
²⁷⁸ Al-ṭabarżīdīn, an Arabized word from the Persian ṭabarzad. See Lane, Lexicon, s.v. t-b-r-z-d/-n.
²⁷⁹ The Index does not list a place by this name in Sāmarrā, though the context clearly indicates that this city is intended. The duplication of Baghdad place names in Sāmarrā was perhaps not uncommon (e.g., al-Karkh).
²⁸⁰ A town on the road from Mosul to Naṣībin, some seven leagues from the former. See Le Strange, Lands, 99.
One of the mawłās reportedly said, "I saw one of the Waṣīf clan who had got together soldiers who were playing polo281 with Mūsā and Bāyakbāk in the hippodrome of Bughā the Younger, on Wednesday the 11th of Ṣafar [January 18, 870]."

The search for Śāliḥ b. Waṣīf was intensified and for this reason raids were made upon many of those who had formerly been connected with him or else were suspected of giving him refuge. Among these were Ibrāhim b. Saʿdān al-Nahwī, Ibrāhim al-Ṭālibī, Hārūn b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Azhar al-Shiʿī, Abū al-Ḥā waṣ b. Aḥmad b. Saʿīd b. Salm b. Qutaybah, Abū Bakr, an in-law of Abū Ḥarmalāh al-Ḥajjām, Shāriyah the singer, al-Sarakhsi, chief of the special security police, and many others.

Ibrāhim b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhim b. Muṣʿab b. Zurayq reported that the owner of the Rabʿ al-Qubbah, which was opposite the palace of Śāliḥ b. Waṣīf, had related to him, saying, "On Sunday while we were sitting around, a slave boy suddenly emerged from a small alleyway and I could see that he was very frightened. We did not know him and wanted to ask him what the matter was, but he vanished. Moments later a mawlā of Śāliḥ b. Waṣīf arrived, a ruffian (ʿayyār)282 called Rūzbah; he was with three or four others whom we also did not know, and they disappeared into the alleyway. Shortly after, they reemerged with Śāliḥ b. Waṣīf and we then asked what was going on. It seems that the slave boy had gone into a house in the alleyway wanting a drink of water, when he heard someone say in Persian, 'O commander, hide quickly, for a slave boy has come asking for a drink of water.' Now the lad had heard these words and, as he was acquainted with this ruffian (Rūzbah), he went and told him what had happened. The ruffian rounded up three other men and they captured Śāliḥ."

This same ruffian who had led the attack on Śāliḥ reportedly said, "This slave lad told me what he had heard, and when I arrived at the house with these three men, there was Śāliḥ with mirror and comb

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281. The text reads șawālijah, which is the plural of șawlajah, Arabized from the Persian chawgan. Lane, Lexicon, s.v. ș-w-l-j, describes the șawlajah as a kind of golf stick, with which a ball is struck by men on horseback, an accurate enough description of the game of polo.

in his hands attending to his beard. When he saw me, he ran into the house, and I was afraid he might be going for his sword or some weapon, and I held back. Then I cautiously spied upon him and discovered that he was huddled in a corner, so I approached and brought him out, and he did no more than implore me. When he did, I told him there was no way I could let him go; but I would take him past the residences of his family, his companions, his commanders, and hirelings, and if two of them were to meet me I would turn him over to them. However, I met no one on the way who was not eager to help me to abuse him."

It was reported that the two of them had gone a distance of some two miles accompanied by fewer than five government soldiers.

It was further reported that, when Šalih was captured, he was wearing a shirt, a half-silk lined garment, and drawers; his head was bare, and he walked barefoot.

Šalih was borne away upon a mustard-colored pack animal, the crowd running behind him, while five special security men tried to prevent their attacking him. Having arrived with Šalih at the palace of Mūsā b. Bughā, Bāyakbāk, Muflih, Yājūr, Sātīkin, and other commanders joined them there. Šalih was then taken, riding a saddled mule, through the Hayr Gate, which was next to the qiblah side of the main mosque as they made their way to the Jawsaq palace. Just as they reached the edge of the minaret, one of Muflih's soldiers struck Šalih a blow to the shoulder from behind, which nearly killed him. His head was then severed and the corpse left behind. At length they came to al-Muhtadi's palace a little before sunset. Šalih's head, wrapped in a garment of one of Muflih's pages, was dripping with blood. Al-Muhtadi was at that moment at prayer, and he did not see them bring in the head, which was then taken away to be cleaned up. After al-Muhtadi had finished his prayers, he was informed that they had killed Šalih and brought his head to him. His only reaction was to say "Cover it up," and he began to repeat "Praise the Lord!"

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283. Mubattanah mulham. See Lane, Lexicon. s.v. b-t-n.
284. The qiblah is the direction the Muslim faces when performing the prayer, i.e., the direction of Mecca. See EI. s.v. "Masjid."
285. This could be the minaret (al-minārah) of the mosque, which Yaqūt says could be seen from the countryside for miles around. See Mu'jam. III, 17.
286. Tashbih. The word also signifies the act of praying. Lane, Lexicon. s.v. s-b-h, notes that it meant to perform the supererogatory morning prayer.
news reached Śāliḥ’s residence, at which a wailing lament was raised and continued throughout the night. On Monday the 22nd of Ṣafar (January 29, 870), the head of Śāliḥ b. Waṣif was carried around town upon a lance, while proclamation was made: “This is the recompense for slaying one’s master.” It was hung up at the Public Gate for an hour and then removed, a practice followed for three successive days. The head of Bughā the Younger was removed at the same time as Śāliḥ’s head was publicly displayed on the Monday. Then it was given to Śāliḥ’s family, and they buried it.

One of the mawlašs reportedly said that he saw Muṣliḥ crying when he had looked at Bughā’s head, saying, “May God slay me if I do not avenge his death.” On Thursday the 25th of Ṣafar (February 1, 870), Mūsā sent Śāliḥ’s head to his sister Umm al-Faḍl, al-Nūshūrī’s wife, who had previously been married to Salamah b. Khāqān. One of the Hāšhīmites reportedly said, “I congratulated Mūsā b. Bughā for killing Śāliḥ, and he said, ‘He was an enemy of the Commander of the Faithful and deserved to die.’” He also congratulated Bāyakbāk, who retorted, “I had nothing to do with this. Śāliḥ was my brother!”

Al-Salūlī recited these lines to Mūsā after Śāliḥ b. Waṣif had been killed:

You have avenged yourself on the Pharaoh when he acted tyrannically.
And you have come when you did, O Mūsā, as ordained.

Three, each of them is an oppressor, a brother of envy, accusing you of oppression and aggression out of hate.
Waṣif is in Karkh, of whom an example was made, and Bughā is at the bridge, burning in the embers and flames.
And Śāliḥ, son of Waṣif, his body lies tossed in the dust in al-Ḥayr, and his soul is in hell.

On the 1st of Jumādā I of this year (Thursday, April 6, 870), Mūsā b. Bughā and Bāyakbāk set out against the Khārijite Musāwir. Muḥammad b. al-Wāḥiq bade them farewell.

Also in this same month of Jumādā I (April 6 – May 5, 870), Musāwir b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamid and the Khārijite ʿUbaydah al-ʿUmrusī met

187. Bughā’s death had been reported by Ṭabarī earlier, in the year 254/868, and his head was publicly displayed first in Sāmarrā and then in Baghdad. See III, 1694–95.
188. Reference to Qur’ān 20: 40.
in battle at al-Kuhayl. They each held opposing views. In his victory Musâwir killed 'Ubaydah.

In this month of Jumâda I Musâwir and Muflîḥ met each other in battle. I was told that Musâwir returned from al-Kuhayl after he had killed al-'Umrusi, with many of his men wounded, whose injuries had not yet healed. Indeed the battle [against al-'Umrusi] had left them exhausted by the time they reached Mûsâ's army and those who had joined him. As Musâwir attacked, Mûsâ was in a defensive position. Their encounter took place at Jabal Zaynî, and, when the victory Musâwir sought did not occur, he and his troops held fast to the mountain side and made their way to the top. There they lit fires and stuck their spears into the ground. Mûsâ was camped farther down on the lower slopes of the mountain. Later Musâwir escaped by leading his troops down the far side of the mountain away from Mûsâ's position and left them thinking that he was still on top.

On the 14th of Rajab of this year (June 17, 870), al-Muhtadi was deposed, and he died on the 18th (June 21, 870).

An Account of [al-Muhtadi's] Removal and Death

It was reported that on the 2nd of Rajab (June 5, 870) the dwellers of al-Karkh, Sâmarrâ, and al-Dûr were aroused to demand their allotments. Al-Muhtadi sent their chief Ṭabâyahû and his own brother 'Abdallâh to talk to them, but they were not well received; instead they insisted on talking directly to the Commander of the Faithful himself.

Abû Naṣr (Muhammad) b. Bughâ left that night for his brother's army camp, which was at al-Sinn in the vicinity of the Khârijite (Musâwir). Meanwhile, a group of soldiers went to the Jawsaq palace on Wednesday and al-Muhtadi spoke to them for some time. Their allowance was not forthcoming on Wednesday and Thursday, but they were prepared to refrain from any action until they knew what Mûsâ b. Bughâ was prepared to do. Now Mûsâ had paid the allowance to his army for a month since his troops had been patient while

289. Ibn al-Athîr, Kâmîl, VII, 226, explains that the feud was over whether or not a sinner's repentance can be accepted; Musâwir argued that it should be, while 'Ubaydah claimed it could not.
291. The reading is conjectural.
he was engaged in fighting (Musawir) the Kharijite. But then disagreements broke out and Musa set off for the Khurasan Road.

Explanations differed as to why these disagreements occurred, why Musa left for the Khurasan Road, and why al-Muhtadi had openly confronted certain Turks (al-atrak) engaged in battle against him.

Some said that Musa had withdrawn from the conflict with the Kharijite (Musawir) and had headed for the Khurasan Road because al-Muhtadi was well disposed toward Bâyakbâk, who was still with Musa's army confronting Musawir. The Caliph wrote to Bâyakbâk, ordering him to take command over Musa's army and either to dispose of Musa b. Bughâ and Muflih or else to bring them back in chains. When this despatch reached Bâyakbâk he took it to Musa b. Bughâ and said, "I am not at all happy with this, as it appears to be only a plot against the lot of us. If you are treated this way today, then tomorrow I could be treated in the same manner. What do you think?" Musa replied, "In my view you should return to Sâmatrâ and tell the Caliph that you will loyally assist him against Muflih and myself. In this way he will feel at ease about you, and then we can plan to kill him." After returning from battle against the rebel they made for their homes, while Bâyakbâk went to see al-Muhtadi. Confronting him angrily, al-Muhtadi said, "I ordered you to kill Musa and Muflih, so how could you leave the army and treat this matter so lightly?" Bâyakbâk asked how he could have dealt with them and managed to kill them when they had superior forces and were more powerful than he. Moreover, he said, "Once something or other happened between Muflih and myself, and I did not avenge myself then; but I have in any case brought my army, companions, and those obedient to me to assist and reinforce your rule, and this has left Musa with fewer supporters." Al-Muhtadi said to him, "Lay down your weapons," and he ordered him brought into the palace. Bâyakbâk replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, this is no way to treat me, as I have come to you in good faith, I must first return home and leave instructions for my companions and family." Al-Muhtadi refused to allow that, as it was essential to check Bâyakbâk's story. And so Bâyakbâk was relieved of his weapons.

When Bâyakbâk's companions had not heard from him for a while, his chamberlain Ahmad b. Khâqân quickly urged them to search for their leader before something happened to him. Seething
with anger, the Turks surrounded the Jawsaq palace. At the time al-Muhtadi was with Šāliḥ b. ‘Ali b. Ya’qūb b. Abī Ja’far al-Manṣūr.\(^{292}\) When he perceived these developments, al-Muhtadi asked him for advice on what he should do. Šāliḥ replied, “O Commander of the Faithful, none of your ancestors could match you for courage and daring. Abū Muslim’s hold over the Khurāsānīs was far more powerful than this Turk’s position among his followers. But no sooner had [Abū Muslim’s] head been thrown to them than they quieted down, even though some of them worshiped him and regarded him as their lord. So if you were to do that, they would [similarly] be appeased; for you are much bolder and stouthearted than al-Manṣūr.”

So al-Muhtadi summoned Muḥammad b. Mubāshir al-Karkhī, a blacksmith who had made tent pegs and poles in al-Karkh and then had become very devoted to al-Muhtadi in Baghdad, and the Caliph trusted him. Now he ordered him to kill Bāyakbāk, which deed was done while the Turks were lined up armed in the Jawsaq palace demanding to see Bāyakbāk. Al-Muhtadi gave the order to the commander ‘Attāb b. ‘Attāb to throw them Bāyakbāk’s head. He did so and, after a brief delay, the Turks broke into a rage, and one of them attacked and killed ‘Attāb. Al-Muhtadi then sent for contingents of the Farāghinah, the Magḥāribah, the ʿUkashiyyah,\(^{295}\) the Ushrusaniyyah,\(^{296}\) and Turks who had rendered allegiance to him for the sum of two dirhems and some barley meal (ṣawīq). After they arrived, many among their ranks were killed, about which people have had many [different] things to say. It was said that some four thousand Turks who took part in the fighting were killed; others put the number at two thousand, while others said only a thousand. That was Saturday, the 13th of Rajab (June 16, 870).

On Sunday the numbers of Turks gathered together had swollen to some ten thousand men united by their common cause. The brother

\(^{292}\) A descendant of the second ʿAbbasid Caliph, al-Manṣūr.

\(^{293}\) One of the leading commanders of the ʿAbbasid revolt against the Umayyads in Khurāsān; his rising power was perceived as a threat to the new dynasty, and he was murdered by the Caliph al-Manṣūr. On his role and significance, see Shaban, The ʿAbbasid Revolution, 133–68; El, s.v. “Abū Muslim.”

\(^{294}\) That is, Bāyakbāk.

\(^{295}\) The reading is uncertain, a variant being al-Ubkasiyyah.

\(^{296}\) Troops drawn from the province of Ushrusānāh, which lay to the east of Samargand between the rivers of Sughd and the Jaxartes. See Le Strange, Lands, 474–76.
of Bāyakbāk, Ṭaghūṭyā, and Aḥmad b. Khāqān, Bāyakbāk’s chamberlain, had arrived with around five hundred men, plus the Turks and Persians brought by Ṭaghūṭyā. Al-Muhtadi went out with Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Alī, who was wearing a Qurʾān tied around his neck; he pleaded with people to come to the aid of their Caliph. But the final straw was when the Turks accompanying al-Muhtadi sided with their fellows who supported Bāyakbāk’s brother. Al-Muhtadi was left with the Farāghinah and the Maghībah and some of the populace, who were of little use to him. Thirsting for vengeance, Ṭaghūṭyā, Kāyakbāk’s brother, launched a bitter attack, broke up their battle order, and routed them. Large numbers were killed while the rest turned and fled. Al-Muhtadi, sword in hand, fled from the scene, crying out, “O you people, come to your Caliph’s assistance!” He finally managed to reach the place of Abū Ṣāliḥ ‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad b. Yazdād, which was located next to Khashabat Bābak. Aḥmad b. Jumayl, the commandant of police, was there. Al-Muhtadi entered and, setting aside his weapon, he donned a [plain] white garment, in order to slip from the roof of one palace to another and make his escape. A search for him failed.

Then Aḥmad b. Khāqān arrived with thirty horsemen, making inquiries of al-Muhtadi’s whereabouts and learned news of him at the palace of Ibn Jumayl. Aḥmad promptly rushed his men to the rooftops and al-Muhtadi was struck at last by an arrow and wounded by a sword. Aḥmad b. Khāqān had him carried on a pack horse, or mule, with a groom riding behind until they returned to the Jawṣaq palace. His enemies gathered and began cuffing him and spitting in his face. They sought information as to the value of goods and furnishings he had sold, and al-Muhtadi confessed to a sum of six hundred thousand [dinars], which al-Karkhi had deposited for him with various people in Baghdad. They took his written pledge for that amount and then handed him over to someone who [tortured him] by kicking him in the testicles until he died.298

297. The reading is conjectural.

298. Fa wuṣṭiya’ālā khushyatihihattāqatalahu. Ibn al-Athir adds that he was also struck by sword blows and that afterward his executioners bore witness that he had died without a mark on him. He was buried in the tomb of the Caliph al-Muntaṣir. Kāmil, VII, 230. See also Ṭabari’s account, p. 99, below.
Other Accounts of al-Muhtadi's Death

Someone else said that the beginning of the whole dispute occurred when the sons of the Turks met together and stated that they were not content to allow anyone to be their chief except the Commander of the Faithful. They wrote to Mūsā b. Bughā and Bāyakbāk to that effect, while the two were still engaged with the Khārijite [Musi-wir]. On Friday Mūsā arrived with his men at a bridge in the district of al-Waziriyah. Al-Muhtadi was camped with his army in al-Ḥayr; he approached them but then turned away and proceeded armed to the Jawṣaq palace. On Saturday, the 13th of Rajab [June 16, 870], Bāyakbāk came [to al-Muhtadi] as an obedient subject, while Mūsā headed for the district of the Khurāsān Road with about two thousand men. One of the mawlās came to tell al-Muhtadi that Bāyakbāk had promised Mūsā he would assassinate him in the Jawṣaq palace. Al-Muhtadi had Bāyakbāk disarmed and imprisoned. This was on Saturday, about the time of the afternoon prayer. Later the inhabitants of al-Karkh and al-Dūr went out in search of Bāyakbāk. The search was resumed the following morning, and everyone joined in either walking or riding, each one carrying a weapon. Al-Muhtadi had just finished the noon prayer when the crowd reached the Jawṣaq palace. He confronted them with the Farāghinah and Magharībah, but the Turks forced them back and then mounted a full attack upon them. Pursuing al-Muhtadi's forces, the Turks had laid a trap for them and many of the Farāghinah and Magharībah were slain. Al-Muhtadi himself fled and as he passed the residence of Abū al-Wazīr, one of his servants shouted out, "O you people, here is your Caliph!"

With the Turks in hot pursuit behind him, al-Muhtadi managed to reach the palace of Aḥmad b. Jumayl and, by scaling the walls, he moved from one residence to another. The Turks spread throughout the entire district and finally trapped him in the house of a servant belonging to ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar al-Bāzyār. Wearing only a shirt and drawers and wounded in the side, he was taken away on an emaciated pack animal. The residences of [Muḥammad b. Mubāshir] al-Karkhī, the Banū Thawābah, and a number of others were sacked. On Monday Aḥmad b. al-Mutawakkil, who was known as Ibn Fit-yān, was brought to the palace of Yārjūkh, while the Turks circulated the streets praising the populace for not having opposed them.
Others said that the cause of these events was quite different. On Monday, the 2nd of Rajab (June 5, 870), the troops of Dūr Sāmarrā and al-Karkh became agitated and began to congregate in al-Karkh and the area beyond it. Al-Muhtadi despatched to them Kayghalagh, Ṭabāyaghū b. Ṣūl Artākīn and his own brother ʿAbdallāh, who remained with them until the crowd calmed down, whereupon the men returned to the [Jawsaq] palace. Word reached Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. Bughā the Elder that al-Muhtadi had been speaking to the mawlās about him and Mūsā, telling them that the [Bughā] brothers possessed money. This stirred fear in Abū Naṣr, and he fled on Tuesday night, the 3rd of Rajab (June 6, 870). Al-Muhtadi sent four letters to Abū Naṣr granting him safe conduct for himself and those with him. Two letters arrived while he was in al-Muḥammadiyyah with Artākin b. B.r.n.m. kātakīn and the others while he was with Faraj the Younger. Abū Naṣr put his trust in the safe-conduct and returned to the [Jawsaq] palace, together with his other brother, Habshūn, and Bakālabā. They were imprisoned along with Kayghalagh, Abū Naṣr being isolated from the others. Money was demanded of him and fifteen thousand dinars was received from his agent. On Tuesday, the 3rd of Rajab (June 6, 870), Abū Naṣr was put to death and his body tossed into a well of the underground canal system (al-qanāt). The corpse was removed on Monday, the 16th of Rajab (June 19, 870), and taken to his house. It reeked of decay. Three hundred mithqāls of must and six hundred of camphor were purchased to apply to the body, but the odor could not be checked. Al-Ḥasan b. al-Maʾmūn said the funeral prayer over him.

Al-Muhtadi had corresponded with Mūsā b. Bughā at the time of Abū Naṣr’s imprisonment and ordered Mūsā to surrender the army to Bāyakbāk and to bring his mawlās to Sāmarrā. He also wrote Bāyakbāk about delivering the army into his command and ordering him to continue the fight against the Kharijite [Musāwir]. Bāyakbāk took the letter to Mūsā; he read it, and they then agreed to return to Sāmarrā. Word reached al-Muhtadī that they had disobeyed him. He

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299. The place of that name in the marshlands (baṭāʾīh) seems intended here.
300. The first part of the name is unpointed in the text, and therefore the first three consonants are conjectural.
301. For details of the variations in the use of this term of measurement, see Hinz, *Islamische Masse*, 1–2.
called the mawláṣ together, exhorting them to obedience, urging them to attend him in the palace and leave off neglecting him. For each of the Turks and those of similar status al-Muhtadí arranged a stipend of two dirhems per day to be paid, and a dirhem for each of the Maghāribah. From these two groups and their friends he rounded up some fifteen thousand men in the Jawsaq palace and other apartments. Among the Turks was a man called al-Kāmili. In charge of administration of the palace after Kayghalagh had been imprisoned was Masrūr al-Balkhī; the chief commander was Ṭabāyaghū, and ‘Abdallāh b. Takīn was put in charge of prisoners.

Mūsā, Mufliḥ, and Bāyakbāk learned of the incarceration of Abū Naṣr, Ḥabshūn, and the others and were hence on their guard. On Thursday messengers and despatches flowed between them and al-Muhtadí. The same day, which was the 11th of Rajab (June 14, 870), al-Muhtadí ventured forth with his force to await the arrival of the enemy. No one, however, appeared. On the Friday, the 12th of Rajab (June 15, 870), news was confirmed that al-Muhtadí and Mufliḥ had turned off the Sāmarrā road toward the district of al-Jabal and halted there. On Saturday Bāyakbāk, Yārjūkh, Asātakin, ‘Ali b. Bāris, Sīmā the Tall, and Khūṭārīsh presented themselves at the Jawsaq palace. Bāyakbāk and his deputy Aḥmad b. Khāqān were imprisoned, while the rest were dismissed. Bāyakbāk’s followers and some of the other Turks met together and asked themselves why their commander had been imprisoned and why Abū Naṣr had been killed. Al-Muhtadí confronted them on Saturday, but, as no conflict occurred, he returned (once again) to the palace. On Sunday the two sides met again, al-Muhtadí with his force of Maghāribah, Turks of the lower-ranking guards,302 and the Farāghinah. He placed Masrūr al-Balkhī on the right flank and Yārjūkh on the left, with himself, Asātakin, Ṭabāyaghū, and some other commanders occupying the heart of the battle line.

As the day grew hotter, the combatants approached each other, and battle ensued. The men demanded Bāyakbāk, and al-Muhtadí threw his severed head into their midst. ‘Attāb b. ‘Attāb had pulled it out of his tunic. When they saw it, Bāyakbāk’s brother Ṭaghūṭyā and a group of his elite soldiers intensified the attack against al-Muhtadí’s forces. The right flank turned, followed by the left, while the re-

302. Al-atrāk al-barrāniyin. See n. 171, above.
remainder of the army fled from al-Muhtadi. There were many slain on the two sides.

Ḥabshūn b. Bughā reportedly said that seven hundred eighty men had been killed. The fighters dispersed and al-Muhtadi returned to the palace, locking behind him the gates through which he had entered and making his exit from the al-Maṣāff Gate, eventually through the ʾIṯāḳh Gate into the little market of Masrūr and along al-Wāthiq street until he finally reached the Public Gate. There he cried out, "O you people, I am the Commander of the Faithful. Fight to defend your Caliph!” But none of the people heeded him. As he passed thus, crying out in the street but seeing no one prepared to help him, he reached the prison gate and ordered the release of all the inmates, thinking that they would come to his aid. Instead, they all fled. Not one responded to him.

After this al-Muhtadi made his way to the palace of Abū Ṣāliḥ Ḥabḍallāh b. Muḥammad b. Yazdād, where the commandant of police, Ahmad b. Jumayl, was staying. They broke in on him, and he was taken out by way of the Bureau of Estates and taken to al-Jawsaq, where he was imprisoned along with Ahmad b. Khāqān. Ibn Jumayl’s palace was then plundered.303

Among the commanders of the Maghāribah who were killed during the battle was Naṣr b. Ahmad al-Zubayrī, and of the commanders of the Shākirīyyah ʿAttāb b. ʿAttāb was killed bringing back Bāyakbāk’s head. According to some al-Muhtadi killed a considerable number with his own hands in the course of the fighting.

Later, after al-Muhtadi was imprisoned, strong words were exchanged between him and his captors. They wanted him to abdicate but he refused, surrendering himself instead to death. They said that he had, in his own hand, made a written agreement with Mūsā b. Bughā, Bāyakbāk, and a number of the other commanders that he would neither deceive, harass, nor murder any of them, or even think of doing so, and, [if] he actually treated them in this manner, either collectively or individually, and they found out, they would be free to break their oath of allegiance to him, take charge of affairs, and depose whomsoever they pleased. On this basis they felt free to break their compact.

303. Which presumably explains why he was staying elsewhere at the time of al-Muhtadi’s final hours.
After the rout of the Caliph's forces, Yājrūkh had gone to the Jawsaq palace and taken some of al-Mutawakkil's sons back to his own palace. There, on Tuesday\(^{304}\) the 13th of Rajab (June 16, 870), the oath of allegiance was rendered to Ahmad b. al-Mutawakkil, known as Ibn Fītān, who took the regnal name of al-Mu'tamid 'alā Allāh. On Thursday,\(^{305}\) the 18th of Rajab (June 21, 870), the death of Muḥammad b. al-Wāthiq al-Muhtadī was witnessed. The only marks on his body were the two wounds he had received on the Sunday during the fighting, one of these was an arrow wound, the other was sustained by a sword blow. Ja'far b. 'Abd al-Wāhid and a number of the Caliph's brothers recited prayers at his funeral. He was buried in the tomb of al-Muntaṣir. Mūsā b. Bughā and Muṣliḥ entered Sāmarra on Saturday, the 20th of Rajab (June 23, 870); Mūsā saluted al-Mu'tamid, who granted him a robe of honor. Mūsā returned to his residence, and calm settled upon the populace.

Someone who reportedly had witnessed these events said that on Saturday evening, the 1st of Rajab (June 4, 870), the whole population of al-Karkh and al-Dūr was stirred up and began to congregate. Whenever the people became agitated, al-Muhtadī would send his brother 'Abdallāh to them, just as he did on this occasion. When 'Abdallāh got there, he found them making their way to the Jawsaq palace. He addressed them and guaranteed them action to meet their needs. They, however, refused [this promise], insisting instead on returning with him to the Commander of the Faithful to plead their case with him directly. Now when 'Abdallāh returned, there were present in the palace at that time Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. Bughā, Ḥabshūn, Kayghalagh, Masrūr al-Balkhi, and others. 'Abdallāh conveyed to al-Muhtadī what had transpired between him and the crowd, and he was ordered to go back and bring some of them to the palace. Encountering the crowd now quite near the Jawsaq palace, he directed them to stay where they were and send some of their number to accompany him. This they also rejected.

When the news of the crowd's approach reached Abū Naṣr and the others in the palace, they all left by way of the al-Nazālah Gate. No one was left in the palace except Masrūr al-Balkhi and Alṭūn, the deputy of Kayghalagh, and among the secretaries only 'Īsā b. Far-

\(^{304}\) Actually, a Friday. 
\(^{305}\) Wednesday, in fact.
The mawālās entered the palace near the gate of the Qaṣr al-Aḥmar, filling it with about four thousand men. They reached al-Muhtadī and complained to him of their situation. Chiefly, they were counting on the removal of their amirs from responsibility for them, so that their affairs could be handled by the Commander of the Faithful’s own brothers. Moreover, they wanted the amirs and secretaries admonished for extorting sums from the central treasuries, the amount mentioned running to one hundred fifty million.306 Al-Muhtadī promised to examine the matter and respond to their requests. So they remained in the palace for the rest of the day and al-Muhtadī sent Muhammad b. Mubāshir al-Karkhī to purchase quantities of barley meal for them to eat.

At that, Abū Naṣr b. Bughā moved promptly to set up camp in al-Hayr a short distance from the racecourse. Around five hundred men joined him there, but during the night most slipped away, leaving behind fewer than a hundred. So Abū Naṣr decamped and moved to al-Muḥammadiyyah.307

On Thursday morning the mawālās resumed their original demands. They were told that what they wanted was difficult to achieve. Dislodging power from the hands of the amirs would not be smooth sailing for them; all the more difficult when combined with attempts to seize their money. “Consider your own positions. If you think that you have the patience to see this affair through to its end, then the Commander of the Faithful has responded positively. But if it be otherwise, the Commander of the Faithful will do his best for you.” They refused, however, to accept anything other than what they had sought in the first place. So they were invited to take oaths of allegiance and obedience that they would stand by their word and not go back on it, that they would fight against anyone who attacked them, and that they would be loyal to the Commander of the Faithful and protect him. To all these conditions they consented. Solemn oaths were administered and about one thousand men swore to them that day.

‘Īsā b. Farrukhānshāh,308 who was in charge of affairs, assuming

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306. It is not specified whether the sum mentioned is in dirhams or dinars.
307. This location is clearly the one in close proximity to Sāmarrā. In the Index it is mistakenly placed in the marshlands of the south.
308. See Sourdel, Vizirat, I, 303–4; ‘Īsā did not actually hold the title of vizier.
the responsibilities of vizier, wrote to Abū Naṣr on behalf of the mawlās, mentioning their objection to his leaving the palace without cause and also that they had come to the Commander of the Faithful only to plead their needs and that when they found the palace empty they remained. Were he to return, they would restore his position, having had no wish to provoke him.

ʿĪsā also wrote in the same vein to Abū Naṣr on behalf of the Caliph. Between late afternoon and early evening Abū Naṣr approached from al-Muḥammadīyyah and entered the Jawṣaq palace with his brother Ḥabshūn, Kayghalagh, Bakālabā, and a group of other commanders. The mawlās stood before them, armed. Abū Naṣr and the others joined al-Muḥtadi where he was seated. Saluting him, Abū Naṣr drew near and kissed his hand, his feet, and the carpet. He then backed up, and al-Muḥtadi addressed him, saying, “O Muḥammad, what do you think about what the mawlās are saying?” “What are they saying?” asked Abū Naṣr. Al-Muḥtadi said, “They report that you all have expropriated wealth and usurped posts and that you give no thought to their affairs or to what could restore their welfare.” Abū Naṣr Muḥammad replied, “O Commander of the Faithful, what have I to do with finances? I was not secretary of a bureau nor did administrative districts fall into my hands.” Al-Muḥtadi asked him, “So where is all the wealth if it is not in your possession and your brother’s or in the possession of your secretaries and your companions?”

The mawlās now came closer. ʿAbdallāh b. Takin and a group of them stepped forward and, seizing Abū Naṣr by the hand, cried out, “Here is the enemy of the Commander of the Faithful, standing before him armed with a sword.” They relieved him of his sword. One of Abū Naṣr’s pages named Thīṭal, who was then present, drew his sword and made a move to prevent them from harming Abū Naṣr. As Thīṭal had moved next to the Caliph, ʿAbdallāh b. Takin reacted instinctively and struck him a blow on the head with his sword. No one in the room was without his sword drawn. Al-Muḥtadi rose and entered a nearby apartment. Muḥammad b. Bughā was taken away and placed in a compartment in the palace, while the rest of his companions were imprisoned. The mawlās wanted to kill Abū Naṣr’s page, but al-Muḥtadi restrained them, saying he would handle the matter in his own way. He ordered the page given a [clean] shirt from
the wardrobe and his head cleansed of blood; then he should be put in prison.

By Thursday morning the numbers of *mawlās* had increased and oaths of loyalty and obedience sworn. Later on `Abdallah b. al-Wāthiq gave the order for a thousand men of the Shākiriyah, Farāghinah, and others to depart for al-Rafif. Among the Khurāsānī commanders instructed to go with them were the following: Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Wāthiqi, ‘Attāb b. ‘Attāb, Hārūn b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Azhar, Ibrāhim the brother of Abū ‘Awn, Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad b. Dā‘ūd, a son of Naṣr b. Shabath, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Di-nār, Aḥmad b. Faridūn, as well as others.

Afterward `Abdallah b. al-Wāthiq learned that these commanders were saying to each other how improper it was to send them to the district (*of al-Rafif*), so he abandoned the venture. They had a mind to correspond with Mūsā and Muflīḥ about leaving (*for Samarra*) and handing the army over to one of the other commanders. Finally, they agreed to write Mūsā and Muflīḥ about the matter, and word was also sent to some of the commanders concerning their assumption of the army management in place of the two. Notes were sent as well to lower-ranking officers about what their troops in Samarra had asked and what (*positive*) responses they received. Copies were made (*for them*) of the letters that had been sent to the commanders, and they were told to wait and see. If Mūsā and Muflīḥ swiftly did as they had been ordered, coming with their freedmen to the Caliph’s palace and handing over the army to whomever had been charged with the task, well and good. Otherwise they were to shackle the two of them, taking them by force to the Caliph. These letters were despatched by means of thirty men, who left Samarra on the night of Friday, the 5th of Rajab (June 8, 870).

Meanwhile in the palace each one who swore an oath of obedience was paid the sum of two dirhems per day. `Abdallah b. Takīn was the person in charge of distributing the money to the oath takers; he was Kanjūr’s brother-in-law. When Mūsā and his companions learned of this, Mūsā, who was then in al-Sinn, became alarmed about Kanjūr and had him beaten and imprisoned. Bāyakbāk heard the news while he was in al-Ḥadithah and he went to al-Sinn\(^309\) and had Kanjūr re-

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309. Two locations on the Tigris south of Mosul, al-Ḥadithah lying at the junction with the Upper Zāb river, al-Sinn near the junction with the Lower Zāb river. For both, see Le Strange, *Lands*, 90, 91.
moved from prison. The messengers arrived in al-Sinn with the commander’s despatches while the army was assembled there. One of the despatches was read out to the troops. They responded by swearing an oath of support and departing for the bridge at al-Rafif, where they established camp. This was Thursday, the 11th of Rajab (June 14, 870).

The same day al-Muhtadi set out for al-Hayr. He reviewed the troops, marched around a bit, and then returned to the Jawsaq palace, giving the order to have tents and pavilions pitched for them in al-Hayr. On Friday morning around a thousand men from Musa’s army had left (deserting him). Among them were Kutakin and Khushanaj. Once again al-Muhtadi made for al-Hayr. He placed Kutakin in charge of the right flank of his forces and Khushanaj in charge of the left, while he himself took the middle sector. The messengers began again to shuttle between the two armies. What Musa b. Bughā wanted was to be made governor of some district and allowed to proceed to it, while what the men wanted Musa to do was to come with his freedmen in order to negotiate with them. Nothing, however, was settled that day.

On Friday evening those who wanted to leave Musa had done so and Musa together with Mufliḥ had turned again toward the Khu-rasān Road with about one thousand men. The same night Bāyakbāk and a group of his commanders joined ‘Īsā al-Karkhī and spent the night with him. The following morning, Saturday, Bāyakbāk and his company came to the Jawsaq palace, where he, Yārjūkh, Asātakin, Ahmad b. Khāqān, Khatārīmush, and others were relieved of their swords. They appeared together before al-Muhtadi and saluted him. All were ordered to withdraw save Bāyakbāk who was commanded to remain standing before al-Muhtadi while he enumerated his many transgressions against Muslims and Islam. After this the mawlās abused him and locked him up in one of the palace chambers. Just five hours later, at sunset on Saturday, he was killed. Thus was the matter settled. There was no unrest and only a few who disapproved of Bāyakbāk’s treatment bothered to talk about it, and even they did not seem especially concerned.

On Sunday the Turks expressed their objection to the Farāghinah

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310. Al-khiyām wa-al-madārib.
311. The Arabized form of the Persian Khushank.
being treated as their equals in the palace, their admission to it altogether, [for] it became clear to them that the plot to murder the Turks' own leaders was designed to give the Farāghinah and the Maghāribah the upper hand. The Turks then abandoned the palace entirely to them. Protestations at that were voiced from al-Karkh and also included a demand for Bāyakbāk, as his troops had joined with theirs. Al-Muhtadi instructed a group of the Farāghinah to attend upon him, and he informed them of the Turks' objections. He said to them, "If you are sure you are up to taking care of the Turks, the Commander of the Faithful would not be displeased to have you by his side. If you feel yourselves unable to cope with them, we will be willing to do what they wish before things come to a head." The Farāghinah said they could cope and that, if they were combined with the Maghāribah, they could overcome them (the Turks); and they listed a number of reasons for their priority over the Turks. The Farāghinah sought to induce al-Muhtadi to go after the Turks and discussion about this continued until noon. Finally, when al-Muhtadi marched forth, most of his cavalry was comprised of Farāghinah and most of his infantry of Maghāribah. The Turks, who numbered around ten thousand men, were located between al-Karkh and the district of the fiefs. Al-Muhtadi and his forces numbered only six thousand, fewer than a thousand of whom were Turks, these being the troops of Šāliḥ b. Waṣif and a contingent accompanying Yāṛjūkḥ.

As the two sides advanced toward each other, Yāṛjūkḥ and his contingent broke off, while the troops of Šāliḥ b. Waṣif fled in retreat to their homes. Ṭāṣhtimur emerged from behind al-Dakkah, where his troops had been waiting in ambush, and against stiff resistance hand-to-hand fighting raged for a time during the day until al-Muhtadi's forces were beaten. Al-Muhtadi held on trying to rally his troops around him, he continued fighting until he despaired of their return and then rode off in a hasty retreat. He carried an embossed sword312 and was wearing a breastplate covered by a garment of patterned white-silk material.313 He reached Khashabat Bābak, all the while urging people to help him and stand against the enemy. However, only a party of riffraff (al-`ayyarun)314 decided to follow him.

312. Sayf mushattab. See Lane, Lexicon, s.v. sh-ṭ-b.
313. Ḥarīr abyād muʿayyān. See Lane, Lexicon, s.v. ʿ-y-n.
314. See references in note 182, above.
When they got as far as the prison, they seized his horse’s bridle and demanded he release the prison inmates. He turned his face from them, but they did not leave him until he had given the command to open the prison; then they abandoned him and busied themselves at the prison gate. Al-Muhtadi was left entirely alone.

He found his way to the palace of Abū Ṣāliḥ b. Yazdād where Ahmad b. Jumayl was staying. Upon entering he had the doors locked behind him and shed his clothes and weapons. He had received a hip wound, and requested a [clean] shirt and pantaloons, which Ahmad b. Jumayl gave him. After cleaning the wound, he drank some water and then said his prayers. A party of around thirty Turks led by Yārjūkḥ approached the palace of Abū Ṣāliḥ and beat upon the door until they were admitted. Al-Muhtadi heard them and, grabbing his sword, he made his way as quickly as possible up a flight of steps to the palace roof. One of the Turks wanted to go up after al-Muhtadi and, lunging at him with his sword, he missed and tumbled down the stairs. The Turks fired arrows at him, one of which struck his chest. It was only a slight wound but al-Muhtadi nevertheless knew he was finished. So he surrendered and descended, throwing away his sword. Seizing al-Muhtadi the Turks put him on a pack animal, with one of them in charge, and made their way back along the road he had come from to Yārjūkḥ’s palace in the district of the fiefs.

The Jawsaq palace was plundered by the Turks who stripped it clean. Ahmad, known as Ibn Fityān, b. al-Mutawakkil, imprisoned at the time in al-Jawsaq, was released by the Turks. They wrote to Mūsā b. Bughā asking him to come to [Sāmarra]. Al-Muhtadi remained in their care, but no one did anything more to him. On Tuesday, in the district of the fiefs, they rendered the oath of allegiance to Ahmad, the son of al-Mutawakkil, taking him on Wednesday to the Jawsaq palace, where the Ḥāshimites and the court elite also rendered their allegiance.

During these days, attempts to persuade al-Muhtadi to abdicate were made, but he refused and would not consent. He died on Wednesday. The following day, Thursday, his body was produced for the Ḥāshimites and the court elite; then his face was uncovered and his body washed. Jaʿfar b. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid recited the funeral prayers over him on Thursday, the 18th of Rajab 256 (June 21, 870).

On Saturday, the 20th of Rajab (June 23, 870), Mūsā b. Bughā arrived [in Sāmarra], and Ahmad Ibn Fityān rode to the Public Audi-
ence Hall\textsuperscript{315} on Monday, the 22nd of Rajab (June 25, 870); the public oath of allegiance was rendered there.

Muḥammad b. ʿIsā al-Qurashi reportedly said that, when al-Muhtadi fell into the hands of the Turks, he refused to abdicate. So they removed his fingers and toes, causing the palms of his hands and his feet to become swollen. After that they did several other things to him, until he died.\textsuperscript{316}

Muḥammad b. ʿIsā also\textsuperscript{317} reported, on the cause of the death of Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. Bughā, that he had set out from Sāmarrā to meet his brother Mūsā. Al-Muhtadi sent his brother ʿAbdallāh after Abū Naṣr with a contingent of the Maghāribah and Farāghinah, who caught up with him in al-Rafīf and brought him back to be imprisoned.

Once, before the conflict with al-Muhtadi, Abū Naṣr had visited the Caliph, greeting him. Al-Muhtadi said to him, “O Muḥammad, your brother Mūsā came [to Sāmarrā] with his army and slaves [ʿabīd] only to slay Ṣāliḥ b. Waṣīf and leave again.” Abū Naṣr replied, “O Commander of the Faithful, may God protect you from thinking that! Mūsā is your loyal servant, engaged in fighting a vile enemy.” Al-Muhtadi said, “Ṣāliḥ was more useful to us than Mūsā, and his policies better suited the empire. Now this ʿAlawi\textsuperscript{318} has returned to al-Rayy.” Abū Naṣr replied, “O Commander of the Faithful, what can he [Mūsā] do? He had defeated him and slain his companions and scattered his forces in every direction. But, whenever he goes away, he [al-Ḥasan] always returns. My God, he [al-Ḥasan] will do so again unless you order him [Mūsā] to remain in al-Rayy forever.” The Caliph said, “Enough of that! Your brother has accomplished nothing more than stealing and expropriating property for himself.”

\textsuperscript{315} Dār al-ʿāmmah. Bosworth, “Recruitment,” 63, notes that this term indicated the outer sections and annexes of the Caliphs’ palace, where troops other than palace guards were quartered and workshops, storehouses, and stables were located. Bosworth is, however, referring to Baghdad during the Caliph al-Muʿtaḍid’s reign (279–89/892–901); in Sāmarrā, Public Audience Hall seems an appropriate designation for the Arabic phrase.

\textsuperscript{316} The critical apparatus notes an additional phrase taken from ʿUyūn al-akhbār: Al-Dūlābī related that the brother of Bāyakbāk arrived with Khanjar and drank from the [Caliph’s] blood.

\textsuperscript{317} Ṭabārī does not mention the name of the transmitter, but it seems plausible to assume that it is a continuation of Muḥammad b. ʿIsā’s account.

\textsuperscript{318} That is, the rebel al-Ḥasan b. Zayd.
At this Abū Naṣr replied rudely, “Let what he and his family have acquired since you became Caliph be assessed and restored to their owners, and then do the same for what you and your brothers have acquired!” Al-Muhtadi ordered him arrested, beaten, and imprisoned; his palace was plundered along with that of Ibn Thawābah. A bounty was put on the heads of al-Ḥasan b. Makhład, Ibn Thawābah, and Muflīh’s secretary, Sulaymān b. Wahb al-Qaṭṭān, who fled in consequence, their palaces were also stripped bare.

Following this, al-Muhtadi brought together the various groups of Farāghinah, the Ushrusaniyyah, the Ṭabarīyyah, the Daylamites, the Ishtākhaniyyah, and the remnants of the Turks of al-Karkh and the clan of Waṣif and sought their support against Mūsā and Muflīh. He argued that they had expropriated much wealth and monopolized the tax revenue, and moreover that he was afraid they were plotting to kill him. “If you help me,” he said, “I shall pay all that is owing to you and increase the level of your allotments.” At this they agreed to assist him against Mūsā and his forces. As they remained in the Jawṣaq palace, they renewed their oath of allegiance to him. Al-Muhtadi ordered barley meal and sugar to be purchased for them and each man was paid a daily rate of two dirhams, and given a frequent ration of bread and meat. The army command was entrusted to Aḥmad b. Waṣif and ‘Abdallāh b. Bughā al-Sharābī.

The Banū Hāshim rallied to them, and together with al-Muhtadi they set out riding through the markets appealing to people for help saying, “These godless ones who slay caliphs and maltreat their own mawlās are the same who have appropriated the tax revenue for themselves; so support and aid the Commander of the Faithful.” Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Alī b. Yaʿqūb S. al-Manṣūr and other members of the Banū Hāshim spoke to people in a similar fashion. Al-Muhtadi later wrote to Bāyakbkāk with orders to take over as commander of the whole army and to arrest Mūsā and Muflīh.

After al-Muhtadi’s death, people searched for Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. Bughā, thinking he was still alive. When they were at last led to the spot where he was buried and he was disinterred, his body was found to have been butchered. The remains were taken to his family for Bāyakbkāk’s body was also taken and buried. The Turks broke a thousand swords over Muḥammad b. Bughā’s grave in accordance with their custom when a chief died.
It was said that when al-Muhtadi refused to abdicate, his testicles were ordered crushed until he died. It was also said that, when al-Muhtadi faced his executioners, he uttered these words:

"Were I able, I would be determined, but there was an obstacle between intent and execution of the act."[319]

The day that Muhammad b. Bughā was imprisoned nothing [else] was done to him. Restitution was demanded and he paid nearly twenty thousand dinars. After ripping open his belly and wringing his neck, they put him to death. His body was thrown into a well of the underground canal system, remaining there until the day after they took al-Muhtadi into custody when the mawlās extracted it for burial.

Al-Muhtadi's caliphate, to the very end of his reign, lasted exactly eleven months and twenty-five days.320 He was then thirty-eight years old. He was a man of wide and elegant forehead, and austere gray-blue eyes, short and rotund, broad-shouldered, and with a long beard. He was born in al-Qāṭūl.321

In this year Ju`lān arrived in al-Baṣrah to take on the leader of the Zanj.322

News of [the] Encounter [between Ju`lān and the Zanj]

Following his arrival in al-Baṣrah, Ju`lān reportedly advanced with his army from the city until he was just a farsakh323 distant from the Zanj army. There he had a trench excavated to enclose his forces where he remained for six months. Al-Zaynabī, Burayh, the Banū Hashim, and other Baṣrans who were prepared to fight the abominable one were sent forth on the day that Ju`lān promised them he would attack the Zanj. But, when the two sides met, they only threw

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319. Literally "a barrier between the wild ass and escape."
320. Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, VII, 233, has fifteen days.
321. See Le Strange, Lands, 57.
322. Popovic, Révolte, 93. Popovic observes that at this point, with the Caliph's despatch of a Turkish officer commanding government troops, the Zanj revolt had lost its local character and had become "an affair of state."
323. About 6 km.
stones and shot arrows at each other, and Ju`lán found he could not proceed owing to the dense stand of palm trees and undergrowth, which allowed no room for the horses upon which most of his troops were mounted.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan reported that after Ju`lán had spent some time thus entrenched, the Zanj leader said he had decided to conceal some of his troops along the approach roads to the trench and then launch a night attack upon him. The result of the attack was that a number of Ju`lán’s men were killed and the rest were gripped with such terror that Ju`lán left the camp to return to al-Baṣrah. Now prior to the abominable one’s nocturnal attacks against Ju`lán, al-Zaynabi had collected fighters from the Bilāliyyah and Sa`diyyah factions and despatched them to Ju`lán from the districts of the Nahr Nāfidh and Hazārdar, so as to confront the Zanj from two sides. However, they offered no resistance when they encountered the Zanj whose victory left many of them dead while the rest fled in disarray. Ju`lán escaped to al-Baṣrah and remained there, which made his weakness apparent to the central authorities.

Thus, Ju`lán was removed from responsibility for fighting the abominable one, and Sa`īd al-Ḥājib was ordered to proceed to undertake the task.

In this year the Zanj leader transferred [his headquarters] from the salt flats where he had established himself on the western side of the Nahr Abi al-Khaṣīb.324

In this year as well the Zanj leader reportedly seized fourteen seacraft, which had formed part of a convoy heading for al-Baṣrah. When news of the Zanj raids on the waterways reached the boats’ owners, they proposed binding their boats one to the other so as to form a kind of island linking the first craft to the last, which they could then sail along the Tigris. The abominable one got wind of this and detailed some of his troops to capture the flotilla, encouraging them by saying it was easy prey.

Abū al-Ḥasan said that he has heard the Zanj leader comment, “When news of the approaching boats reached me, I went to say my prayers. I had begun my humble petition for God’s assistance when

324. See Le Strange, “Ibn Serapion’s Description,” 304. It was at this place around this time that the Zanj leader built his capital, al-Mukhtarārah. The canal takes its name from a freedman of the Caliph al-Manṣūr who was granted lands here in fief. According to the Index, it was also known as Nahr al-Atrāk.
a voice addressed me, saying that I had been granted a great victory. Scarcely a moment later, I turned round and caught sight of the boats and my troops heading toward them in flat-bottomed craft. They quickly overwhelmed the boats, killed the fighters on board, captured slaves, and plundered vast treasure, the extent of which could not be counted or even estimated." For three days the Zanj were allowed to carry on in this fashion, after which their leader ordered anything left to be delivered to him.

On the 25th of Rajab (June 28, 870) of this year the Zanj occupied al-Ubullah, killing many of the inhabitants and burning the city.

**An Account of the Zanj Occupation of al-Ubullah**

At the time Ju‘lān had withdrawn from the trench he had constructed in Shāṭi‘ Uthmān and returned to al-Baṣrah, the Zanj leader reportedly harassed the inhabitants of al-Ubullah with several brigades of troops, attacking them with infantry from the direction of Shāṭi‘ Uthmān and from the commandeered boats from the Tigris. His troops then turned toward the Nahr Ma‘qil.

The Zanj leader reportedly said that he hesitated whether to head for ‘Abbadān or al-Ubullah but decided in favor of the former. He entrusted the task to some of his men but was then told that the nearest enemy with regard to abode and the most fitting one to concentrate on to the exclusion of anything else were the inhabitants of al-Ubullah. "Therefore," he said, "the army that I had despatched against ‘Abbadān I recalled and redirected to al-Ubullah."

The Zanj continued fighting the populace of al-Ubullah until Wednesday evening, the 25th of Rajab (June 28, 870). That night the Zanj stormed the city from the Tigris side and the Nahr al-Ubullah. Abū al-Aḥwaṣ and his son were killed in the fighting, while the city was put to the torch. As the buildings were constructed of teakwood and built close together, the fire swept through the city, causing a violent wind, while the sparks of the conflagration spread as far as

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326. The chief waterway of the nine canals lying on the western side of the Tigris estuary and the one through which ships reached al-Baṣrah from the north. It was named after a Companion of the Prophet. See Le Strange, "Ibn Serapion's Description," 303, 305.
327. See Le Strange, Lands, 43, 44.
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Shāṭī‘ Uthmān and engulfed it. Many were slain and many others drowned. Much booty was secured but more goods perished in the flames than were plundered. That evening ‘Abdallāh b. Ḥumayd al-Ṭūsī and one of his sons, who were aboard a barge on the Nahr Ma‘qil with Abū Ḥamzah Nuṣayr, were killed.

This year the inhabitants of ‘Abbādān also surrendered to the Zanj leader and yielded their citadel to him.

The Account of [the Zanj Leader’s] Summons for [the] Surrender [of the Inhabitants of ‘Abbādān]

The reason for this was that when the Zanj had dealt with the inhabitants of al-Ubullah in the manner they had, the ‘Abbādānians’ resolve weakened, and they feared for their lives and their families. Therefore they gave themselves over to the Zanj and surrendered their city to the abominable one. His troops occupied it and seized the slaves (al-‘abīd) and weapons they found there; the abominable one distributed among his troops the weapons that they brought to him.

In this year as well the Zanj occupied al-Ahwāz and captured Ibrāhīm b. al-Mudabbir.328

An Account of [the Occupation of al-Ahwāz]

The reason for this was that following the actions of the Zanj in al-Ubullah and the surrender of the inhabitants of ‘Abbādān to the abominable one,329 he next set his ambitions on al-Ahwāz. He had attached the ‘Abbādānians’ slaves (mamālik) to his own Zanj troops, while distributing among them as well the weapons that had been seized from the city.

The Zanj troops eagerly set off for Jubbā. The population offered no resistance and fled from the Zanj, who entered the town, killing,

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328. Ibrāhīm b. al-Mudabbir was the brother of the celebrated Aḥmad b. al-Mudabbir, financial administrator under the Tulūnids in Egypt. See El,3 s.v. “Ibn al-Mudabbir.”

329. Ibn al-Athir, Kāmil, VII, 237, who has consistently referred to ‘Ali b. Muḥammad as “the Zanj leader,” avoiding the pejorative epithets used by Ṭabari, calls him here al-‘Alawi al-Baṣrī, the Baṣrān ‘Alid, as though conferring an honorific title of conqueror upon him.
burning, and pillaging. They also laid waste the environs of Jubbâ, arriving at last before al-Ahwâz. The governor there at the time was Sa‘îd b. Yaksin, who was also in charge of defense matters; Ibrâhim b. Muḥammad b. al-Mudabbir was in charge of the bureaus of taxes and estates. The population of al-Ahwâz also fled from the Zanj, and almost no one offered resistance. Sa‘îd b. Yaksin withdrew with his soldiers, but Ibrâhim b. al-Mudabbir remained behind with his pages and servants. The Zanj entered and occupied the city. Ibrâhim b. Muḥammad, who had received a blow to the head, was captured and all his possessions, including money, furnishings, and slaves (raqīq), were seized. This was on Monday the 12th of Ramaḍān in the year 256 (August 13, 870).

Following these events in al-Ubullah and al-Ahwâz the Baṣrans were in such a state of dread that many evacuated the city for various other places, as disquieting rumors spread among the common people.

In Dhū al-Ḥijjah (October 30–November 28, 870) of this year the Zanj leader sent an army commanded by Yahyā b. Muḥammad al-Bahrānī to fight Shāhin b. Biṣṭām.330 But, as Yahyā failed to achieve his objective, he returned from the campaign.

In Rajab (June 4–July 3, 870) of this year Sa‘îd b. Ṣāliḥ al-Ḥājib arrived in al-Baṣrah to wage war against the Zanj on behalf of the central authorities.

In this year as well there occurred a battle between the troops of Musā b. Bughā who had gone with him to the district of al-Jabal in revolt against Muḥammad b. al-Wâthiq and Musâwir b. ‘Abd al-Ḥamîd the Khārijite. The battle took place in Khâniqin.331 Musâwir greatly outnumbered Musâ and his two hundred men, yet they were able to rout Musâwir and slay a large number of his troops.

330. He was the secretary attached to Ibrâhim b. Simâ who had replaced Sa‘îd b. Yaksin in his post in al-Ahwâz. For the account of Shâhin’s death, see pp. 123–25, below.
331. A city on the road to Ḥulwân, to the northeast of Baghdad. See Le Strange, Lands, 62–63.
The Caliphate of
al-Mustamid ʿalā-Allāh
The Events of the Year

256 (cont’d)

(DECEMBER 9, 869–NOVEMBER 28, 870)

In this year the oath of allegiance was rendered to Ahmad b. Abi Jafar, who was known as Ibn Fityan. He was given the regnal title al-Mu’tamid ‘alā-Allāh. The ceremony took place on Tuesday, the 16th of Rajab (June 19, 870).

In the same year news was despatched to Mūsā b. Bughā, who was then in Khāniqin, about the death of Muḥammad b. al-Wāthiq and also that the oath of allegiance had been given to al-Mu’tamid as Caliph. Mūsā arrived in Sāmarrā on the 20th of Rajab (June 23, 870).

On the 2nd of Sha‘bān (July 5, 870) ‘Ubaydallāh b. Yahyā b. Khāqān was appointed vizier.\(^{332}\)

In the same year ‘Alī b. Zayd al-Ṭālibi\(^{333}\) appeared in al-Kūfah. Al-Shāh b. Mikāl was sent with a large army to fight him, and ‘Alī and his troops met and routed him, killing a great many of his troops. Al-Shāh, however, managed to escape.

\(^{332}\) See Sourdell, *Vizirat*, I, 305–9. The text has ‘Abdallāh; the correct name is found in Manuscript C.

\(^{333}\) A descendant of al-Hasan b. ‘Alī b. Abi Ṭalib, he is first reported raising a rebellion in al-Kūfah in Rajab 255 (June 869); Tabari III, 1709. Ibn al-Athir, *Kāmil*, VII, 238–39, mentions another ‘Alid revolt that occurred at this time, this one in Upper Egypt, which caused the governor, Ibn Tulūn, to send a force to quell it.
Again in this same year, Muḥammad b. Wāṣil b. Ibrāhim al-Ta-
mīmī, an inhabitant of Fārs, together with a Kurd called Aḥmad b. al-
Layth, who was from the same region, attacked al-Ḥārith b. Simā al-Shārābī, the governor of Fārs. In the ensuing battle al-Ḥārith was
killed, and this allowed Muḥammad b. Wāṣil to conquer Fārs.

Mufliḥ was sent into battle against Musāwir the Kharijite in this
year as well. Kanjūr was also despatched to fight ʿAli b. Zayd al-
Tālibī in al-Kūfah.

The army of al-Ḥasan b. Zayd al-Tālibī conquered al-Rayy in the
month of Ramaḍān (August 2 to 31, 870) of this year.

On the 11th of Shawwāl of this year (September 11, 870), Mūsā b.
Bughā departed from Sāmarrā for al-Rayy with al-Muʿtamid pub-
licly bidding him farewell.

In this year a battle occurred between Amājūr and one of the sons
of ʿĪsā b. al-Shaykh at the gate of Damascus. I heard a report from
someone attending Amājūr that, on the day the skirmish took place,
he had prepared an expeditionary force for himself and departed
from the city of Damascus. At the same moment the son of ʿĪsā b. al-
Shaykh and one of his commanders called Abū al-Ṣahbāʾ were with
their own forces in the vicinity of Damascus. They received intel-
ligence of Amājūr’s departure with a small contingent of troops.
Spoiling for a fight, they advanced toward Amājūr, who was unaware
of their approach until they were upon him. The two sides engaged
in fierce hand-to-hand combat and Abū al-Ṣahbāʾ was killed. The
rest of his troops and those of Ibn ʿĪsā were put to flight. I heard it

334. For these developments, see Bosworth, “Ṭaḥīrids,” 112–13, where the name
is given as Muḥammad b. Wāṣil al-Ḥanẓali.
335. The battle, according to Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, VII, 240, occurred in the Khāni-
qin district. Mufliḥ, facing greater numbers of the enemy, nevertheless managed to
slay many of the Kharijite forces.
336. Kanjūr succeeded in driving the ʿAlid from al-Kūfah and pursued him as far as
Junbulā, where he defeated the rebel and captured many of his men, in Dhū al-Ḥijjah
256 (October 30–November 28, 870). See Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, VII, 239–40, where the
account of Kanjūr is complete. Ṭabarī mentions the circumstances of his death later
under events of 259/872–73, p. 150, below.
337. Ibn al-Athīr’s account, Kāmil, VII, 238, is clearer than Ṭabarī’s, although dif-
fering slightly in some details. ʿĪsā b. al-Shaykh had been appointed over Damascus;
he appropriated a sum of 700,000 dinars, which had been sent from Egypt en route to
Baghdad and then claimed to have distributed it to his troops. The Caliph al-Muʿ-
tamīd sent Amājūr to Damascus as governor with a thousand troops. As Amājūr ap-
proached the city, he encountered the greater force of Manṣūr, ʿĪsā’s son who was de-
feated and killed. ʿĪsā himself escaped toward Armenia, and Amājūr took control of
Damascus.
mentioned that on that day the forces of Ibn 'Isā and Abū al-Ṣahbā' combined were about twenty thousand men, whereas Amajur had only some two to four hundred men.

On Wednesday, the 13th of Dhū al-Ḥijjah (November 11, 870), Abū Aḥmad (al-Muwaffaq), the son of al-Mutawakkil, set out from Mecca for Sāmarra.

In the same year Abū Naṣr Ḥusayn b. Ḥusayn al-Jamā'ī, the judge Muḥammad b. 'Ubaydallāh al-Kurayzī and al-Ḥusayn the eunuch, otherwise known as 'Araq al-Mawt,339 were sent to 'Isā b. al-Shaykh in order to offer him the governorship of Armenia,339 on condition that he leave Syria, he being given a pledge of safe-conduct to do so. 'Isā accepted and set out from Syria for Armenia.340

Leading the pilgrimage in this year was Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. 'Isā b. Abī Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr.341

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338. "[Smelling of the] sweat of death" is an approximation to the meaning of the man's name.
339. See EI, s.v. "Arminiya."
340. The details in the paragraphs here are not recounted by Ibn al-Athir. See n. 335, above.
341. Great-grandson of the Caliph al-Manṣūr, he was known as Ka'b al-Baqar. This appears to have been the first pilgrimage he led. His father had performed the same office in 252/865.
Among the significant events of this year was the arrival in Fārs of Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth. In Shaʿbān of this year (June 24 – July 22, 871) al-Muʿtamid sent to him a delegation comprising Tughtā and Ismāʿīl b. Ishāq and Abū Saʿīd al-Anṣārī. Abū ʿAḥmad b. al-Mutawakkil also despatched to him confirmation of the governorship of Balkh and Tukhāristān including adjacent areas in Kirmān, Sijistān, Sind, and elsewhere, together with the stipulation of the annual amount of his revenue. Yaʿqūb accepted these arrangements and departed.

In Rabiʿ II (February 16 – March 26, 871) of this year, one of Yaʿqūb’s messengers arrived [in Sāmarrā] with idols he had reportedly seized from Kabul.

On the 12th of Ṣafar (January 9, 871) al-Muʿtamid conferred upon his brother Abū ʿAḥmad the overall control of al-ʿUfah, the Mecca
Road, the Ḥaramayn,\footnote{343. That is, the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina. See El,\textsuperscript{2} s.v. “al-Ḥaramayn.”} and the Yemen. Later, on the 7th of Ramaḍān (July 29, 871), Baghdad, the Sawād, Wāsīṭ, the districts of the Tigris, al-Baṣrah, al-Ahwāz, and Fārs were added to the others. The Caliph ordered that the governor of Baghdad take administrative charge of Abū Aḥmad’s districts. He also conferred upon Yārjūkh control of al-Baṣrah, the Tigris districts, al-Yamāmah and al-Baḥrayn in place of Saʿīd b. Șāliḥ. Yārjūkh then appointed Manṣūr b. Jaʿfar b. Dīnār as administrator of al-Baṣrah and the Tigris districts and other areas adjacent to al-Ahwāz.

Also in the same year, Bughrāj was commissioned to press Saʿīd (b. Șāliḥ) al-Ḥajib to proceed to the Tigris and station himself opposite the army camp of the Zanj leader.\footnote{344. See Popovic, \textit{Révolte}, 97.} Bughrāj did so and Saʿīd carried out this task in the month of Rajab (May 25–June 23, 871) of this year. It was reported that when Saʿīd reached the Nahr Maʿqil he found the forces of the Zanj leader there at a canal called the Murghāb,\footnote{345. Yaqūt, \textit{Muʿjam}, IV, 499.} one of the tributaries of the Nahr Maʿqil. Saʿīd engaged the Zanj in battle and routed them; he also managed to free women who had been held prisoner among them, as well as seizing booty. During the encounter Saʿīd received some wounds, one of them in the mouth. Afterward he departed for a spot known as the army camp of Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr\footnote{346. Named after the former ‘Abbāsid Caliph.} and remained there one night. Next he moved on and camped at a place called Haṭmah\footnote{347. Manuscript C has Hamṭah; Ibn al-Athir, \textit{Kāmil}, VII, 242, calls it Haṭṭah and places it on the eastern side of the Tigris. The location cannot be identified, and, as this instance illustrates, many of the locations (and their correct names) that appear in connection with the Zanj uprising in the vast southern Iraqi swamplands were unfamiliar, even to a contemporary writer like Ṭabari.} in the Euphrates valley. He remained there for some days, inspecting his troops and preparing them for a further encounter with the Zanj leader. During his sojourn in Haṭmah, word reached Saʿīd that an army of the Zanj leader was in the Euphrates area. So with a contingent of his own troops, he headed for the Zanj and succeeded in routing them. Among the defeated was ‘Īmrān, who was married to the grandmother of Ankalāy, son of the Zanj leader. This ‘Īmrān sought a pledge of safe-conduct from Bughrāj, after which the sides dispersed.
Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan said: "Once I saw a woman from among the inhabitants of the Euphrates valley who discovered one of the Zanj concealed in some dense underbrush. She seized him and brought him without resistance to Saʿid's camp." Later Saʿid set out again to fight the abominable one. He crossed over to the western side of the Tigris and engaged him in several skirmishes over a period of days. Saʿid then returned to his camp in Haṭmah and from there pursued the struggle against the abominable one throughout the remainder of Rajab and most of Saʿid (from early June through mid-July 871).

In the same year Ibrāhim b. Muḥammad b. al-Mudabbir escaped from prison where he had been detained by the abominable one. The reason for this was that he had reportedly been confined to one room in the residence of Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad al-Bahrānī. As al-Bahrānī felt cramped in these quarters, Ibrāhim was moved to an apartment in his palace and locked up there. Two men who lived in an adjacent building to that in which Ibrāhim was held were put in charge of him. Ibrāhim went to considerable lengths to excite the mens' cupidity. They ran a tunnel from their own quarters to the place where Ibrāhim was confined, and both he and his nephew called Abū Ghālib made their escape along with a man from the Banū Ḥāshim who had been imprisoned with them.

During the course of the year the abominable one's forces fought against those of Saʿid, who himself was killed along with many of his followers.

An Account of the Battle
[between Saʿid al-Ḥājjib and the Zanj]

It was reported that the abominable one sent orders to Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad al-Bahrānī, who at the time was stationed on the Nahr Maṣqil with a large army, for him to proceed by night with a thousand of his troops toward Saʿid's army. The force was to be commanded by Sulaymān b. Jāmī and Abū al-Layth al-Iṣbahānī. They were instructed to attack Saʿid at the break of dawn. Sulaymān and Abū al-Layth set out for Saʿid's army to execute their orders and happened to encounter him quite unprepared. In the ensuing battle a large
number of Sa'īd's troops were slain, the Zanj on that occasion burning Sa'īd's camp to the ground and thereby gravely weakening his position.

Owing to the night attacks the Zanj launched against them, Sa'īd's camp was thrown into a state of confusion. A complicating factor was the withholding of the soldiers' allotments, which had been assigned to them from the revenue of al-Ahwāz. Manṣūr b. Ja'far al-Khayyāt, who was then in charge of military affairs in al-Ahwāz as well as having a hand in matters of taxes, had delayed the payment of the soldiers' allotments. When the position of Sa'īd b. Șāliḥ had deteriorated to such an extent, he was ordered to depart for the court in [Sāmarrā]\(^{350}\) and surrender both the army and his administrative duties to Manṣūr b. Ja'far. Sa'īd eventually carried out these instructions, although he had been unable to move following the night attacks of the Zanj and their burning his camp, until he was relieved of his duties.

In this same year there occurred a battle between Manṣūr b. Ja'far al-Khayyāt and the Zanj leader, during which many of Manṣūr's troops were slain.

*An Account of the Battle [between Manṣūr b. Ja'far and the Zanj]*

It was reported that when Sa'īd al-Ḥājib had been removed from his post in al-Başrah, Bughrāj remained behind to protect its inhabitants. Manṣūr began to organize the supply ships, having them escorted by barge as far as al-Başrah. As a result, the Zanj were low on provisions. Then Manṣūr mustered his troops and added to the barges he had the Jannābi\(^{351}\) barges and other boats. He headed in the direction of the Zanj leader's army camp, scaled the walls of a castle located beside the Tigris, and burned it to the ground and everything around it. Approaching from the same side he entered the Zanj encampment. The Zanj lay in ambush for them and attacked and killed...

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349. Subbibat lahām. See Ṭabarī, Glossarium, cclxxxiv, and n. 57 above.
350. The text reads Bāb al-Sultān, headquarters of the central authorities.
351. The reading is uncertain; the word in manuscript B is unpointed, while C reads al-Ḥan[āniyyāt]. Jannābi barges would have been made in the city of Jannāba, located on the coast of the province of Fārs. See Ṭabarī, Glossarium, clxxi; Le Strange, *Lands*, 259.
a large number of [Mansur's] troops while the rest sought escape in the waters of the Tigris where many more were drowned. On that occasion about five hundred heads were reportedly borne away to the camp of Yahya b. Muhammad al-Bahrani on the Nahr Ma'qil, where he ordered them publicly displayed.

In the same year, at a place called Birkat Zalzal, a stranger from Baghdad was apprehended. He had murdered a number of women and buried them in the house where he was living. He was brought to al-Mu'tamid, and I learned that he had ordered the prisoner whipped. He was given two thousand lashes and four hundred strokes with a bastinado, yet he continued to live. Only when the executioners beat his testicles with two wooden flogging posts ('uqabayn) did he finally expire. His body was then returned to Baghdad, where it was strung up in the public view; the corpse was later burned.

In this year Shahn b. Bistam was killed and Ibrahim b. Sima put to flight.

The Death of Shahn b. Bistam and the Flight of Ibrahim b. Sima

Al-Bahrani had reportedly written to the abominable one advising the despatch of an army to occupy al-Ahwaz and arousing his interest in such a plan. He suggested the operation commence with the destruction of the Arbuk bridge (qantarah) to prevent the (enemy's) cavalry from reaching his army. The abominable one sent 'Ali b. Aban to destroy the bridge. 'Ali was met by Ibrahim b. Sima, who was returning from Fars where he had been with al-Harith b. Sima in a tract of desert known as the Dast Arbuk, which was situated between al-Ahwaz and the aforementioned bridge.

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352. Lane, Lexicon, s.v. 'q-b. Al-'uqabon are two pieces of wood stuck in the ground, between which a man is extended to be flogged.

353. This tale seems curiously out of place amid the narrative of events of greater import to the state; it was one that evidently caught Tabari's personal interest.

354. See Popovic, Révolte, 96–98; Ibn al-Athir, Kamil, VII, 243–44.

355. This was the only bridge crossing the Dujayl. See Yaqut, Mu'amal, I, 185.

356. Al-Khayl. A feminine singular noun with the collective meaning "horses" and in a metonymous sense "mounted troops." See Lane, Lexicon, s.v. kh-y-l; and El's, s.v. "Khayl." The verb in the sentence should be emended to taqil.

357. The governor of Fars, as mentioned p. 116, above.
When 'Ali b. Abān reached the bridge he and his troops established a camp hidden from view. However, when Ibrihim's cavalry had crossed this desert tract they were able to attack 'Ali from several sides and as a result a great number of the Zanj were slain. 'Ali himself was forced to flee. Ibrihim's cavalry pursued him as far as al-Fandam but a foot wound prevented 'Ali from proceeding farther toward al-Ahwāz. Therefore he backtracked and headed for Jubba.

Sa'īd b. Yaksin was removed from his post and Ibrahim b. Simā was appointed [to combat the Zanj]. His secretary was Shāhin. The two men set out at the same time, Ibrihim b. Simā taking the Euphrates Road and heading for the mouth of the Nahr Jubbā. 'Ali b. Abān was at this moment in al-Khayzurāniyyah. For his part, Shāhin b. Bistām set out along the Nahr Mūsā road, judging that he would meet up with Ibrihim at a spot they had previously agreed upon. They had also made prior arrangements to attack 'Ali b. Abān, and Shāhin arrived at the spot first. Now an inhabitant of the Nahr Mūsā district came to 'Ali b. Abān and informed him of Shāhin's approach. 'Ali advanced toward Shāhin, and the two sides met in the afternoon at the Abu al-`Abbas canal, situated between the Nahr Mūsā and the Nahr Jubbā. Battle broke out between the two sides. At first Shāhin's troops held fast and fought fiercely. But then, recovering, the Zanj dealt their opponents a crushing blow, causing them to turn heel and flee. In fact the first to fall mortally wounded that day were Shāhin himself and a cousin of his named Ḥayyān; this was because he had been in the vanguard of the troops. A great many of his men were slain as well.

Another informant came to 'Ali b. Abān and told him of Ibrihim b. Simā's arrival. This was after 'Ali's battle with Shāhin was over. Without delay 'Ali departed for the Nahr Jubbā, where Ibrihim b. Simā's army was camped. As yet Ibrihim had heard no word of Shāhin's fate. At the time of the last evening prayer, 'Ali drew in

358. Yāqūt, Mu'jam, IV, 278, places this in [the district] of al-Ahwāz and adds, "But I don't know what it is."
359. A town lying on a canal of the same name, east of the Dujayl and below al-Ahwāz in an area occupied by many villages. See Le Strange, Lands, 243.
360. Ibrihim was appointed to replace Sa'īd as military governor of al-Ahwāz.
362. A town on the eastern side of the Tigris above Fam al-Šilh, in the district of Wāṣīt. See Le Strange, "Ibn Serapion's Description," 301.
close upon Ibrāhim’s position and then attacked ferociously, slaying his troops in droves. Thus in the brief span of time between the afternoon and evening prayers, Shāhīn had been killed and Ibrāhim routed.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan said that he had once heard ‘Ali b. Abān talking of these events. He said, “That day, as it happened, I had come down with one of the bouts of fever to which I was subject. When my troops had achieved their victory over Shāhīn, they dispersed so that there were only about fifty left with me when I set out for Ibrāhim b. Simā’s army camp. When I reached it, I got close enough to hear the commotion of the soldiers and even some of their conversations. When the place fell quiet, I went onto the attack.”

‘Ali b. Abān left Jubbā when Shāhīn had been killed and Ibrāhim b. Simā routed, after a despatch arrived for him from the abominable one with orders to proceed to al-Bagārah and wage war against its inhabitants.

In this year the troops of the abominable one entered al-Bagārah.

The Events that Led up to [the] Entry of al-Baṣrah [by the Zanj] and What Transpired Thereafter

It was reported that, when Saʿīd b. Ǧālib (al-Ḥājib) left al-Baṣrah, the central authorities handed over his duties to Maḥsūr b. Jaʿfar al-Khayyāṭ. The events concerning Maḥsūr and the troops of the abominable one we have dealt with already: They told of Maḥsūr’s enfeebled position, his inability to engage the abominable one in battle, contenting himself with providing protection for the supply ships sufficient to relieve the inhabitants of al-Baṣrah of the harm caused when the flow of these supplies was interrupted. Word of this reached the abominable one, who was then frustrated by the news that the Baṣrans had been relieved. This caused him to send ‘Ali b. Abān to the districts of Jubbā, where he established camp in al-Khayzurāniyyah. This distracted Maḥsūr b. Jaʿfar from the protection of the supply boats to al-Baṣrah, so once again the Baṣrans experienced straitened circumstances.

The abominable one’s troops harassed the inhabitants of al-Baṣ-
raḥ day and night with attacks. Then, in the month of Shawwāl (August 22–September 19, 871) of this year, the abominable one determined to rally his forces together for a concerted assault on the Başrans and a serious [attempt to] destroy it. The decision was taken because he was aware of their weakness, their disunity, and the damaging effects upon them of the blockade and the destruction of surrounding villages. Moreover, the abominable one had consulted the astrological charts and discovered that there would be a lunar eclipse on Tuesday evening, the 14th of the month (September 4, 871).

Muḥammad b. al-Hasan b. Sahl reported that he had heard the abominable one say, “I earnestly prayed to God for help against the people of al-Baṣrah and humbly beseeched Him to hasten its destruction. A voice addressed me saying that al-Baṣrah was but a loaf of bread, which one could nibble around the edges; when half the loaf had been devoured, al-Baṣrah would be destroyed. I took this to mean that devouring half a loaf indicated the eclipse of the moon, which was expected at this time, so it was entirely plausible that the fate of al-Baṣrah would occur soon afterward.”

Muḥammad continued: “The abominable one continued speaking in this vein to such an extent that he overwhelmed his followers with the story, repeating it among them ad nauseam. Then he deputized Muḥammad b. Yazid al-Dārīmī, one of his adherents in al-Bahrayn, to go among the Arab tribesmen, many of whom were successfully won over to the Zanj cause. They camped at a place called al-Qandal, and the abominable one sent Sulaymān b. Mūsā al-Ṣaḥrānī to join them, and then ordered the whole force to head for al-Baṣrah and attack it. He forwarded instructions to Sulaymān b. Mūsā to drill the tribesmen in the execution of such an operation.

When the lunar eclipse occurred, the Zanj leader sent ‘Alī b. Abān with a detachment of Arab tribesmen, ordering him to approach al-Baṣrah by way of the territory of the Banū Saʿd. Likewise Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad al-Baḥrānī, who was then blockading the Başrans, was instructed to approach the city via the Nahr ‘Adī with the remainder of the tribesmen who were attached to him.”

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan said that Shibl (b. Sālim) had observed that the first attack on the Başrans was led by ‘Alī b. Abān. This was at the time when Bughraj was present in the city with a detachment of soldiers. For two days the battle raged between the two sides, the
people in general supporting Bughrāj. Yahyā (b. Muḥammad al-Bahrānī) approached with his troops by way of Qaṣr Anas, making their way to the bridge. ‘Alī b. Abān al-Muhallabī entered the city at the time of the Friday congregational prayers on the 17th of Shawwāl (September 7, 871). Killing and burning continued through the day and into the evening and throughout all of Saturday as well. Yahyā approached al-Baṣrah early on Sunday morning. Bughrāj and Burayh with a force of troops blocked his way and drove him back. Yahyā returned and held his ground for the rest of the day. On Monday morning he (Yahyā) made a further attempt, but, when he finally secured entry into the city, the defenders had scattered, Burayh had fled, and Bughrāj had withdrawn with his troops, leaving no opposition. Ibrāhīm b. Yahyā al-Muhallabī met Yahyā and sought a promise of protection from him on behalf of the inhabitants and this was granted.

Ibrāhīm b. Yahyā’s town crier proclaimed the protection to anyone who sought it; he had only to present himself at Ibrāhīm’s palace. The inhabitants of al-Baṣrah responded without exception, thronging the city squares. When he saw the great gathering, he seized the opportunity to blockade every street, roadway, and alley, thus preventing anyone from escaping. Behaving in this treacherous manner, he then gave the order for his troops to kill, and, with rare exceptions, everyone present was slain. The perpetrator of this act departed the same day to stay in Qaṣr ‘Iṣā b. Ja’far in al-Khuraybah.

Muḥammad continued: Al-Faḍl b. ‘Adī al-Dārimī recounted to me the following: “At the time the traitor was warring against the people of al-Baṣrah, I was in the district, staying among the Banū Sa’d.” Al-Faḍl continued, saying that someone had arrived one night and mentioned that he had seen some passing cavalry heading for Qaṣr ‘Iṣā in al-Khuraybah. [Al-Faḍl said], “My companions said to me, ‘Go and gather some information for us about this troop.’ I did so, and, when I came upon a part of the Banū Tamīm and the Banū Asad, I inquired what they were doing. They claimed to be supporters of the ‘Alawite and attached to ‘Ali b. Abān, who was supposed

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365. The subject of the verb here is unclear. Grammatical requirements point to Ibrāhīm b. Yahyā as the perpetrator of the ensuing massacre, but it was certainly the work of Yahyā b. Muḥammad al-Bahrānī. See p. 131, below, for another account.

366. Ṭabari uses the word khaḍ'in for the Zanj leader, a change from the monotonous khabith, “abominable one.”
to reach al-Baṣrah the following morning, his destination being the quarter of the Banū Sa'd. Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad was also with another contingent, heading for the quarter of the Āl al-Muhallab. They said to me, 'Tell your companions from the Banū Sa'd, "If you wish to protect your women and children, then make haste to evacuate them before the army surrounds you."'  

Al-Faḍl said, "I returned to my companions and gave them the news from the Arab tribesmen." Having made their preparations, they sent someone to Burayh to inform him, too, of the situation. He came to them at dawn with the remaining chattels and a contingent of soldiers. They then marched out until they eventually reached a trench called Banū Ḥimmān. Some Banū Tamīm and fighters of the Sa'diyah met up with them, but it was not long before ʿAlī b. Abān overtook them with a contingent of Zanj and Arab tribesmen on horseback. Burayh became alarmed before even encountering this crowd and so he returned to his residence [in al-Baṣrah]. This was as good as admitting defeat. The Banū Tamīm who had gathered now dispersed and ʿAlī was able to approach the city unopposed, and he made his way to the quarter of al-Mirbad.  

Burayh sent word to the Banū Tamīm requesting assistance, and a group of them responded. Fighting broke out in al-Mirbad in front of Burayh’s palace. Thereupon Burayh fled, and his supporters scattered. The Zanj burned his palace to the ground, having plundered all its contents. The killing continued, the Baṣrans‘ position having been gravely weakened, while that of the Zanj grew stronger. The sides battled on until the end of the day, when ʿAlī reached the congregational mosque and ordered it burned down. Fath, the servant of Abū Shith, together with a group of Baṣrans, took ʿAlī by surprise, and he had to retreat with his men, some of the Zanj being killed. ʿAlī thereupon turned back and established his army camp at a place called the graveyard of the Banū Shaybān.

People sought for someone in authority with whom they could join in battle, but none was found. When they looked for Burayh, they discovered that he had fled. On Saturday the Baṣrans realized that ʿAlī b. Abān had not returned, but early on Sunday morning he

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367. Located at the western gate of al-Baṣrah, it was the quarter where caravans halted and hence was one of the busiest in the city. See Le Strange, _Lands_, 45; _EI_, s.v. "al-Baṣrah."
The Events of the Year 257

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan related as follows from Muḥammad b. Simʿān: “At the time the Zanj entered al-Baṣra, I was living in the city. I used to attend the assembly held by Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, who was known as Burayh. On Friday, the 10th of Shawwāl 257 (August 31, 871), I was there, and Shihāb b. al-ʿAlāʾ al-ʿAnbarī was present as well. I heard Shihāb telling Ibrāhīm that the traitor had sent money and supplies into the desert in order to raise a force from among the Arab tribesmen; that he had in fact managed to muster a large troop of horsemen, and with them and his own Zanj infantry he intended to infiltrate al-Baṣra. At the time al-Baṣra was defended by only some fifty cavalry of the government forces under Bughraj. Burayh told Shihāb that the Arab tribesmen would not venture to act with hostility toward him [because] he was obeyed and respected by the Arabs.”

Ibn Simʿān continued: “I left Burayh’s assembly and came across the secretary, Aḥmad b. Ayyūb, whom I overheard talking about Hārūn b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Shiʿi, who at the time was in charge of the postal service (barīd) in al-Baṣra. Hārūn confirmed that the traitor, on the 3rd of Shawwāl (August 24, 871), had performed the congre- gational prayer with nine persons, while al-Baṣra’s leading command- ers and its resident governor remained in total ignorance about what the traitor was up to, as I have described.”

The blockade had driven the populace to hunger, and disease was on the increase. Conflict erupted in the city between the two factions of the Bilāliyyah and the Saʿdiyyah. Then on Friday morning, the 16th of Shawwāl (September 6, 871) of this year, the traitor’s cavalry attacked al-Baṣra on three fronts, the Banū Saʿd district, al-Mirbad, and al-Khuraybah. ʿAlī b. Abān led the army, which was despatched against al-Mirbad. He had divided his troops into two contingents: One was in the charge of Rafiq, the servant of Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Khāqān, who was ordered to march into the Banū Saʿd district, and the other, with whom he himself remained,

368. The expression is jammaʾa fi tisʿa anfus. See Lane, Lexicon, s.v. j-m. Although the date was actually a Saturday, the meaning seems to be that ʿAlī b. Muḥammad had the temerity to pray with nine persons (with nine of his companions or with only nine other persons!) in the congregational mosque in al-Baṣra prior to the final assault and under the noses of the authorities.
The Caliphate of al-Mu'tamid 'alā-Allāh

set out for al-Mirbad. Yahyā b. Muḥammad al-Azraq al-Bahrānī led the cavalry, which was sent to al-Khuraybah, having assembled his troops together on one front. Those Baṣrans of little circumstance who could, despite being exhausted by hunger and the blockade, went out to face each of these divisions. The cavalry accompanying Bughrāj split up into two groups, one of which made for the district of al-Mirbad and the other for al-Khuraybah. Those [of 'Ali's forces] who reached the Banū Saʿd district engaged in battle a contingent of the Saʿdiyyah fighters, along with Fath, the slave of Abū Shīth and his companions, but a few Baṣrans were no match for the assembled forces of the abominable one, whose troops attacked on horse and on foot.

Ibn Sim‘ān said: “On that day I was present in the congregational mosque when flames engulfed three areas, Zahrān, al-Mirbad, and Banū Ḥimmān, at the same time, as if they had been set by arsonists at an agreed moment. That was at the beginning of the day, on Friday. The calamity worsened, and Baṣrans were convinced that they were doomed. Those in the main mosque strove to reach their homes as swiftly as possible. I was hastening toward my own house, which was on the Mirbad Road. On the way, fleeing Baṣrans passed me retreating to the great mosque. Al-Qāsim b. Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān al-Hāshimi brought up their rear, seated upon a donkey and girt with a sword. He cried out to the crowd, ‘Woe upon you! Will you surrender your city and your families? This is your enemy who has just entered your city!’ But none paid heed to him or listened to his plea, and he went upon his way. Then the Mirbad Road cleared of people, and between those in flight and the Zanj there was empty space as far as the eye could see.”

Muḥammad369 said, “When I saw what was happening, I entered my house and locked the door. From the upper floor of the house I looked down and saw the cavalry of the Arab tribesmen and the Zanj foot soldiers led by a man riding a chestnut horse and carrying a spear bearing a yellow lappet.370 Sometime later, after I had been taken to the traitor’s city, I inquired about the man’s identity. ‘Ali b. Abān claimed that he had been the one I had seen with the yellow streamer.”

369. That is, Muḥammad b. Sim‘ān.
370. ‘Adhabah. Lane, Lexicon, s.v. ‘-dh-b, describes this as a strip of linen or the like that is bound to the head of a spear.
The [Zanj] troops entered the city and disappeared down the Mirbad Road, proceeding to the 'Uthmān Gate. By then it was late in the day. Then they left. The ignorant young clods of the city imagined that they were off to attend the Friday prayer, but what had really frightened them off was possible attack from bands of the Bilāliyyah and Sa'diyyah who might attack them from the square, for they feared ambushes there. So they left. Those [Zanj] who were in the quarters of Zahrān and Banū Ḥisn also departed after they had burned, pillaged, and overwhelmed the city, for they knew no one could stop them. They let Saturday and Sunday go by. Then they came again on Monday, and found no one defending the city. The population was collected before the palace of Ibrāhīm b. Yaḥyā al-Muhallabi and promised their security.

Muḥammad b. Simʿān recounted the following from al-Ḥasan b. 'Uthmān al-Muhallabi, who was nicknamed Mundaliqah and was one of Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad's companions. That morning Yaḥyā had ordered him to go to the graveyard of the Banū Yashkur and bring back as many ovens as he could fetch. "I did so," said al-Ḥasan, "and brought back some twenty ovens carried on porters' heads. I took them to the palace of Ibrāhīm b. Yaḥyā, and people thought they were for the purpose of preparing food for them, as they suffered from hunger resulting from the harsh blockade and the strain of events. A crowd developed in front of Ibrāhīm b. Yaḥyā's palace, people coming and going and increasing in number through the night until sunrise."

Ibn Simʿān continued. "At this time I had moved residence from the Mirbad Road to the palace belonging to my mother's grandfather Hishām, who was called al-Dāff. It was located in the district of the Banū Tamīm; [I did this] because the Banū Tamīm were rumored among the populace to have accepted the traitor's peace. I was there when some informants brought news of the battle in front of Ibrāhīm b. Yaḥyā. They said that Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad al-Bahrānī had ordered the Zanj to surround the crowd. He allowed any of the Muhallabi family to enter Ibrāhīm b. Yaḥyā's palace. A small

371. Al-Murabba'ah. The reading is uncertain, though some location seems indicated by the context. Manuscript B has al-mu'arabah and C al-murfah.
372. Al-nās. The word is typically ambiguous and could also mean the Baṣrān troops.
373. The reading is conjectural; manuscript B is unpointed, while C reads s-da-l-ī-h.
374. See n. 216, above.
number did so, and the gates were then shut. Finally, the Zanj were given the word to massacre the rest of the crowd, which they proceeded to do, to the very last person."

Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh, known as Abū al-Layth al-Iṣbahānī, was the one who had given the signal\(^\text{375}\) to the Zanj, which they recognized as the order to commence the slaughter. The sword did the rest.

Al-Ḥasan b. ʿUthmān said, "I could hear their uproar, crying out 'There is no God but Allāh' as they were put to the sword. Their voices rang out with the cry of 'There is no God but Allāh' so loudly that they could be heard far away, in al-Ṭafawah." After the crowd had been massacred, as we have described, the Zanj proceeded to slay anyone [else] they encountered. That day ʿAli b. Abān burned down the congregational mosque, he also burned the harbor from the cable \(\text{habl}\)\(^\text{376}\) to the bridge, the fire destroying all before it, including people, animals, goods, and merchandise. Throughout the morning and afternoon the Zanj harassed anyone they found, driving everybody to Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad (al-Bahrānī), who was then residing in Sayhān; anyone with some money was tortured to extract it and then killed, but anyone who was poor was killed straightaway.

Shibl reportedly said that Yaḥyā entered al-Baṣrah early on Tuesday, following the massacre of the crowd in front of Ibrāhīm b. Yaḥyā's palace. An offer of safety and security was publicly proclaimed, to try to lure people into the open, but no one appeared. The news reached the abominable one, and he removed ʿAli b. Abān from al-Baṣrah, assigning Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad to the city on his own, sanctioning and approving the massacre, and expressing his affection for him. The abominable one judged ʿAli b. Abān al-Muhallabi's performance lacking in regard to his restraint from seizing booty in the Banū Saʿd district. ʿAli b. Abān had deputed a party of the Banū Saʿd to go to the abominable one, but, as they gained no benefit from him, they departed for ʿAbbādān.

Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad remained in al-Baṣrah. The abominable one sent him a despatch ordering the public announcement of Shibl as his deputy in al-Baṣrah in order to calm the fears of the populace and so that those in hiding would begin to reemerge and those who were

\(^{375}\) The signal was a verbal one, which, in the text, reads \(\text{kīlū}\.\) an imperative meaning "measure!" or "weigh!"

\(^{376}\) See Ṭabarī, Glossarium, clxxix.
known to be wealthy. When these reappeared, they were to be forced to reveal the money they had buried and hidden. Yahyā carried out this order. Not a day passed when a group of affluent persons was not stripped of their possessions and then put to death. Others of no evident substance were summarily put to death; none who appeared before Yahyā survived and many fled as best they could. Finally the abominable one withdrew his army from al-Baṣrah.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan said, "When the traitor had completed the destruction of al-Baṣrah and word had reached him of the enormities perpetrated by his troops, I heard him comment that he had invoked Allāh's [judgment] upon the populace of al-Baṣrah the day his troops entered the city. He said: 'I prayed earnestly and prostrated myself, praying all the while, and behold I was given a vision of al-Baṣrah. I could see the city and my troops fighting there. I had the vision of a man standing in thin air between earth and the sky in the image of Jaʿfar b. Maʾlūf,37 who was formerly put in charge of the registry of land taxes in Sāmarrā. He was standing with his left hand lowered and his right hand raised, about to overturn al-Baṣrah and its inhabitants. I knew then that the angels alone had been charged with the destruction of the city, and not my troops, for had they been responsible for that, the destruction would not have reached the vast proportions people speak about. The angels brought victory and supported me in my battle and kept my troops from being fainthearted.'"

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan continued: "It was following the destruction of al-Baṣrah that the abominable one claimed his descent from Yahyā b. Zayd b. 'Ali,378 because a large number of 'Alawites who had been in al-Baṣrah joined his ranks. Among them were 'Ali b. Aḥmad b. Ḥaṣā b. Zayd and 'Abdallāh b. 'Ali,379 together with their womenfolk and families. When they joined him, he abandoned his

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377. He was involved in the torture and execution of the secretary Najāh b. Salamah in 245/857. See Tabari, III, 1442, 1444, 1446, and n. 255, above.

378. Zayd b. 'Ali, a descendant of the fourth Caliph, 'Ali b. Abi Ṭalib, had raised a revolt in al-Kūfah against the Umayyad dynasty in 122/740, in which he was killed. His son, Yahyā, who participated in the rebellion, escaped to Khurāsān. The Zanj leader here is professing to be the great-grandson of this Yahyā. Although by this time his line was extinct, there were descendants from Yahyā's half-brothers, whose mother had been a slave. See Popovic, Révoltes, 101, and annexes 1 and 2, El, s.v. "Zaid b. 'Ali."

379. That is, 'Abdallāh was the son of 'Ali b. Aḥmad b. Ḥaṣā b. Zayd. When they joined the Zanj, the Zanj leader 'Ali b. Muḥammad switched his claim of descent
claim to be descended from Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā, alleging instead to belong to the line of Yaḥyā b. Zayd.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan continued: “When a group of Nawfaliyyūn were with him, I heard al-Qāsim b. al-Ḥasan al-Nawfali say that they had heard that he was a descendant of Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā b. Zayd, but the abominable one replied, ‘I am not a descendant of ʿĪsā, but of Yaḥyā b. Zayd.’ He lied about that; it is generally accepted about Yaḥyā that he had no offspring but a daughter who died in infancy.”

In the same year the central government despatched Muḥammad al-Muwallad to al-Baṣrah in order to fight the Zanj leader. He left Sāmarrā on Friday, the 1st of Dhū al-Quḍah (September 20, 871).

An Account of al-Muwallad’s Expedition

Muḥammad al-Muwallad reached the area and was quartered in al-Ubullah. Burayh arrived and established himself in al-Baṣrah. A large number of Baṣrans who had previously fled the city gathered around Burayh. When Yaḥyā (b. Muḥammad) withdrew from the city, he set up camp on the Nahr al-Ghūṭḥā.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, reporting from Shibl, said that, when Muḥammad al-Muwallad arrived, the abominable one sent Yaḥyā instructions to proceed to the Nahr Awwā. He arrived there with his army and set about engaging al-Muwallad in battle for ten days. Al-Muwallad had selected a place of residence and settled himself in but had devoted less attention to pursuing hostilities. The abominable one ordered Yaḥyā to launch a night attack against him and sent him barges with Abū al-Layth al-Ḫabānī. Yaḥyā launched the night attack and al-Muwallad ventured forth with his troops. The two sides fought until morning and well into the next afternoon. Then he turned and withdrew while the Zanj entered his camp and

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from Ahmad b. ʿĪsā b. Zayd to that of Yaḥyā b. Zayd. Ṭabari is, in fact, saying that the claim was fabricated. Thus the Zanj leader’s reason for altering his claim would have been to make it more difficult for opponents and skeptics to challenge its truth, especially if descent from Yaḥyā meant from one of his several half-brothers.

380. This is probably a reference to Yaḥyā’s daughter by a woman of the Azd tribe, whom he married in al-Kūfah. See EI, s.v. “Zaid b. ‘Ali.”

381. Ibn al-Athir, Kāmil, VII, 246, refers to him as Aḥmad al-Muwallad.

382. See Popovic, Révolte, 103 n. 2, on the nature of Muḥammad’s forces.
plundered it. Yahyā sent word of this to the abominable one, who sent further instructions that Yahyā should pursue al-Muwallad. Yahyā chased after al-Muwallad as far as al-Ḥawānīt383 before making his way back. He then passed by al-Jāmīdah,384 attacked its inhabitants, and plundered all the neighboring villages, spilling as much blood as he could in the course of the operation. Next he set up his army camp in al-Ǧālah and remained there a while before returning to the Nahr Maʿqil.

In the same year Muḥammad al-Muwallad captured Saʿīd b. ʿAbd al-Muḥammad b. Saʿīd b. Salm al-Bāḥili, who, with the aid of his Bāḥilite troops, had gained control over the swamp region and made the land routes very insecure.

In this year as well Muḥammad b. Wāṣil violated his allegiance to the central authorities by conquering the province of Fārs.

Leading the pilgrimage this year was al-ʿAfdl b. Ishāq b. al-Ḥasan b. Ḥamd b. al-ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAbbās.

In this year Bāsīl I,385 one of the ruling household, who was known as al-Ṣaqlābi because his mother was a Ṣaqlābi,386 attacked and killed Michael, the son of Tawfīl, the king of Byzantium. Michael had ruled alone for twenty-four years, and after him the Ṣaqlābī became ruler of Byzantium.

383. The name means “toll booths,” and the place lay on the eastern bank of the Tigris, just north of the great swamp region. See Le Strange, “Ibn Serapion’s Description,” 33, 46.
385. Basil I, founder of the Macedonian dynasty, ruled from 867 to 886. He had his co-emperor, Michael III, murdered in his bed, enabling himself to become sole ruler of the Byzantine empire. See Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State, 233ff.
386. See El’s, v “Ṣaqlība,” a term meaning “Slav” widely applied to peoples of various origins who lived in territory lying between Constantinople and the lands of the Bulgars.
Among the important events of this year was the arrival of Sa‘îd b. Ahmad b. Sa‘îd b. Salm al-Bähili before the central authorities, who ordered that he be punished with seven hundred lashes. This was in the month of Rabi‘ II (February 15 – March 14, 872). Sa‘îd died, and his body was placed on public display.387

In the same year also one of the religious judges of the Zanj leader, who had represented him in ‘Abbâdân, was beheaded. Fourteen other Zanj, who had been captured in the district of al- Başrah, were beheaded at the Public Gate in Sāmarrā.

Muflîḥ fought with some Arab tribesmen in Takrit.388 It was reported that they were sympathetic to Musāwir the Khārijite.

Masrûr al-Balkhî engaged in battle the Kurds of the Ya‘qûbiyyah, routing them and inflicting casualties among them.

387. Sa‘îd and the activities of the Bähilah in the marshland areas have already been mentioned, p. 135, above. The capture and death of the Bähilah chief, Sa‘îd, caused the tribe to go over to the cause of the Zanj. See EI, s.v. “Bähila.”

388. At this time Takrit, located 30 miles north of Sāmarrā on the west bank of the Tigris, was regarded by the early Arab geographers as situated on the frontier between the province of Iraq and the Jazirah but within the former. See Le Strange, Lands, 25, 57.
Muhammad b. Wāsil submitted obediently to the central authorities and delivered the taxes (kharāj) and the revenue of the estates in Fārs to Muhammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Fayyād.

The Caliph al-Muʿtamid put his brother Abū Aḥmad in charge of the districts of Diyār Muṭar, Qinnasrin, and al-ʿAwāšim. This occurred on Monday, the 2oth of Rabiʿ I (February 4, 872). On Thursday, at the commencement of the new moon of Rabiʿ II (around February 29, 872), the Caliph in assembly bestowed robes of honor upon both his brother and Muṣliḥ. The two of them set out for al- Başrah, riding in a public procession, with al-Muʿtamid accompanying Abū Aḥmad as far as Bazkuwar, whence he returned to Ṣāmarrā.

Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar b. Dīnār al-Khayyāṭ was killed in the course of this year.

An Account of [Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar’s] Death

It was reported that, following the carnage wrought by his troops in al- Başrah, the abominable one ordered ʿAli b. Abān al-Muhallabi to march toward Jubbā to wage war against Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar, who at the time was in Al-Ahwāz. ʿAli camped opposite ʿAli’s army, which was then stationed in al-Khayzurāniyyah, Manṣūr employing at this moment small contingents of infantry. The abominable one then sent twelve barges to ʿAli b. Abān, manned with the toughest of his troops, and placed in their charge Abū al-Layth al-Iṣbahānī. He ordered Abū al-Layth to obey ʿAli’s commands, but this he failed to do to the extent of imposing his own views upon ʿAli. As Muḥammad was approaching with his own barges to make one of his regular at-

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389. Lying along the banks of the Euphrates, one of the three districts constituting the province of the jazirah, it was named after the tribe of Muṭar. See Le Strange, Lands, 86.
390. The ancient Chalcis in northern Syria.
391. See Le Strange, Lands, 101 – 2; EI, s.v. “al-ʿAwāšim.” This was part of the frontier zone between Byzantium and the ʿAbbāsid domains in the north and northeast of Syria. Abū Aḥmad’s responsibilities in these districts were nominal; his real task was to conduct the campaign against the Zanj, as the remainder of the paragraph makes clear.
392. A town on the Tigris near al-Qāḍisiyyah, variously referred to as Barkuwarā, Balkuwāra (see Le Strange, Lands, 52), or Barkuwān, as in manuscript C.
394. Abū al-Layth appears to have been the chief, if not the only, commander, or “admiral,” of the Zanj flotilla.
tacks on the enemy, Abū al-Layth suddenly set out to meet him without first having consulted ‘Ali about this. Manṣūr seized Abū al-Layth’s barges and killed a large number of both whites and Zanj who were aboard them. Abū al-Layth himself managed to escape and found his way back to the abominable one. ‘Ali b. Abān turned back as well with all his forces and remained in camp for a whole month. Then with his infantry troops he set out again to fight Manṣūr. After establishing his new camp, he sent out scouts to gather information concerning Manṣūr and his soldiers.

Now Manṣūr had a prefect stationed at Karnabā. ‘Ali b. Abān launched a night attack against this commander, killing him along with most of those based there. ‘Ali looted the camp, took some horses, and burned the place to the ground. He returned during the course of the same night, and arrived at the mouth of the Nahr Jubbā. News of this reached Manṣūr, who ventured forth, finally approaching [‘Ali’s base] in al-Khayzurāniyyah. ‘Ali went out to challenge him with a small band of troops, and the battle between them lasted that day from mid-morning until noon. Manṣūr was forced to flee, and his own troops scattered, abandoning him. A party of Zanj caught up with Manṣūr and tracked him as far as the canal owned by ‘Umar b. Mihrān. Manṣūr repeatedly turned to attack his pursuers until at last his spears were all broken and his supply of arrows depleted, leaving him completely defenseless. He then made his way to the edge of the canal, intending to cross over. He shouted encouragement to his horse and it leaped, but failed to reach the other bank, and he plunged into the water.

Shibl said that the reason why the horse was unable to make the crossing successfully was because one of the Zanj had seen Manṣūr head for the canal bank, intending to cross over. Hurriedly throwing himself into the water, he swam across ahead of Manṣūr. When Manṣūr’s horse jumped, the black confronted it, causing the horse to shy away, tumbling both itself and its rider into the water. Manṣūr’s head bobbed to the surface, and a slave from among the blacks of Muṣlih’s lieutenants called Abrūn struck him a mortal blow and then commenced to rob him. A large number of those with Manṣūr were killed, including his brother Khalaf b. Jaʿfar. Yārjūkh then placed [a

395. The reading is uncertain.
Turk named Aṣghajūn in charge of Manṣūr’s administrative duties.

On Tuesday, the 18th of Jumādā I (April 1, 872), Muṣliḥ was killed by an untipped arrow, which struck him in the temple. He died the following morning; his body was borne to Sāmarrā, and he was buried there.

An Account of [Muṣliḥ’s] Death

I have already recounted how Abū Aḥmad [al-Muwaffaq] b. al-Muṭawakkil departed from Sāmarrā and headed for al- Başrah to do battle with the cursed one. I myself witnessed in Baghdad the army with which Abū Aḥmad and Muṣliḥ had set out. This was after the news had reached Abū Aḥmad and al-Muṭamīd concerning the atrocities endured by Muslims in al- Başrah and adjacent territories. The army passed by the Bāb al-Tāq, the quarter where I was then staying, and I happened to hear a group of the elders of Baghdad saying that they had seen many armies of the caliphs but none that appeared larger and better equipped or prepared than this one. A large enthusiastic crowd of Baghdad’s citizenry accompanied the army on its way through the city.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan recounted that Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad al- Baḥrānī was camped on the Nahr Maʿqīl before Abū Aḥmad’s arrival in the locality of the abominable one. Yaḥyā sought permission of the Zanj leader to march on to the Nahr al-ʿAbbās, but this was strongly rejected out of fear that the central authorities’ forces would arrive while his own troops were scattered in various places. Yaḥyā persisted, however, until he secured permission, and he departed, followed by the greater part of the abominable one’s forces.

396. Thus in manuscript B, C, however, gives such alternative readings as Aṣfahūr and Aṣfajūr.
398. This is the fourth epithet (al-lāʾīn) Ṭabarī employs for the Zanj leader, the others being “abominable one,” “traitor,” and “enemy of God.”
399. A rare personal comment by Ṭabarī on an event at which he himself was present.
400. This was the great arched gate at the eastern end of the Main Bridge in Baghdad, which opened directly onto the major market street of the eastern quarter of the city. See Le Strange, Baghdad, 178; Lassner, Topography, 173–76.
`Ali b. Abān was stationed in Jubbā with a large number of the Zanj. Al-Baṣrah had already been plundered by his troops and they were busy moving back and forth transporting the goods they had seized from it. And so, at that time there were not many troops available to man the abominable one’s own camp. His situation remained thus when Abū Ahmad arrived with Muḍliḥ and his army, a formidable and mighty force such as had never before been sent against the abominable one.

When this war machine reached the Nahr Ma‘qil, those of the Zanj leader’s troops who were stationed there fled, terrified, to join him. The abominable one was alarmed by this development, and he summoned two of his army chiefs who had been present at the Nahr Ma‘qil and asked them why they had abandoned their position. They told him of the might of the approaching army they had seen, its equipment, and its high state of preparedness. There was no way their own forces were sufficient to stop it. The abominable one inquired whether they knew the identity of the army commander. They did not; although efforts had been made to discover who he was, they had failed, owing to the lack of a trustworthy informant. So the abominable one despatched scouts in skiffs to attempt to glean this intelligence. His messengers returned with information concerning the imposing might of the army, but none had been able to find out who the commander-in-chief or the other leaders were. This lack of information only served to increase his apprehension and dismay. So [the Zanj leader] sent urgent word to `Ali b. Abān informing him of the approaching danger and ordering him to bring to him such troops as he had available. The government’s army arrived and established camp in front of the Zanj position. On the day of the battle, which was a Wednesday, the abominable one ventured forth on foot, making the rounds of his army to examine carefully the state of affairs on his own side, as well as those confronting him.

That day a light rain had fallen. The ground was wet, making it slippery underfoot. The Zanj leader had made an early morning reconnaissance and after his return he called for ink and paper to despatch a message to `Ali b. Abān. He informed him of what he had observed of the government forces and ordered him to send whatever number of infantry he could spare.

While [the Zanj leader] was thus engaged, someone called Abū Dulaf, who was one of the commanders of the blacks, came to him
and said, "The enemy has advanced and the Zanj have fled from them; they had no leader among them to check their flight until they reached the fourth habl." The Zanj leader berated him loudly, saying, "Get out of my sight, you liar! You don’t know what you’re talking about. You have only been alarmed by the numbers of troops you have seen."

Abū Dulaf left him, and the abominable one then turned to his secretary, who had ordered Ja‘far b. Ibrāhīm al-Sajjān to summon the Zanj to move into the battlefield. Al-Sajjān informed the Zanj leader that he had despatched them and that his troops had seized two skiffs. Al-Sajjān was next commanded to get the infantry ready. It was only a short while after this that Muflīh was struck by an arrow from a concealed archer. Thereafter defeat was unavoidable, as the Zanj overwhelmed their enemy and engulfed them in a bloodbath. The Zanj brought to the abominable one heads of the enemy, holding them by their teeth, and tossed them at his feet; that day the heads of the enemy filled every corner. The Zanj even began to apportion the flesh of their victims among themselves and to exchange it as gifts. A prisoner from Farāghinah was brought before the traitor, who asked him who the commander of the army was, and he told him of the whereabouts of Abū Ahmad and Muflīh. The Zanj leader was alarmed at the mention of Abū Ahmad’s name. Whenever he became alarmed by something, he would deny its truth. He said, "There is no leader in the army other than Muflīh, for I have heard mention of none save him. If the one this prisoner mentioned were in the army, he would be of such importance that Muflīh would only be his subordinate and adjutant to his associates."

When Abū Aḥmad’s troops attacked the abominable one’s camp, the noncombatants were filled with such fear that they fled from their dwellings and sought refuge by the Nahr Abī al-Khaṣīb. At this time there were no bridges spanning the water, and as a consequence

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401. See Ĥabari, Glossarium, clxxix, where the suggested meaning is one attested in Lane, Lexicon, as “the station of the horses collected for a race before they are let go,” which was probably marked by an extended rope and was for that reason thus called.” More likely, however, habl means here a measure of distance, indicated by some marker. Le Strange, Baghdad, 326 n. 1, notes that al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī used the term habl for a length equivalent to the side of a jarib. See also Hinz, Islamische Masse, 62.

402. As his name suggests, he was a jailer.
a great number of women and children drowned in the attempt to cross it.

The abominable one had not long to wait after the battle before `Ali b. Abân arrived with a number of his troops, although by then there was little need of them. Shortly after Muflîh’s death, Abû Aẖ- mad withdrew to al-Usbûlûh to reassemble his shattered forces and renew his preparations for war. Finally, he set out for Nahr Abî al-Asad and set up his camp there.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan reported that the abominable one did not know how Muflîh had been killed. But, when he heard that he had been hit by a stray arrow that no one claimed, he boasted that he had himself shot it. Muḥammad continued: “I heard him say that an arrow had fallen near him and his servant Wah picked it up and brought it to him. He then shot it and killed Muflîh. I know that he lied about that, because I was present and witnessed the whole thing; he did not get off his horse until the battle was over and the news arrived of the enemy’s defeat and the heads were brought.”

In this year an epidemic struck the population of the Tigris districts, and many people died in Madinat al-Salâm, Sāmarra, Wāsiṭ, and elsewhere.

In this year as well Khuraskhāris was killed, along with a number of his troops in Byzantine territory.

[1866] Yaḥyâ b. Muḥammad al-Bahrâni, the close associate of the Zanj leader, was captured in this year and killed.

**An Account of [Yaḥyâ b. Muḥammad’s] Capture and Death**

Muḥammad b. Simʿān the secretary reportedly said that when Yaḥyâ b. Muḥammad reached the Nahr al-‘Abbâs he encountered at the mouth of the canal three hundred seventy horsemen from the forces of Aşghajûn, who was in those days the financial administrator of al-Ahwâz; the horsemen were recruited from the same area. Upon seeing them, Yaḥyâ underestimated their number and imagined

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403. See Popovic, Révolte, 105 and n. 3.
404. Thus in Manuscript B; C is unpointed and could be read bah/nah, etc.
405. The reading is uncertain.
that he had nothing to fear, given the size of his own force. So, without anything to protect them from danger, his troops attacked, and Asghajjun’s soldiers rained arrows down upon them, injuring many. Yahyā then despatched one hundred twenty of his own horsemen across the canal, together with a large number of foot soldiers. Asghajjun’s troops withdrew, allowing al-Bahrāni’s force to enter the canal. This was at a time of low water and the transport boats were stranded in the mud. The men on the boats saw the approaching Zanj and decided to abandon them, whereupon they were seized and an immense amount of valuable goods were plundered from them. The Zanj then headed for the marsh area known as the Baṭiḥah al-Ṣaḥnāh, carrying their spoils, but they left the well-traveled road, owing to the mutual envy that existed between al-Bahrāni and ‘Ali b. Abān al-Muhallabi. Yahyā’s companions advised him not to take the road frequented by ‘Ali’s army. Yahyā accepted their advice, and they set out for and finally entered the marshland, showing him the road we have just mentioned. There Yahyā granted leave to the cavalry and ordered Abū al-Layth al-Iṣbahānī to march them to the encampment of the Zanj commander.

The abominable one had sent word to Yahyā alerting him of the approaching army that he had encountered and urging him to be on his guard on his return lest he also run into the enemy. Al-Bahrāni sent out some scouting parties to the Tigris and they left just as Abī Aḥmad’s army was setting off from al-Ubullah for the Nahr Abī al-Asad.

The reason for the departure of the government’s forces to the Nahr Abū al-Asad was that Rāfī’ b. Bistām and others from the neighborhood of Nahr al-‘Abbās and the Baṭiḥah al-Ṣaḥnāh had communicated with Abū Aḥmad informing him of al-Bahrānī and the size of his forces and, moreover, that he was planning to leave Nahr al-‘Abbās for the Tigris. They thus advised Abū Aḥmad to advance to the Nahr Abū al-Asad and establish his army camp there in order to interrupt the flow of supplies to al-Bahrānī and preventing anyone coming to or going from his camp. Yahyā’s scouts returned with the news of Abū Aḥmad’s army, causing him increasingly to fear an encounter. He therefore turned back along the road he had come from, both he and his troops experiencing great hardship. They succumbed to a sickness owing to their constant exposure in the swamp and many of their number fell ill. As they neared the
Nahr al-‘Abbās, Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad placed Sulaymān b. Jāmi‘ in charge of the vanguard of the Zanj who were engaged in towing their boats out of the Nahr al-‘Abbās. The government forces, however, had barges and skiffs provided by Aṣghajūn guarding the mouth of the canal, along with contingents of cavalry and infantry. This situation caused considerable concern to Yaḥyā and his soldiers. The Zanj then abandoned their boats and took themselves off to the west of the Nahr al-‘Abbās making for the al-Zaydān road and the encampment of the abominable one.

Yaḥyā was totally in the dark about what had happened to this group [of Zanj]. No news reached him in the central sector of his army, which had just reached the Qūraj al-‘Abbās Bridge (qantarāh), at a narrow spot where the water flowed very swiftly in the channel. From there he could oversee his Zanj troops as they towed their boats, some of which sank while others were rescued.

Muḥammad b. Simān reported that while he was standing there by the bridge, Yaḥyā came up to him and was clearly astonished by the violent force of the water and the great difficulty experienced by his men in towing their boats. He said, “What do you imagine would happen if the enemy attacked us now; what situation could be worse than ours?” He was interrupted by the arrival of Ṭāshtimur al-Turkī with the army that Abū Aḥmad had despatched upon his return from al-Ubullah to the Nahr Abī al-Asad. Great consternation broke out among Yaḥyā’s troops.

Muḥammad (b. Simān) continued: “I jumped up to take a look and saw red flags appear on the western side of the Nahr al-‘Abbās where Yaḥyā was located. The Zanj spotted them and, throwing themselves into the canal, they crossed over to the eastern side. Yaḥyā’s location became deserted, and only a few dozen men remained with him. At that Yaḥyā took up his shield and sword and wrapped a cloth around his waist. He met the approaching enemy with his small band and Ṭāshtimur’s troops showered arrows upon them, swiftly causing many wounds. Al-Bahrānī himself was wounded in three places, both his arms and his left leg. When his companions saw him injured, they scattered. However, as he was not recognized and no one made to finish him off, he retraced his way to one of the boats and crossed over [as well] to the eastern side of the canal. The time was about midmorning.”

The wounds that Yaḥyā had sustained sapped his strength. His
condition caused the Zanj's fear to increase and their resolve to weaken. They abandoned the battle, their only concern now being to save their own skins. The government troops plundered the boats situated on the western bank of the canal. When they had finished, they boarded one of the boats with fire-throwing machines and crossed over to the opposite bank where they proceeded to burn the craft the Zanj had abandoned there. The Zanj themselves had scattered, leaving Yahyā on his own. For the remainder of the day, those who could do so slipped away, leaving many dead and captured behind them, finally escaping under the protective cover of darkness. Seeing the total collapse of his forces, Yahyā boarded a galley that one of the white fighters was in charge of. He brought with him a practitioner of the medical arts called Abū Jaysh ‘Abbād, because of the injuries he was suffering from. His only desire was to make good his escape to the camp of the abominable one. As they approached the mouth of the canal, the sailors in the galley saw ahead of them barges and gallies [of the government forces] blockading the canal. They feared to approach too near, certain as they were to be apprehended. They then crossed over to the western bank and put Yahyā and those with him on shore at a small plantation. Yahyā made some distance on foot moving with difficulty until, too exhausted to go further, he dropped and spent the night where he was. The next morning the physician ‘Abbād, who was still with him, set out on foot carefully on the lookout for anyone. When he came across some of the government's troops, he signaled to them, told them where Yahyā was hiding, and then showed them the way, so that he fell into their hands. Some claim, however, that it had been another group of people who, in passing by Yahyā, saw him and gave his position away so that he was captured. The news of Yahyā's fate reached the abominable one, leader of the Zanj, which greatly increased his unease and heightened his sense of sorrow at the loss.

Yahyā b. Muḥammad al-Azraq al-Bahrānī was taken to Abū Ahmad who transported him to al-Muʿtamid in Sāmarrā. A platform was ordered constructed at al-Ḥayr by the racecourse; Yahyā was then elevated before the crowd so they could witness him being publicly flogged. It is reported that he entered Sāmarrā on Wednesday, the 9th of Rajab (May 11, 872), seated upon a camel. Al-Muʿtamid held an assembly on the following morning, which was Thursday, and Yahyā was given two hundred strokes of a whip end in the Ca-
liph's presence. Next his hands and legs were severed from opposite sides. Then he was beaten severely with swords, drawn and quartered, and finally his body was burned.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan related that, when Yaḥyā al-Bahrānī was executed and the news of this reached the leader of the Zanj, he said, "Yaḥyā's death was deeply distressing to me and my anxiety was intense, when a voice addressed me saying that his death was a blessing for me, as he was a greedy person." Sometime later he approached a group of people I was standing with and said that an example of Yaḥyā's cupidity was the following story: "Once we had acquired a great deal of booty from one of the towns we took, and there came into his possession two necklaces of which the larger and more precious he concealed from me, showing me only the less valuable one, requesting that I give it to him as a gift. This I did. But I was then informed of the one he had hidden, and, summoning him, I said, 'Give me the necklace that you have concealed.' However, he produced only the one I had already presented to him, denying that he had taken any other. But, when I began to describe the necklace that had been reported to me, watching him, he became pale and speechless. He left and later brought me the second necklace and beseeched me to give it to him as a gift also. I did so and ordered him to seek God's forgiveness for his deed."

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan — Muḥammad b. Simʿān reported that one day the Zanj leader said to him that he had been offered prophethood but that he had refused. Ibn Simʿān asked why and received the reply that prophethood involved burdens he feared he had not the strength to bear.

In this same year Abū Āhmād b. al-Mutawakkil withdrew from his position in the neighborhood of the Zanj leader and made for Wāṣīt.

An Account of [Abū Āhmād's] Withdrawal to Wāṣīt

After Abū Āhmād had gone to the Nahr Abū al-Asad and camped there, illness and disease spread among his soldiers and others ac-

408. Popovic, Révolte, 107, reads this word as ʿabā, "robe" (of prophethood), rather than ʿabdān, a plural in the accusative, as in the text; the emendation does not seem justified. See Halm, Traditionen, 215.
companying him. A number died, but he could not move until those who survived had managed to recover. Abū Ahmad then set out to return to Bādhāward, where he camped. He ordered the renewal of the army's equipment and the distribution to the troops of their allotments. He also refurbished the barges, galleys, and ferries and placed them under the command of men from among his freedmen. ννννννν

Setting out in pursuit of the abominable one's army, Abū Aḥmad ordered a group of his commanders to make for certain spots that he listed, including the Nahr Abī al-Khaṣib and other places. Other commanders he ordered to stay with him to fight at the spot he himself would select. When the battle resumed between the two sides, most of his forces moved toward the Nahr Abī al-Khaṣib, while Abū Ahmad remained with only a handful of his troops. He held his position for fear that the Zanj might be tempted to attack him and other groups of his forces exposed to them while they were in the salt flats of Nahr Manka. The Zanj observed the dispersal of Abū Aḥmad's troops and found out his precarious position, so they concentrated on it. Battle flared up furiously with many dead and injured on both sides. Abū Aḥmad's troops burned many of the fortified places and dwellings of the Zanj and rescued a large number of female captives. The Zanj then directed all their efforts toward the place where Abū Aḥmad was stationed. (Abu Ahmad) al-Muwaffaq appeared on a barge and plunged into the middle of the battle, urging on his troops, until there arrived a crowd of Zanj whom he knew he could not combat, given the small number of his own followers. Realizing that the better part of valor would be to disengage from battle, he commanded his own troops to retreat to their boats in deliberate and orderly fashion. Abū Aḥmad then reboarded his barge after ensuring that most of his men were safely aboard their boats. A detachment remained behind, and they sought refuge in the heavy thickets and narrow waterways. They were completely cut off from their comrades. The Zanj ambushed them and picked them off one by one. These men defended themselves and in the hand-to-hand combat many Zanj met their fate. Nevertheless, some one hundred ten heads of Abū Aḥmad's soldiers were sent to the leader of the Zanj, which only served to increase his arrogance.

410. Located between al- Başrah and Wāsiṣ. See Yabhā, Mu'jam, I, 462.
411. The phrase is min mawālihi wa-ghilmānihi.
Abū Ahmad finally managed to make it back with his army to al-Bādhāward, where he stayed, mustering his troops for another round against the Zanj. A fire broke out at one end of the camp during a period of violent wind storms and the camp burned down. Then, in Shaʿbān of this year (June 12 – July 10, 872), Abū Ahmad made the return journey to Wāsiṭ and, after his arrival, the bulk of his troops dispersed.

On the 10th of Shaʿbān (June 21, 872) a dreadful, thunderous earthquake occurred in al-Ṣaymarah. Then the following morning, which was Sunday, an even greater crash than the first was heard, and as a result most of the city was destroyed. Everywhere walls of buildings collapsed, and, according to what was said, some twenty thousand persons were killed.

A man known as Abū Faqʿas was roundly beaten at the Public Gate in Sāmrā, one thousand twenty strokes being administered. The charge against him was abusing the pious ancestors (salaf). He died on Thursday, the 7th of Ramadan (July 15, 872).

On Friday, the 8th of Ramadan (July 16, 872), Yājrūkh died. Abū ʿĪsā b. al-Mutawakkil recited the funerary prayers for him, with Jaʿfar b. al-Muʿtamid present.

In this year as well there occurred a battle between Mūsā b. Bughā and the troops of al-Ḥasan b. Zayd, who were routed.

Masrūr al-Balkhi returned to Sāmrā after his campaign against the Khārijite Musāwir. He brought back Khārijite prisoners and left Juʿlān behind as deputy of his army in al-Ḥadithah. Later Masrūr himself set out for the district of al-Bawāzij, where he encountered Musāwir again. In the ensuing battle a number of Musāwir’s troops were captured. Before the end of Dhū al-Hijjah (October 8 to November 6, 872) Masrūr set out on the return journey.

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412. The word is haddāh, which Lane, Lexicon, s.v. h-d-d, states is a violent sound occasioned by a falling wall or part of a mountain; an earthquake certainly seems to have been the cause of the destruction.

413. The chief town in the district of Mihrajānqadhāq, on the frontier of Iraq. See Le Strange, Lands, 201–2.

414. This is Ḥadīthat al-Nūrah (Ḥadīthah of the Chalk Pit), which is on the Tigris and must be distinguished from the city al-Ḥadīthah on the Euphrates. See Le Strange, Lands, 64. Ibn al-Athir, Kāmil, VII, 257, calls the location Ḥadīthah al-Mawsil, which would refer to the same place, that is, Ḥadīthah in the district of al-Mawsil.

415. The town of Bawāzij lay on the bank of the Lower Zāb river, east of Sinn on the Tigris. See Le Strange, Lands, 91.
In the same year a malady overcame people in Baghdad. It was called *quffā*.

In this year most of the Ḥājj pilgrims returned from al-Qarā' out of a fear of thirst. But those who went on to Mecca arrived safely. The leader of the pilgrimage this year was al-Faḍl b. Ishāq b. al-Hasan.

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416. A person described as *aqfa* is one whose toes are misshapen. See A. de Biberstein Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire arabe-français*, s.v. *q-*.

417. Literally, "bare," so named, according to Yahyā, *Mu‘jam*, IV, 325, because of its lack of vegetation. It was a stage on the route from al-Kūfah to Mecca.

418. This was the second year in succession that he had led the pilgrimage. See p. 135, above.
The Events of the Year

259\textsuperscript{419}

(\textit{November 7, 872—October 26, 873})

Among the events of this year was the return of Abū Aḥmad b. al-Mutawakkil from Wāsiṭ to Sāmarrā. He arrived on Friday, the 26th of Rabi`\textsuperscript{1} (January 30, 873). He appointed Muḥammad al-Muwallad to be responsible for Wāsiṭ and for pursuing the war against the abominable one in the area.\textsuperscript{420}

The death of Kanjur\textsuperscript{421} occurred in this year.

\textit{An Account of [Kanjur's] Death}

At the time he was governor of al-Kūfah, Kanjur left it without official sanction for Sāmarrā. He refused an order to return to al-Kūfah and so, according to what has been reported, money was transported

\textsuperscript{419} Popovic, \textit{Révolte}, 109, notes the disproportionate amount of detail that Ṭabari provides on the Zanj revolt. The years 255-58/868-72 cover more than twice the space given to the succeeding period, 259-65/873-79. In this latter period, Ṭabari highlights only the important developments in the revolt.

\textsuperscript{420} See Popovic, \textit{Révolte}, 108ff.

\textsuperscript{421} See n. 336, above.
to him to be distributed among his troops for their allotments. This failed to mollify Kanjur, and he continued as far as ‘Ukbara\(^{422}\) in the month of Rabī‘ I (January 5–February 3, 873). In response, a number of army commanders were sent from Sāmarrā to deal with him, among them Sātikin, Takīn, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muflīh, Mūsā b. Utāmish, and others. They butchered him and sent his head to Sāmarrā. This was on the 29th of Rabī‘ I (February 2, 873). Some forty thousand dinars were seized from him at the same time. Kanjur’s Christian secretary was forced to surrender more money. Then in the following month, Rabī‘ II (February 4 to March 4, 873), this secretary was punished by being given one thousand lashes at the Public Gate [in Sāmarrā], from which he died.

In this year Sharkab al-Jammāl conquered Marv and its adjacent territories and plundered them.

Ya‘qūb b. al-Layth returned from Balkh in this year and resided in Quhistān.\(^{423}\) He appointed financial prefects over Herāt, Būshanj, and Bādhghis, and then he departed for Sijistān.\(^{424}\)

In this year as well ‘Abdallāh al-Sijzī\(^{425}\) abandoned Ya‘qūb ibn al-Layth, breaking his bond of loyalty to him, and blockaded Naysābūr.\(^{426}\) Then Muhammad b. Ṭāhir sent messengers and legists to sort out matters, and they went back and forth between them [conducting negotiations], and finally ‘Abdallāh was appointed governor of al-Ṭabasayn and Quhistān.\(^{427}\)

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423. The province of Quhistān was generally regarded by Arab geographers as a dependency of Khurāsān. See Le Strange, Lands, 352ff. The movements of Ya‘qūb b. al-Layth mentioned in this paragraph reflect the expansion of his power in the eastern provinces of the ‘Abbāsid domains. See Bosworth, “Ṭāhirids,” 115ff.

424. The province situated on the southern border of Khurāsān; it was also called Sistān. Le Strange, Lands, 334–51, 431.

425. That is, a native of the province of Sijistān. See also Ibn al-Athir, Kāmil, VII, 261–62.

426. One of the four major cities of the province of Khurāsān, the others being Marv, Herāt, and Balkh. See Le Strange, Lands, 382–88.

427. There were two places in Quhistān called Ṭabas, Ṭabas al-Tamr and Ṭabas al-‘Unnāb, which are often referred to in the dual form Ṭabasayn. This province of Quhistān, which means “mountain land,” is not to be confused with the Persian equivalent of the district known in Arabic as al-Jībāl. See Le Strange, Lands, 186, 359.
On the 6th of Rajab (May 8, 873) of this year (‘Ali b. Abān) al-Muḥallabī and Yaḥyā b. Khalāf al-Nahrabaṭī overran Sūq al-Ahwāz and killed a great many inhabitants, including the chief of security.

An Account of [the] Battle [at Sūq al-Ahwāz] and How the Army Commander\(^{428}\) of the Central Authorities Was Killed

The burning of Abū Aḥmad’s military camp in al-Bādhāward was reported to have been kept from the leader of the Zanj. He discovered what had happened only three days later, when two men from ‘Abbādān visited him and gave him the news.

At this the Zanj leader returned to plundering, as supplies of food were cut off from him. He sent off ‘Ali b. Abān al-Muḥallabī with most of the army accompanied by Sulaymān b. Jāmī‘, who had taken charge of the forces formerly under Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad al-Bahrānī and Sulaymān b. Mūsā al-Sha‘rānī. Sulaymān was also placed in charge of the cavalry while the rest of the troops were with ‘Ali b. Abān al-Muḥallabī.

At the time the governor of al-Ahwāz was someone called Aṣghajūn; stationed there with him were Nayzak and a number of other commanders. ‘Ali b. Abān approached al-Ahwāz with his Zanj forces, and when Aṣghajūn was alerted to this he advanced toward ‘Ali with his own troops, the two sides meeting in the desert wastes of Dastīmārān. That day fate was against Aṣghajūn, who was drowned, while Nayzak and many of his troops were slain. Al-Ḥasan b. Harthamah al-Ṣhār and al-Ḥasan b. Ja‘far Zāwashār were both taken prisoner the same day.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan — al-Ḥasan b. (al-Harthamah) al-Ṣhār said, “That day we left al-Ahwāz with Aṣghajūn to meet the Zanj, but our troops were unable to stand their ground, and they fled; Nayzak was killed, and Aṣghajūn went missing. When I became aware of this, I dismounted from my own crop-tailed horse.\(^{429}\) By leading another horse I had with me into the river and seizing hold of its tail, I planned to make good my escape. But my servant beat me to it, making his escape and leaving me behind. I then tried to join Mūsā

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\(^{428}\) Sahīb al-ḥarb.

\(^{429}\) Faras mahdhūf. See Lane, Lexicon, s.v. h-dh-f.
b. Ja'far so the two us could get away together, but he had boarded a rivercraft and departed without waiting for me. I caught sight of another boat, which I managed to board, but a crowd gathered round demanding to be taken on board as well, and, with so many clinging to the craft, they caused it to capsize. I scrambled onto the overturned hull and the crowd departed just as the Zanj arrived. They began shooting arrows at me and, as I felt my end was near, I cried out to them, 'Stop shooting and toss me something that I can grab myself and reach you.' So they extended a spear, which I grabbed with my hand, and they pulled me out. As for al-Hasan b. Ja'far, his brother put him on a horse and set him up to act as a messenger between him and the commander of the army. But, in the wake of defeat and in his haste to find safety, his horse stumbled, and he was captured."

'Ali b. Aban relayed the news of the battle to the abominable one and sent him many enemy heads and banners as well. Al-Hasan b. al-Shār, al-Hasan b. Ja'far, and Ahmad b. Rūḥ, along with other captives, were ordered imprisoned. Meanwhile 'Ali b. Aban entered al-Ahwāz and systematically pillaged it, forcing the central authorities to assign Mūsā b. Bughā to the task of waging war against the abominable one.

Mūsā b. Bughā left Sāmarrā for this purpose on the 17th of Dhū al-Qa'dah (September 14, 873). Al-Mu'tamid accompanied him in public procession as far as the city walls and there bestowed robes of honor upon him.


An Account of How [Mūsā b. Bughā's Commanders] Fared against the Zanj

Following Ibn Muflīḥ's arrival in al-Ahwāz, he reportedly encamped for ten days at the Arbuk Bridge and then set out against ('Ali b. Abān) al-Muhallabi. Ibn Muflīḥ was defeated in the encounter by al-

Muhallabi and forced to withdraw to regroup his forces. Ibn Muflih returned to do battle again. In the violent fighting the Zanj were dealt a devastating blow in numbers killed and taken captive. `Ali b. Abān was routed, yet managed to escape with some followers to Bayân. The abominable one tried to induce them to return to battle but, owing to the fear that gripped their hearts, they could not. When he saw the situation as it was, he allowed them to enter his camp; they did so and settled for a time in his city.

`Abd al-Rahmān (b. Muflih) arrived in Ḥisn al-Mahdi to establish his army there. The abominable one sent `Ali b. Abān to fight him but, as `Ali was unable to overcome Ibn Muflih, he headed for a place called al-Dakar. At this time Ibrāhīm b. Simā was in al-Bādhāward, and in one engagement he defeated `Ali, who, when he returned to the attack, was beaten again. During the night `Ali left and, accompanied by some guides who led him through the dense thickets and copse, he reached Nahr Yahyā. `Abd al-Rahmān received news of `Ali’s movements and despatched Tāshtimur against him with a contingent of mawlās. However, owing to the inaccessibility of `Ali’s position and the impenetrable barrier of reeds and grasses, Tāshtimur failed to reach him. So he forced them out by setting fire to the vegetation. A number of Zanj were captured, and Tāshtimur brought them and news of the victory to `Abd al-Rahmān b. Muflih while `Ali b. Abān made his way to Nasūkhā and set up camp there with the remainder of his forces. News of `Ali’s move reached `Abd al-Rahmān b. Muflih, and he immediately shifted his own camp to al-Amūd.

Meanwhile, `Ali b. Abān had gone toward Nahr al-Sidrah, where he wrote to the abominable one seeking his reinforcements and barges. Thirteen barges were sent containing several contingents of Zanj troops. With these `Ali set out to meet `Abd al-Rahmān b. Muflih, who had also made his way toward an encounter. However, no fighting occurred and the two armies stood arrayed against each other for the whole day. After nightfall, `Ali hand-picked a number of his troops, in whose courage and fortitude he had

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433. The reading is conjectural.
434. The broad reach of the Dujayl below al-Ahwāz was known as Nahr al-Sidrah, the Lotus canal. See Yāqūt, *Mu’jam*, II, 258.
complete trust. Leaving the rest of his army behind in order to conceal his real intentions, 'Ali set out with these select few accompanied by Sulaymān b. Mūsā al-Sha‘rānī. Taking up a position in the rear of 'Abd al-Raḥmān, 'Ali launched a surprise night attack on the camp and inflicted serious losses on him and his troops, forcing 'Abd al-Raḥmān to retreat and abandon four of his own fleet of barges; 'Ali recovered these and departed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān proceeded as far as al-Dūlāb, where he reestablished his camp. Placing Tāshṭimūr in command of some of his infantry troops, he sent them into another campaign against 'Ali b. Abān. Tāshṭimūr and 'Ali met each other in the environs of Bayān Āzar. In the fighting 'Ali was forced to flee to Nahr al-Sidrāh. When Tāshṭimūr sent word of 'Ali's defeat to 'Abd al-Raḥmān, he set out with his army to reach al-'Amūd, where he set up camp and prepared his troops for battle. The barges, over which Tāshṭimūr was given command, were put in order and with them he ventured forth to the mouth of Nahr al-Sidrāh, where he engaged 'Ali b. Abān in a major battle. 'Ali was again routed, losing ten of his barges and being forced to return in defeat to the abominable one. 'Abd al-Raḥmān immediately set up his army camp in Bayān, from which both he and Ibrāhīm b. Simā advanced and attacked by turns the abominable one's position, stirring great fear among those in his camp.

Išāq b. Kundāj, who at the time was stationed in al-Baṣrāh, had cut off the flow of supplies to the army of the abominable one. On the day that he feared that 'Abd al-Raḥmān and Ibrāhīm b. Simā would come out against him, the abominable one would gather together his forces until the battle was over and then send a detachment of them to the outskirts of al-Baṣrāh, where Išāq b. Kundāj would attack them. For over ten months they remained deadlocked in this fashion, until Mūsā b. Bughā was replaced by Masrūr al-Balkhī as the one in charge of conducting the campaign against the abominable one. News of this change reached the abominable one.

In this same year al-Ḥasan b. Zayd conquered Qūmis, and his troops occupied the city.
In this year as well a battle occurred between Muḥammad b. al-
Faḍl b. Sinān al-Qazwini and Wahṣūdān b. Justān al-Daylamī,\(^{438}\) who was routed by Muḥammad.

Mūsā b. Bughā appointed al-Ṣalābī\(^{439}\) this year as governor of al-
Rayy, at the time when Kayghalagh attacked Takīn\(^{440}\) and killed him. Al-Ṣalābī went to take up his post.

The Byzantine emperor\(^{441}\) conquered Sumaysāt\(^{442}\) in this year and also attacked Malāṭyah\(^{443}\) and besieged its inhabitants, who fought back and succeeded in driving him off. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-
Qābīs killed Naṣr al-Iqrīṭashi, the supreme commander.\(^{444}\)

This year, too, a group of Zanj prisoners was sent to Sāmarrā from al-Ahwāz. The Sāmarrān mob attacked and killed many of them and stripped their bodies.

Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth entered Naysābūr this year.

\[1881\]

\textit{An Account of [Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth's Entry into Naysābūr]}\(^{445}\)

Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth had reportedly gone to Herāt and then headed for Naysābūr. As he approached the city, intending to enter it, Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir sent word to him requesting that Yaʿqūb receive him, but he refused to comply. So Muḥammad had some of his kinsmen intercede on his behalf with Yaʿqūb, after which, in the evening of the 4th of Shawwāl (August 3, 873), Yaʿqūb entered the city and encamped in one of the suburbs called Dāʿūdābād. Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir rode out to meet Yaʿqūb in his pavilion, where he was closely

tains. The capital town was al-Damghān, which the Arabs often called (Madinat) Qūmis. See Le Strange, \textit{Lands}, 364–65.


\(^{439}\) Unidentified.

\(^{440}\) The reading is uncertain, and therefore it is not clear that this is the same person as the army commander mentioned on p. 151, above, who was despatched with others to deal with Kanjūr. There is no evidence that the latter Takīn held the governorship of al-Rayy, which is what the context suggests.

\(^{441}\) See n. 385, above.

\(^{442}\) A town on the Euphrates in the district of Diyar Muḍar, which bordered on the province of the Jazirah. See Le Strange, \textit{Lands}, 87.

\(^{443}\) Called by the Greeks Melitene; it was an important fortress on the frontier between Muslim and Byzantine territory. See Le Strange, \textit{Lands}, 120.

\(^{444}\) Bītrīq al-Batāriqah, commander of ten thousand men.

\(^{445}\) See also Ibn al-Athīr, \textit{Kāmil}, VII, 261–62.
questioned. Ya‘qūb then began to upbraid and rebuke Muḥammad for neglecting his duties, after which he appointed ‘Uzayz b. al-Sari as his agent and replaced Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir with him as governor of Naysābūr. Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir and his kinsmen were imprisoned, and, when news of this reached the central authorities, they despatched Ḥātim b. Zayrak b. Salām to Ya‘qūb at once. One the 20th of Dhū al-Qa‘dah (September 17, 873) the central authorities received Ya‘qūb’s communications. According to report, Ja‘far b. al-Mu‘tamid and Abū Ahmad b. al-Mutawakkil held an audience in the main hall of the Jawṣaqq palace, attended by the army commanders. Permission was granted Ya‘qūb’s messengers to address them, and they related details that had come to Ya‘qūb’s attention concerning the state of affairs among the population of Khurāsān, where Khārijites and brigands had overrun the place, gravely weakening Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir’s position. This had caused people to correspond with Ya‘qūb, imploring him to come to their assistance, to which request he responded. When Ya‘qūb was still ten farsakhs from Naysābūr, people from the city met him and surrendered it, allowing him to enter.

Abū Ahmad (b. al-Mutawakkil) and ‘Ubaydallāh b. Yaḥyā then spoke to the messengers, saying that the Commander of the Faithful could not condone what Ya‘qūb had done. He was therefore ordering Ya‘qūb to return to the duties in his own province. As he had no justification for doing what he had done without orders, he must return [to his province]. If he returned, he would be behaving as a governor should; if not, then he would be treated as a rebel. Ya‘qūb’s messengers were sent back. [Before they left] they were each presented with a three-piece robe of honor.447 They had brought with them a head stuck upon a lance with a message on it, which read: “This is the head of God’s enemy ‘Abd al-Rahmān the Khārijite, who for thirty years falsely professed himself caliph in Herāt. He was slain by Ya‘qūb b. al-Layth.”

Leading the pilgrimage this year was Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far b. Sulaymān b. ‘Ali b. ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abbās, who was known as Burayḥ.448

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446. About 60 kni.
447. Khīfah fiha thalāthah athwāb. See n. 257, above.
448. Ibn al-Athir, Kāmil, VII, 271, identifies him as governor (al-‘āmil) and amīr of Mecca.
Among the events taking place this year was the death of Muḥammad b. Hārūn b. al-Muʿammar, who was slain by one of the Kurds of Musāwir the Khārijite. Discovered aboard a boat heading for Sāmarrā, Muḥammad was killed, and his severed head sent to Musāwir. In Jumādā II (March 24, 874 – April 21, 874) (the tribe of) Rabī‘ah sought to avenge Muḥammad’s death, and so Masrūr al-Balkhī and a number of the other commanders were ordered to go after Musāwir.

In this year as well the leader of the Zanj killed ‘Alī b. Zayd al-‘Alawī, the master of al-Kūfah.

Ya’qūb b. al-Layth in this same year fought and routed al-Ḥasan b. Zayd al-Ṭālibi and then entered Ṭabaristān.

An Account of [the] Battle [in Ṭabaristān]

Well-informed sources related to me that in the struggle for dominance of Sijistān between Ya’qūb and ‘Abdallāh al-Sijzī, Ya’qūb got

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the upper hand, while `Abdallāh managed to escape from him and
join Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir in Naysābūr. When Yaʿqūb reached Nay-
sābūr, `Abdallāh fled and joined up with al-Ḥasan b. Zayd, following
which Yaʿqūb set out in pursuit of him, after what went on
between him and Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir, as I have already mentioned
before.

On his way into Ṭabaristān he passed Asfārāʾīm and its terri-
tories. A man lived there whom I used to know, called Badil al-Kash-
shi. He was a collector of prophetic traditions and [was known for]
practicing supererogatory works and commanding the good. He had
been well received by the common people of this district. When Yaʿqūb
stayed there he sent word to Badil, informing him that they were
alike in their performance of supererogatory works. Yaʿqūb contin-
ued to treat him with courtesy until Badil ventured to come to visit
him. Once in his power, however, Yaʿqūb placed Badil in fetters and
took him along to Ṭabaristān, where, as he approached Sāriyāh, he
was met by al-Ḥasan b. Zayd.

I was also told that Yaʿqūb sent word to al-Ḥasan b. Zayd, request-
ing that he deliver `Abdallāh al-Sijzī to him, after which he would
depart, as he had come to Ṭabaristān only for the sake of `Abdallāh,
not to pick a fight with al-Ḥasan. However, al-Ḥasan b. Zayd refused
to hand over `Abdallāh. Yaʿqūb then informed al-Ḥasan of his inten-
tion to attack. The two armies met with neither side at first gaining
the upper hand, though al-Ḥasan was finally forced to flee and head
for al-Shirriz and the country of Daylam. Yaʿqūb occupied Sāriyāh
and then proceeded toward Āmul, collecting from its inhabitants
a year's taxes. From Āmul he left for al-Shirriz in pursuit of al-Ḥasan
b. Zayd. Upon reaching the mountains of Ṭabaristān, he encoun-
tered a period of uninterrupted rainfall which, according to my re-
ports, lasted for some forty days. Only with extreme difficulty was
he able to advance. As I was told, he had managed to ascend a moun-

452. Tabari reported his last whereabouts in Qūmīs, which he captured in 259. See p. 155, above. Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, VII, 268, reports that at this time he was in Ṭa-
bristān, where `Abdallāh joined him.
453. Also written as Asfarayn, for which, see Le Strange, Lands, 393. It was a pros-
perous city in Khurāsān, located in a large plain of the same name.
454. At this time Sāriyāh, rather than Āmul, was the seat of the Ṭāhirid governor
in Ṭabaristān. See Le Strange, Lands, 370.
455. The reading is uncertain.
456. Le Strange, Lands, 370, 381.
tain, but the descent was possible only by his being borne upon the shoulders of his men, as most of the pack animals had perished. Thereafter he resumed his pursuit of al-Ḥasan b. Zayd to al-Shirriz.

Someone from that district informed me that Yaʿqūb finally reached the road he had sought to join and there he paused with his troops. He advanced in front of them, carefully inspecting the way before finally rejoining his troops and ordering them to turn back. He said to his men, “If there is no other road than this, then there is no way of overtaking al-Ḥasan b. Zayd.” The same person who had mentioned this to me also informed me that the women of this district said to their men, “Let him come, for, if Yaʿqūb ventures upon this road, we will take care of him for you. We will be responsible for seizing and imprisoning him for you.”

When Yaʿqūb returned from the border area of Ṭabaristān, he reviewed his troops and discovered, as I was told, that he had lost forty thousand men along with the greater part of his horses, camels, and baggage, which were also lost.

It is said that he wrote to the central authorities about his expedition against al-Ḥasan b. Zayd and of his departure from Jurjān to Ṭamīs, which he conquered. He then noted his passage to Sāriyah where al-Ḥasan b. Zayd had destroyed the bridges and removed the ferries, thus preventing any advance along that road. Al-Ḥasan b. Zayd was camped before the gate of Sāriyah, naturally protected by the surrounding great river valleys. Khurshād b. Jilaw, the chief of Daylam, had come to al-Ḥasan’s aid, providing a powerful force composed of troops gathered from Ṭabaristān, Daylam, Khurāsān, Qumm, al-Jabal, al-Shām, and al-Jazīrah. Yaʿqūb said, “I routed al-Ḥasan and slew a greater number of the enemy than I’ve ever seen before, capturing as well seventy of the Talibiyyin.” That took place in Rajab (April 22 – May 21, 874). Al-Ḥasan b. Zayd returned to al-Shirriz, taking the Daylamites with him.

In this year in many of the Islamic lands prices shot up. According to one report, those who were living in Mecca for religious reasons

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457. Le Strange, Lands, 375, notes that Ṭamīs (or Ṭamisah) lay on the eastern frontier of Ṭabaristān, three marches distant from Sāriyah, it stood “on the great causeway across the marches which had been built to carry the high road by King Anūshirwan the Just.” See also Yāqūt, Muʿjam, III, 503 – 4. This description helps clarify Ḥasan b. Zayd’s moves to prevent passage along the road.
abandoned it for Medina and other places because price rises were particularly severe in Mecca. The financial administrator, Ibrāhim b. Muhammad Burayh, who had been living in Mecca, also left the city. In Baghdad, too, prices rose, a kurr of barley reaching one hundred twenty dinars, while wheat reached one hundred fifty dinars a kurr. The situation remained this way for several months.

Arab tribesmen this year killed Manjur the governor of Ḫims. Baktimur (b. Tashtimur) was made governor in his place.

Ya`qūb b. al-Layth left Ṭabaristān this year for the district of al-Rayy. According to a report I received, the reason for this was the fact that, after Ya`qūb’s defeat of al-Ḥasan b. Zayd, ‘Abdallāh al-Sijzi had sought protection from Ya`qūb with al-Ṣalābī, offering him the choice of either delivering ‘Abdallāh al-Sijzi to him, enabling him to return and leave al-Ṣalābī’s jurisdiction, or else engaging in battle. According to what I was told, al-Ṣalābī chose to hand over ‘Abdallāh. This done, Ya`qūb killed ‘Abdallāh and then departed al-Ṣalābī’s territory.

In this year al-‘Alā’ b. Aḥmad al-Azdi was slain.

An Account of [al-Azdi’s] Death

It was reported that al-‘Alā’ b. Aḥmad suffered a stroke and became gravely incapacitated as a result. The central authorities sent to Abū al-Rudayni ‘Umar b. ‘Ali b. Murr, confirming him in the governorship of Adharbayjān, a position held by al-‘Alā’ b. Aḥmad. Abū al-Rudayni set out to take possession of the province from al-‘Alā’. In Ramaḍān (June 20 – July 19, 874) al-‘Alā’, borne upon a litter, went forth to confront in battle Abū al-Rudayni, who was accompanied by a crowd of Khārijites and others. Al-‘Alā’ was killed. It is also reported that al-Rudayni sent a number of his men to seize al-‘Alā’’s possessions, which he had left behind; goods valued at two million

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458. A measure of wheat, etc., consisting of six assloads. See Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v. k-r-r. See also Hinz, *Islamische Masse*, 64.

459. Ibn al-Athir, *Kāmil*, VII, 272, mentions only the price of wheat, which rose to one hundred twenty dinars.

460. Ibn al-Athir, *Kāmil*, VII, 273, adds in a separate note that price increases were also severe in Ifriqiyyah, the Maghrib, al-Andalus, and other places, which resulted in many deaths from epidemics and plague.
seven hundred thousand dirhams were removed from his fortress.

In this year the Byzantines captured Lu’lu’ah\(^{46} \) from the Muslims.

Leading the pilgrimage this year was Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far b. Sulaymān b. ʿAli, known as Burayh.

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\(^{46}\) See Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam*, IV, 371, who identifies Lu’lu’ah as a fortress near Tarsus. At this time it seemed to change hands regularly; Tabari notes at the end of the year 263 (877) that the fortress was (again!) surrendered by the Muslims to their enemies.
The Events of the Year

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(OCTOBER 16, 874—OCTOBER 5, 875)

Among the events occurring this year was the departure of al-Hasan b. Zayd from the land of Daylam for Tabaristan. He destroyed Shālūs\textsuperscript{462} by fire [in revenge] for the assistance its people had given to Yaʿqūb. He also converted their estates into fiefs for the Daylamites.

Also this year the central authorities ordered Ḫubaydallāh b. ‘Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir to round up the pilgrims present in Baghdad from Khurāsān, al-Rayy, Tabaristan, and Jurjān. This he did in Safar (November 15 – December 13, 874) and read to them a declaration in which they were informed by the central authorities that Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth had not been commissioned as governor of Khurāsān. They were, furthermore, ordered to disavow him, because the Caliph disapproved his entry into Khurāsān and his capture of Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir.

‘Abdallāh b. al-Wāthiq died this year in the army camp of Yaʿqūb al-Ṣaffār.

\textsuperscript{462} A city two days march west of Ḍāmul, with a large stone castle and adjoining congregational mosque. See Le Strange, \textit{Lands}, 373.
In this year as well, during the month of Jumādā II (February 11–March 12, 875), Musāwir the Khārijite killed Yahyā b. Ḥafs, who administered the Khurāsān Road, in Karkh Juddān. Masrūr al-Balkhi went out in pursuit of Musāwir, and he was followed by Abū Aḥmad b. al-Mutawakkil. Musāwir withdrew and was not overtaken by his pursuers.

In Jumādā I (February 1–March 1, 876) of this year Abū Hāshim Dāʾūd b. Sulaymān al-Jaʿfari was slain.

A battle took place in Rāmhurmuz this year between Muḥammad b. Wāṣil and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muflīḥ, who was with Ṭāshtimur. Ibn Wāṣil killed Ṭāshtimur and captured Ibn Muflīḥ.

An Account of [the] Battle [of Rāmhurmuz]464

According to reports I have received, the cause was because Ibn Wāṣil had killed al-Ḥarīth b. Simā, the agent of the central government in Fārs, which had now fallen to Ibn Wāṣil. Fārs, along with al-Ahwāz, al-Ḥāṣrah, al-Bahrayn, and al-Yamamah, was now assigned to Mūsā b. Bughā, in addition to the east, which he already controlled. Mūsā b. Bughā despatched ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muflīḥ to al-Ahwāz to govern it and Fārs, giving him the assistance of Ṭāshtimur. Ibn Wāṣil got word of Mūsā’s decision and also that Ibn Muflīḥ was headed for Fārs in pursuit of him, having previously been stationed in al-Ahwāz, where he had conducted a campaign against the Khārijite in al-Ḥāṣrah.

Ibn Wāṣil marched toward Ibn Muflīḥ, and the two sides met in Rāmhurmuz, where Abū Dāʾūd al-Ṣaʿlūk465 joined forces with Ibn Wāṣil as support against Ibn Muflīḥ. In his triumph Ibn Wāṣil captured Ibn Muflīḥ, while destroying his army and slaying Ṭāshtimur. Ibn Muflīḥ remained captive until he was killed, although the central authorities had sent to Ibn Wāṣil Ismāʿīl b. Ṣaḥāq [the judge]466 to negotiate his release, but without securing any response from Ibn Wāṣil. Once Ibn Wāṣil was rid of Ibn Muflīḥ, he openly declared his intention of making for Wāṣit to fight Mūsā b. Bughā. He progressed

463. Located close to the border between Iraq and Iran. See Yāqūt, Muʾjam, IV, 449.
465. See n. 48, above.
466. He had been a member of the delegation sent by al-Muṭamid to Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth in Fārs. See p. 119, above.
as far as al-Ahwâz, where Ibrâhîm b. Sîmâ was stationed with a large force. Mûsâ b. Bughâ, realizing the seriousness of matters, with the rising wave of rebels in the eastern districts and with resources insufficient to check them, requested to be relieved of his duties over these provinces. This was granted, and his territories were added to those of Abû Aḥmad b. al-Mutawakkil, who was made governor over them all. Mûsâ b. Bughâ meanwhile retired from Wâsiṭ to the central authorities [in Sâmarra], along with his administrative prefects from the eastern districts.

In this year Abû al-Sâj[467] was made governor of al-Ahwâz and given responsibility for the conduct of the campaign against the Zanj leader. Abû al-Sâj made for al-Ahwâz after ‘Abd al-Rahmân b. Muflîh had left for Fârs.

In this year as well a battle occurred between ‘Abd al-Rahmân [who was related by marriage to Abû al-Sâj] and ‘Ali b. Abân in the district of al-Dûlâb. ‘Abd al-Rahmân was slain, and Abû al-Sâj departed for ‘Askar Mukram. The Zanj occupied al-Ahwâz and put some of its inhabitants to the sword, taking others captive and plundering and burning the houses. Thereafter Abû al-Sâj was removed from his duties in al-Ahwâz and his responsibilities for fighting the Zanj, being replaced as governor by Ibrâhîm b. Sîmâ. He remained in charge, leaving al-Ahwâz only at the time when Mûsâ b. Bughâ was relieved of control of the eastern districts.

During this year Muhammad b. Aws al-Balkî was made governor of the Khurâsân Road.

When Abû Ahmad took over control of the eastern provinces he appointed Masrûr al-Balkhi governor of al-Ahwâz, al-Bâṣrah, the Tigris districts, al-Yamâmah, and al-Bâhrayn in Shaʿbân (May 11 – June 8, 875) of this year. He was also given the task of campaigning against the leader of the Zanj.

In Ramâdân (June 9 – July 8, 875) Naṣr b. Aḥmad b. Asad al-Sâmâni[468] was appointed governor of the land beyond the river of Balkh[469]; he received a letter of appointment to this post.

467. His full name was Abû al-Sâj Diwdad b. Diwdast. He had previously held a post in al-Kûfah, with responsibility for repairing the Meccan road in 252 (866–67). See Tâbârî, III, 1682–85; Ibn al-Athîr, Kâmîl, VII, 276; El., i s.v. “Sâdjîtes.”

468. Ibn al-Athîr, Kâmîl, VII, 279–82, provides more details on these developments; see also R. N. Frye, “The Sâmanîds.”

469. This was the territory known as Mâ ward al-nahr, “what was beyond the
In Shawwāl (July 9 - August 6, 875) Ya`qūb b. al-Layth marched toward Fārs. Ibn Wāsil was still encamped in al-Ahwāz, and from there he set out for Fārs; in Dhū al-Qa‘dah (August 7 - September 5, 875) he clashed with Ya`qūb b. al-Layth, who routed him and destroyed his army. Ya`qūb sent off men to Khurramah to strip clean Ibn Wāsil’s fortress, the contents of which reportedly reached a value of forty million dirhams. He also took prisoner Mirdās, Ibn Wāsil’s maternal uncle.

During the year the troops of Ya`qūb b. al-Layth assaulted the inhabitants of Zamm471 Musa b. Mihrān al-Kurdi for the assistance they had rendered to Muhammad b. Wagil. The troops killed them, forcing Musa b. Mihrān to flee.

On the 12th of Shawwāl (July 20, 875) of this year al-Mu’tāmid held an assembly in the Public Audience Hall (dār al-‘ammah), at which he appointed his son Ja`far his heir, giving him the honorific title al-Mufawwād ilā-Allah. He also made him governor of the western regions, attaching Mūsā b. Bughā to him as governor of Ilriqiyah, Egypt, Syria, al-Jazirah, Mosul, Armenia, the Khurāsān Road, Mihrājānqadhaq, and Ḥulwān. Al-Mu’tāmid also appointed his brother Abū Aḥmad472 heir after Ja`far, making him governor of the eastern regions. Masrūr al-Balkhi was attached to him as governor of Baghdad, the Sawād, al-Kūfah, the Mecca Road, Medina, the Yemen, Kaskar, the Tigris districts, al-Ahwāz, Fārs, Iṣfahān, Qumm, al-Karaj, al-Dinawar, al-Rayy, Zanjān, Qazwīn, Khurāsān, Ṭabaristān, Jurjān, Kirmān, Sijistān, and Sind. Al-Mu’tāmid also bestowed upon each of his heirs two standards, one black, the other white. He stipulated that, in the event of his death, if Ja`far could not fulfill the duties of the caliphate, it would pass first to Abū Aḥmad and then to Ja`far. On these terms the oath of allegiance was rendered by the people, and copies of the succession decree were dis-

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470. See Le Strange, *Lands*, 278. This was located some 80 km. from Shirāz, on the road to Kirmān; see also Iṣṭakhrī, *Kitāb al-masālik wa-al-mamālik*, 102.

471. Known also as Zamm al-Bazanjān. See Ṭabari, *Index*; also Iṣṭakhrī, *Masālik*, 145.


473. That is, because Ja`far would not have reached the age of maturity, when he could assume these responsibilities.
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semminated. One such copy was despatched with al-Hasan b. Muhammad b. Abi al-Shawārib to affix to the Ka‘bah [in Mecca]. In Shawwāl (July 9–August 6, 875) Ja‘far al-Mufawwād made Mūsā b. Bughā his deputy over the western regions and sent Muḥammad al-Muwallad to him with an agreement to this effect.

Muḥammad b. Zaydawayh deserted Ya‘qūb b. al-Layth this year, withdrawing thousands of his troops from Ya‘qūb’s army and going over to Abū al-Sāj, who welcomed him. Muḥammad stayed with him in al-Ahwāz and received a robe of honor from Sāmarrā. Ibn Zaydawayh then requested of the central authorities that al-Ḥusayn b. Ṭāhir b. ‘Abdallāh be sent with him to Khurāsān.

On the 7th of Dhu al-Ḥijjah (September 12, 875) Masrūr al-Balkhī set out from Sāmarrā as Abū Aḥmad’s vanguard. According to report, robes of honor were bestowed upon him and thirty-four of his commanders. The two heirs publicly escorted him, and al-Muwaffaq followed him from Sāmarrā on the 21st of Dhu al-Ḥijjah (September 26, 875).


Al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Abī al-Shawārib died this year after he had performed the pilgrimage.
Among the events taking place this year were the arrival of Ya`qūb b. al-Layth in Rāmhurmuz in the month of al-Muḥarram (October 6–November 4, 875) and the despatch of Ismā`il b. Isḥāq and Bughrāj to him by the central authorities.474 The central authorities also released from prison Ya`qūb’s supporters. At the time of the dispute between Ya`qūb and Muḥammad b. Tāhir, the authorities had imprisoned Ya`qūb’s servant Waṣīf and other supporters who had stood by him. They were released from prison following Ya`qūb’s arrival in Rāmhurmuz on the 5th of Rabī’ I (November 9, 875).

Thereafter Ismā`il b. Isḥāq left Ya`qūb for Sāmarrā bearing a message from him. Meanwhile, Abū Aḥmad (al-Muwaffaq) held an audience in Baghdad, to which he summoned a group of merchants, informing them that the Commander of the Faithful had appointed Ya`qūb b. al-Layth governor of Khurāsān, Ṭabaristān, Jurjān, al-Rayy, and Fārs and head of security in Madīnat al-Salām. One of Ya`-

474. Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, VII, 290, commences his account of this year by stating that Ya`qūb journeyed from Fārs to al-Ahwāz in the month of al-Muḥarram; Rāmhurmuz was only a three-day march east of al-Ahwāz.
qūb’s companions, Dirham b. Naṣr, was present at the audience. Al-
Mu’tamid had sent this Dirham from Sāmarrā to Ya‘qūb [with a
message] granting the latter what he had requested. Dirham went
to Ya‘qūb accompanied by ‘Umar b. Simā and Muḥammad b. Tar-
kashah.

Messengers of Ibn Zaydawayh arrived in Baghdad during the
month of Rabi‘ I (December 14, 875 – January 12, 876) this year to
deliver a communication from him. A robe of honor was bestowed
upon him by Abū Aḥmad (al-Muwaffaq).

Later this same year those who had been sent by Ya‘qūb b. al-
Layth returned to the Caliph and informed him that Ya‘qūb was not
satisfied with merely corresponding with the Caliph, but he rather
preferred to come in person to the caliphal palace. Ya‘qūb left ‘Askar
Mukram, while Abū al-Sāj went to meet him, and was received
honorably and given presents. After the messengers had returned
with Ya‘qūb’s reply, al-Mu‘tamid, on Saturday the 3rd of Jumādā II
(March 15, 876), assembled his troops in al-Qa‘im, in Sāmarrā, leaving
his son Ja‘far in charge of Sāmarrā with the assistance of Mu-
ḥammad al-Muwallad. Departing from the city on Tuesday the 6th
of Jumādā II (March 18, 876), al-Mu‘tamid reached Baghdad on
Wednesday the 14th of the month (March 26, 876). He passed
straight through the metropolis, however, and proceeded to al-Za‘-
farāniyyah, where he set up camp. From al-Za‘farāniyyah he sent
ahead his brother Abū Aḥmad as vanguard, while Ya‘qūb proceeded
with his army from ‘Askar Mukram, arriving within a farsakh’s distance of Wāsīt. There he encountered flooded terrain created by
Masrūr al-Balkhi, who had breached the dike on the Tigris in order
to hinder Ya‘qūb’s passage. Ya‘qūb remained there and managed to
repair the breach, which allowed him to cross over the Tigris on the
24th of Jumādā II (March 23, 876) and advance toward Bādhbin.478
The next stage was the arrival of Muḥammad b. Kathir, on behalf of
Ya‘qūb, opposite the camp of Masrūr al-Balkhi, who then proceeded
with his army to al-Nu‘māniyyah.479

475. That is, the governorships to which he had been appointed.
476. An important town on the Masrūqān canal, which irrigated some of the rich-
est land in Khūzistān. See Le Strange, Lands, 236.
477. About 6 km.
478. Located east of Wāsīt, on the road to al-Ahwāz, Le Strange, Lands, 82, vocal-
izes the name Bādhbin.
479. The halfway stage between Baghdad and Wāsīt. See Yāqūt, Mu’jam, IV, 796.
Meanwhile, Ya'qūb had reached Wāsiṭ and entered it on the 24th of Jumādā II (March 23, 876). On Thursday, the last day of the month (March 29, 876), al-Muṭtamid left al-Za'farāniyyah and advanced as far as Sib Bani Kūmā, where he was joined by Masrūr al-Balkhi who had traveled along the western bank of the Tigris before crossing over to the side where the Caliph's forces were located. Al-Muṭtamid remained in Sib Bani Kūmā for a few days in order that his various troops and regiments could assemble together. For his part, Ya'qūb advanced by stages from Wāsiṭ to Dayr al-ʿĀqūl and from there toward the government forces. Al-Muṭtamid remained camped in Sib, along with ʿUbaydallāh b. Yahyā, while he sent his brother Abū Aḥmad to engage Ya'qūb in battle. Abū Aḥmad stationed Mūsā b. Bughā on his right flank and Masrūr al-Balkhi on his left, while he himself, with his elite cavalry and the pick of his infantry, held the center. The two sides met on Sunday, at the beginning of Rajab (April 1, 876), at a place called Iḍṭārbaḍ which was between Sib Bani Kūmā and Dayr al-ʿAqūl. Ya'qūb's right wing attacked Abū Aḥmad's left flank, driving it back in disorder. A large number were slain, including some of the government's commanders, like Ibrāhīm b. Simā al-Turki, Ṭabāghū al-Turki, Muḥammad Ṭuḥtā al-Turki, and one known as al-Mubāraqa al-Maghribi, among others. Then those [on the left flank] who had been driven back regrouped, while the rest of Abū Aḥmad's forces stood their ground and launched a counterattack against Ya'qūb's forces. They stood their ground and engaged the foe with courage and determination. Many of Ya'qūb's valiant warriors were killed, among them al-Ḥasan al-Dirhamī and Muḥammad b. Kathīr, who had been in charge of Ya'qūb's vanguard, and one known as Lubbādah. Ya'qūb himself was struck by three arrows in his neck and hands. According to what was said, the two sides continued fighting until the time the afternoon prayer had passed. Later, al-Dāyrānī and Muḥammad b. Aws reached Abū Aḥmad, completing the assembly of all of Abū

480. Situated on the east bank of the Tigris between Dayr al-ʿĀqūl and al-Madāʾin, this small town was called Sib of the Banu Kūmā to distinguish it from the Sib farther south. See Le Strange, *Lands*, 36, 41; Le Strange, "Ibn Serapion's Description," 41.

481. This was a monastery located on the east bank of the Tigris, south of al-Madāʾin. See Le Strange, *Lands*, 35; Le Strange, "Ibn Serapion's Description," 41; Yāqūt, *Muḥam*, II, 676.

482. The word is unvocalized in Manuscripts B and C.
Aḥmad's troops. It had become apparent that many on Yaʿqūb's side had developed an aversion to fighting with him when they saw the Caliph appear on the battlefield, and [the assembled government troops] now attacked Yaʿqūb and those who still stood firmly by him. Yaʿqūb's regular troops were routed, leaving him to stand fast with the elite of his forces until they managed to withdraw from the field of battle.

More than ten thousand pack animals and mules were reportedly captured from Yaʿqūb's army along with a great many containers of musk and such an amount of dinars and dirhams that it wore out its bearers.

Muḥammad b. Ṭāḥir b. ʿAbdallāh, who had been shackled in irons, was set free by the one who was in charge of guarding him. He was then presented to the Caliph, who bestowed upon him a robe of honor to accord with his rank. A statement was read out in public, in which it was said:

The accursed renegade called Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth had always professed loyalty [to the central authorities] until he committed such foul acts as marching upon the governor of Khurāsān and overthrowing him; acting as leader of the public prayers there and committing other misdeeds; marching repeatedly into Fārs and seizing its revenues; advancing upon the seat of the Commander of the Faithful, on the pretext of requesting powers of which the Commander of the Faithful had already given him more than he deserved, in an attempt to appease him and avoid [direct contact] by taking a better way. Yaʿqūb had been given authority over Khurāsān, al-Rayy, Fārs, Qazwin, Zanjān, and the security forces in Madīnāt al-Salām. He was ordered to be humble in his correspondence. He had been granted valuable estates as fīrs; but that had only made him more unjust and oppressive. The Caliph then ordered him to turn back [from his march on Baghdad], but he refused. When the accursed one was on the road between Madīnāt al-Salām and Wāsit, flying flags, some of which bore the sign of the cross, the Commander of the Faithful set out to repel him.

The Commander of the Faithful despatched his brother Abū Aḥmad al-Muwaffaq bi-Allāh, the Muslims' future
ruler, in the center of his army, with Abū `Imrān Mūsā b. Bughā on the right flank and Ibrāhīm b. Sīmā on its outer wing. Abū Ḥāshim Masrūr al-Balkhī occupied the left flank and al-Dayrānī its outer wing. Yaʿqūb and his supporters rushed into battle, and he fought until he was severely wounded and Abū `Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir was safely rescued from the enemy's hands. Yaʿqūb's forces retreated in full flight, broken and plundered, while the accursed one was forced to surrender all his accumulated fortune.

This statement was dated Tuesday, the 11th of Rajab (April 10, 876).

Al-Muʿtamid then returned to his army camp and wrote to Ibn Wāṣil, granting him the governorship of Fārs. Ibn Wāṣil had already gone there to gather together some forces. Al-Muʿtamid returned to al-Madāʾin, while Abū Aḥmad, along with Masrūr and Sāṭikīn and a number of the commanders, proceeded to confiscate the property of Abū al-Sāj in the form of estates and buildings, which were then granted to Masrūr al-Balkhī as fiefs. On Monday, the 16th of Rajab (April 15, 876) Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir b. ʿAbdallāh came to Baghdad, his post having been restored, and a robe of honor was bestowed upon him in al-Ruṣāfah. He settled in the palace of ʿAbdallāh b. Ṭāhir; he removed no one and appointed no one, but was ordered to receive five hundred thousand dirhams.

The day of the battle between the central authorities and [Yaʿqūb] al-Ṣaffār was Palm Sunday (yawm al-Sha`ānīn).

Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Fayd al-Ṭāʾi praised Abū Aḥmad in a poem in which the business with al-Ṣaffār was alluded to.

The raven crowed—would that I could end his crowing— and my heart inclined to remembrance of beloved ones.

The raven proclaimed their departure, and my eyes responded to the departure of their saddles with a flood of tears.

They vanished, gentle ladies, like painted dolls, gentle friends, for this expression, see Qurʾān 38:52, 56:37.
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These fair ladies of yours made me adore them by their locks, figures, and brows.

The Muslims' heir apparent has many honorable qualities, the light from which has shone out in many offices
And ranks the summit of which cannot be scaled.
How noble are these peaks and ranks!

Al-Ṣaffār had arrived with impressive battle machines but suffered a terrible calamity,
Fate having dealt him a swift end
in obedient execution of providence.

The accursed devil, Iblis, had seduced him with his plot and lured him with a false promise

Until, when they became allies and al-Ṣaffār imagined he was mighty among armies and regiments,
Fortunate troops advanced toward him, and they met, pushing forward with victorious banner,

In a huge, clamoring army in which heroes were seen bearing shields, spears, and arrows.
The Imam appeared with triumphant flag for Muḥammad—God's keen-honed sword.

The Muslims' heir apparent is Blessed of God,484 swifter than a shooting star,
Appearing among the people as a full shining moon, rejoicing in light, among the stars.

When they met with Mashrāfī swords and spears, piercing and thrusting in combat hand to hand,
The dust swirled round, above it a cloud scattering a rain [of arrows].

He routed the multitude with the decisiveness of a piercing opinion, separating comrades one from another.

God's blessing upon he who is with him, who is blessed (muwaffaq) and joyous,
steadfast and persistent in battle.

O horsemen of the Arabs, [there is] no other the likes of whom can be found, who is equal to disasters
That might come from evil times or from facing an army that is treacherous, treasonous, and violent.

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484. The regnal name of Muʿtamid's brother Abū Ahmad, al-Muwaffaq 'alā-Allāh means "Blessed of God."
In this year the Zanj leader despatched his forces to the territory of the salt flats and Dastumisân.\textsuperscript{485}

\textit{An Account of [the Zanj Attack on the Salt Flats]}\textsuperscript{486}

The cause for this reportedly was that, when al-Mu'tamid removed Müsâ b. Bughâ from his responsibilities for the eastern provinces and their adjoining districts, he included them instead with his brother Abû Aḥmad's duties. Abû Aḥmad himself added the Tigris districts to the duties of Masrûr al-Balkhi. Thus, as the districts of the Tigris had been left without any government protection except for al-Madâ'în and regions lying to the north,\textsuperscript{487} Yaʿqûb b. al-Layth commenced his advance toward Abû Aḥmad and reached Wāsiṭ. Just prior to this Masrûr had sent Juʿlân al-Turkî to al-Bûdâshward in place of Müsâ b. Utâmîsh. Now opposing Müsâ b. Utâmîsh on the Zanj side was Sulaymân b. Jâmi'. Before Ibn Utâmîsh was removed from al-Bûdâshward, Sulaymân had already inflicted some damage on his army. Following his removal and replacement by Juʿlân, despatched a Bahrayni called Thâlab b. Hâfî to attack Juʿlân. Thâlab succeeded in inflicting casualties on both his cavalry and men. For his part the Zanj leader sent Aḥmad b. Mahdî, a man from Jubbâ,\textsuperscript{488} in command of galleys with marksmen on board and with orders to proceed to Nahr al-Mar'ah.\textsuperscript{489} According to report, this man, al-Jubbâ'î, commenced plundering the villages in the neighborhood of al-Madhâr, laying them waste before returning to Nahr al-Mar'ah, where he stationed himself. He communicated with the Zanj leader informing him that the salt flats were void of government troops, owing to the removal of Masrûr and his troops when Yaʿqûb b. Layth arrived in Wāsiṭ. The Zanj leader then ordered Sulaymân b. Jâmi' and a number of his commanders to march to al-Hawānît. He also gave orders to one of the Bâhilîs, 'Umayr b. 'Ammâr,\textsuperscript{490} who knew

\textsuperscript{485} The word is vocalized thus in the Leiden edition, though it is also written Dast Maysân.


\textsuperscript{487} That is, between al-Madâˈîn and Baghdad.

\textsuperscript{488} A town on the estuary of the Dujayl below al-Ahwâz. See Le Strange, \textit{Lands}, 243.

\textsuperscript{489} This canal was the northernmost of nine lying to the west of the Tigris estuary. See Le Strange, "Ibn Serapion's Description," 303, 305; Yâqût, \textit{Muˈjam}, IV, 844.

\textsuperscript{490} On the Bâhilî tribe, see Popovic, \textit{Révolte}, 112 n. 3.
well the roads and byways through the salt flats to accompany al-Jubba'i and establish camp in al-Ḥawānīt.  

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan reported that Muḥammad b. ʿUthmān al-ʿAbbādānī said that, following the Zanj leader’s decision to despatch his armies to the salt flats and Dastumīsān, he commanded Sulaymān b. Jāmi’ to set up camp in al-Muṭṭawwiʿah and Sulaymān b. Mūsā was to establish his quarters at the head of Nahr al-Yaḥūdi, these orders were carried out. They each remained in their camps until receiving word to advance: Sulaymān b. Mūsā proceeded to the village of al-Qādisiyyah and Sulaymān b. Jāmi’ to al-Ḥawānīt, while al-Jubba‘ī was stationed with his galleys in front of this latter Sulaymān’s army. Meanwhile, Abbā al-Turki sailed along the Tigris with thirty barges heading for the camp of the Zanj leader. Passing the village, which had made peace with the abominable one, he destroyed and burned it. The abominable one contacted Sulaymān b. Mūsā by despatch to prevent his returning and Sulaymān blocked Abbā al-Turki’s way by engaging him in battle for a whole month until he managed to reach the region of the salt flats.

Muḥammad b. ʿUthmān reported that Jabbāsh the eunuch (al-khādīm) claimed it was not Abbā al-Turki who had ventured along the Tigris at this time but rather Nuṣayr Abū Ḥamzah.

When Sulaymān b. Jāmi’ reportedly set out for al-Ḥawānīt, he reached a place called Nahr al-ʿAtiq, while al-Jubba‘ī, who had gone along the al-Mādiyān Road, encountered Rumays, whom he engaged in battle and defeated. Al-Jubba‘ī captured twenty-four galleys and some thirty-odd larger craft (ṣalghāh). Rumays escaped and took refuge in the woods. A group of the Jūkhānīyyīn came upon

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491. The word means “booths.” Al-Ḥawānīt was situated on the eastern bank of the Tigris. Near there barriers, supervised by government officials, were moored across the river. See Le Strange, “Ibn Serapion’s Description,” 46.


493. The copyists of Manuscripts B and C wrote his name with tashdīd, thus Abbā. Popovic Révolte, 112 n. 4, misreads this name as Abū al-Turki and incorrectly identifies the patronymic as belonging to Masūr al-Balkhi, whose kunyāh was Abū ʿHāshim. The context of the passage on p. 178, below, makes this identification impossible. Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, VII, 293, calls him Ibn al-Turki.

494. Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, VII, 293, who follows Tabari closely here, lapses for the first time into calling ʿAṭī b. Muḥammad “the abominable one” (al-khabīth).

495. The reading is conjectural.

496. See Tabari, Glossarium, clxxiv.
him and carried him off, but he managed to escape again. In their flight, Rumays’s troops ran straight into Sulaymān (b. Jāmi‘), who was just then emerging from Nahr al-‘Atīq. In the ensuing battle, Rumays’s forces were decimated while Rumays himself made his way to a place called Barr Musāwir. A number of the Bilāliyyah were reported to have joined up with Sulaymān with some one hundred fifty galleys. He interrogated them concerning what lay before him. They replied that neither government authority nor agents were present in the region between him and Wāsiṭ. Placing complete trust in this intelligence, Sulaymān was thrown off his guard and as he reached a spot called al-Jazīrah, he was met by one Abū Mu‘ādh al-Quṣarī, who fought and routed Sulaymān, killing a number of his troops and capturing one of the Zanj commanders, Riyāḥ al-Qandali. Sulaymān returned to his base camp, where two of the Bilāliyyah came and told him that there was no one in Wāsiṭ to defend it other than Abū Mu‘ādh with the five barges with which he had previously met him. So Sulaymān made his preparations, gathered his forces together, and sent word to the abominable one with some of the Bilāliyyah who had sought his protection, keeping a small select group to remain behind with him with ten galleys. However, the two who had informed him of the situation in Wāsiṭ he kept under close guard as he set out for Nahr Abān. Abū Mu‘ādh blocked his way and this sparked off fighting between the two sides. A strong wind blew up, causing Abū Mu‘ādh’s barges to flounder and giving Sulaymān and his men the chance to overpower him. Abū Mu‘ādh, nevertheless, managed to make good his escape while Sulaymān proceeded toward the Nahr Abān, where he swiftly burned and plundered [villages], taking women and children into captivity. News of this reached some of Abū Aḥmad’s agents who were staying on one of his estates on the Nahr Sindād. They set out against Sulaymān with a detachment of troops, and in the battle that followed a large number of the Zanj were slain. Sulaymān and Aḥmad b. Mahdī and their followers fled back to their camp.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan — Muḥammad b. ‘Uthmān said that when Sulaymān b. Jāmi‘ had installed himself in al-Ḥawānīt and set up a temporary camp on the Nahr Ya‘qūb b. al-Naḍr, he sent out someone to collect intelligence on Wāsiṭ and the disposition of government forces there. This was after the departure of Masrūr and his troops, owing to the arrival of Ya‘qūb (b. al-Layth). The spy returned
to Sulaymān and reported Yaʿqūb’s advance toward the government forces. Masrūr, before vacating Wāṣiṭ for al-Sīb, had sent a man called Waṣīf al-Rahbāl with barges against Sulaymān. He fought and killed him, also seizing seven of the boats and killing the prisoners, dumping the dead in al-Ḥawānit in order to instill fear in the hearts of government supporters who might happen by.497

After Sulaymān had received news of Masrūr’s departure from Wāṣiṭ, he summoned his deputy, ʿUmayr b. ʿAmmār, and one of the Bāhili chiefs named Ahmad b. Sharīk. He consulted them concerning withdrawal from the position, which could be reached by horses and boats, searching carefully instead for a spot joining a road that could be used as an escape route should he wish to make for the camp of the abominable one. The two men advised him to head for ʿAqr Māwar and entrench himself in Ṭahithā498 and its dense thickets.

The departure of Sulaymān b. Jānī greatly annoyed the Bāhilites since, having become involved with him, they feared the retribution of the central authorities against them. Sulaymān set out with his troops to Ṭahitha via Nahr al-Barūr, having despatched al-Jubbāʾi to Nahr al-ʿAtīq with galleys. He ordered al-Jubbāʾi to make haste in bringing him intelligence on the strength of the government’s forces in men and barges. He left behind a detachment of blacks to sent on any of his troops who had lagged behind. He headed for ʿAqr Māwar, setting up camp in the village of Qaryat Marwān, located on an island on the eastern side of Nahr Ṭahitha. There he gathered the Bāhilite chiefs and the men of al-Ṭufūf499 and wrote to the abominable one, informing him of his movements. The abominable one replied, approving his plans and ordered him to transfer to him food supplies and animals that he had acquired. This was duly done. Meanwhile, Masrūr had proceeded to the spot of Sulaymān’s previous camp. He found nothing there but that the enemy had already transferred their entire camp.

497. Popovic, Révolte, 113, takes this possibly to mean that the bodies were thrown into the Tigris at al-Ḥawānit.
498. See Popovic, Révolte, 113 n. 1, where he states that the camp was located on the Ṭahitha canal. The reading Ṭahitha is uncertain. Ibn al-Athir, Kāmil, VII, 293, writes it ṭ-h-th-a and reverses the relationship between it and ʿAqr Māwar, that is, Sulaymān was advised to entrench himself in the latter position.
499. ʿAhl al-Ṭufūf. The Index does not cite this as a place name, and it cannot be otherwise identified. It might also be loosely rendered “local inhabitants,” that is, those living in cultivated areas along the canal banks. See Lane, Lexicon, s.v. ʿf-f-.
Abba al-Turki descended toward the marshlands in pursuit of Sulayman, who himself thought that [Abba al-Turki] had left the district altogether and gone away, heading in the direction of the abominable one’s camp. He found no trace of Sulayman. On his return, however, he discovered that Sulayman had moved an army to al-Ḫawānīt in order to surprise any stragglers who might become separated from Masrūr’s army. Abba al-Turki avoided the road that he feared might lead him to Sulayman’s army and instead took another way, which finally brought him to Masrūr, whom he informed that he had no news of Sulayman’s [exact] whereabouts.\footnote{See n. 493, above.}

Sulayman’s army set out for [the abominable one] with the required provisions. Sulayman remained behind. He despatched al-Jubbāʾi with the barges to take care of the food and supply depots and arrange their transport. Al-Jubbāʾi, however, burned such food supplies as he found wherever he went. This greatly displeased Sulayman, who forbade him from such action but al-Jubbāʾi paid no attention, justifying himself on the grounds that the supplies would benefit their enemies and that it was wrong to leave anything behind. At this Sulayman wrote to the abominable one complaining about al-Jubbāʾi’s behavior. The abominable one in turn instructed al-Jubbāʾi to obey Sulayman and accept whatever he commanded.

News reached Sulayman that Aghartimish and Khushaysh\footnote{The vocalization of the names of these two ‘Abbāsid officers is conjectural. Ibn al-Athir, Kāmil, VII, 293, refers to the second as Ḥashish.} were heading his way, leading cavalry and infantry troops with barges and galleys intending to engage him in battle. Sulayman was much troubled by these developments and sent off al-Jubbāʾi to glean information about them. He commenced his preparations to meet them. Al-Jubbāʾi returned shortly thereafter in flight and informed Sulayman that Aghartimish and Khushaysh had reached Bāb Ṭanj, which was only half a farsakh\footnote{About 3 km.} from Sulayman’s forces. Sulayman ordered al-Jubbāʾi to return and block their army’s way, diverting it from advancing directly toward his camp until Sulayman could join forces with him. When al-Jubbāʾi had departed to execute these orders, Sulayman ascended a rooftop, from which he observed the advancing army. Then, hastily descending, he crossed over Nahr Ṭahīthā and proceeded on foot, followed by a number of the command-
ers of the blacks and their troops, finally arriving at Bāb Ṭanj. Aghartimish realized that he had arrived too late and left his troops to struggle back to his camp.

Sulaymān had ordered the deputy commander of his army not to allow any of the blacks to appear in view of any of Aghartimish's army, concealing themselves as best they could and letting the enemy penetrate along the waterway. Then, when they heard the sound of the drum roll, they should emerge and attack Aghartimish. Aghartimish approached with his army until there was no more than the Jārūrah Bani Marwān canal, which flowed from Ṭahīthā, between him and Sulaymān's force. Al-Jubbā'ī fled in the galleys and reached Ṭahīthā, and then leaving them there he retraced his way on foot to Sulaymān's army. This caused fear to deepen among Sulaymān's soldiers, and they scattered to the four winds.503 A small group of men, however, among them one of the commanders of the blacks called Abū al-Nidā', took heart and attacked the enemy, preventing their entry into the camp, while Sulaymān pressed them from behind, then the Zanj beat their drums and throwing themselves into the water, crossed over the canal to join them. At this Aghartimish's troops were routed; the blacks who were in Ṭahīthā fell upon them and put them to the sword. Khushaysh set out, riding upon a gray horse, intending to return to his soldiers, but he was met by blacks, who felled him with their swords and slew him. His head was taken to Sulaymān. Before being killed, as he was dragged away, he had said to them, "I am Khushaysh; you cannot kill me. Take me to your leader!" but they paid him no heed.

Aghartimish fled at the rear of his forces until he collapsed on the ground; he then proceeded on horseback, tracked by the Zanj until they reached their camp. The Zanj obtained their necessities from it, and seized Khushaysh's barges, while those who pursued the retreating army captured [more] barges that were with Aghartimish, containing much wealth. When news of this reached Aghartimish, he returned and managed to recover the boats from the Zanj.

Meanwhile, Sulaymān returned to his troops. He had succeeded in capturing booty and animals and sent word of the result of the battle to the Zanj commander, together with Khushaysh's head and

503. The phrase is fa tafarraqu āyādiya sabā; see H. Wehr, A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, s.v. s-b'.
ring seal, and added the barges that he had seized to his own forces. When the abominable one received Sulaymān’s communication and Khushaysh’s head, he ordered the later circulated throughout the camp and then displayed for a day on a pole. The head was later sent to ‘Ali b. Abān, who at the time was in the districts of al-Ahwāz, and he was ordered to display it in public there as well. Sulaymān, al-Jubbā‘ī, and a group of commanders of the blacks left for the district of al-Ḥawā‘īnīt, skirting its border. There they came across thirteen barges with Abū Tamim, the brother of Abū ‘Awn, associate of Waṣīf al-Turkī. They attacked. Abū Tamīm was killed and thrown into the water. Eleven of his barges were confiscated.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan said that this was the account of Muḥammad b. ‘Uthmān al-ʿAbbādānī. As for Jabbash the eunuch, he claimed that Abū Tamim had only eight barges. Two of these, which had arrived late on the scene, managed to slip away safely with all on board. Sulaymān captured arms and spoils as well as most of the troops on the barges. Sulaymān returned to his camp and sent word to the abominable one of developments involving the slaying of Abū Tamīm and his companions and his confiscation of the barges in his camp.

In this year Ibn Zaydawayh took al-Ṭib504 by surprise and plundered it.

‘Ali b. Muḥammad b. Abī al-Shawā‘īb was appointed to the office of religious judge this year.505

Al-Ḥusayn b. Ṭāhir b. ‘Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir left Baghdad during the last days of the month506 for al-Jabal.

Al-Ṣalābī507 died this year, and Kayghalagh was appointed governor of al-Rayy.

Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Ali b. Ya‘qūb b. (Abū al-Ja‘far) al-Manṣūr died in Rabi‘ II (January 3–31, 876) of this year. Ismā‘īl b. Ishāq was appointed re-

504. Le Strange, Lands, 64, 82. Yāqūt, Mu‘jam, III, 566, says that in his day (the
seven/thirteenth century) the inhabitants of this southeastern Iraqi town were Na-
batean and still spoke a dialect of Aramaic.

505. That is, the brother of al-Ḥasan, who had been appointed chief religious judge
in 252/866 and had died in 261/874–75. See p. 167 and n. 6 above; Sourdel, Vizirat,
II, 654.

506. Taḫari does not mention the actual month, but Ibn al-Athir, Kāmil, VII, 304,
places this event in Ṣafar (November 5–December 3, 875).

507. Ibn al-Athir, Kāmil, VII, 305, here confirms that he had been governor of al-
Rayy.
ligious judge of the east side of Baghdad, thus holding the judgeship of both sides of the city.

Muḥammad b. ‘Attāb b. ‘Attāb was killed this year. He had been appointed governor of the two Sibs and had departed for the place, when he was killed by Arab tribesmen.

In the middle of Ramadān (June 12, 876) this year Mūsā b. Bughā arrived at al-Anbār on his way to al-Raqqah.

In this year al-Qaṭṭān, associate of Muflih, was also slain. He was in charge of the administration of the taxes (kharāji) of Mosul. He was killed on the way back from it.

Kftimur ‘Ali b. al-Ḥusayn b. Dāʾūd, secretary of Aḥmad b. Sahl al-Luṭfi, was made leader of the Mecca Road in Ramadān (May 29 – June 27, 876) of this year.

In Mecca the corn merchants (al-ḥannāṭīn)508 and butchers fought each other on the day before yawm al-Tarwiyyah,509 so that people feared the pilgrimage would be canceled. Then the two sides made peace so that people could perform the pilgrimage rites. Seventeen persons had been killed.

Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth conquered Fārs this year, and Ibn Wāsīl fled from it.

A battle occurred this year between the Zanj and Aḥmad b. Laythawayh, in which many Zanj were killed. Abū Dāʾūd al-Ṣuʿlūk, who had been with the Zanj, was captured.

An Account of the Battle and Capture of al-Ṣuʿlūk510

Masrūr al-Balkhi reportedly sent Aḥmad b. Laythawayh to the region of the districts of al-Ahwāz. When he arrived in the region he settled at al-Sūs.511 (Abū Layth) al-Ṣaffār had appointed Muḥammad b. ‘Ubaydallāh b. Azārmard al-Kurdi governor of the districts of al-Ahwāz. Muḥammad b. ‘Ubaydallāh corresponded with the Zanj leader,
holding forth the prospect that he was ready to go over to his side; indeed, he had been corresponding with him from the beginning of the Zanj leader’s revolt. Muḥammad gave the impression that he would govern the districts of al-Ahwāz for him, although he would pretend to be loyal to (Abū Layth) al-Šaffār until he had firm control of the district. The abominable one agreed to this, on condition that his governor in the region be ‘Ali b. Abān and that Muḥammad b. ‘Ubaydallāh be only his deputy, an offer that he accepted. ‘Ali b. Abān despatched his brother al-Khalil with a large number of blacks and others, while Muḥammad b. ‘Ubaydallāh, together with Abū Dā‘ūd al-Šu‘lūk, bolstered these forces, and they all made for al-Sūs. They did not, however, get that far, as Ibn Laythawayh and the troops of the central authorities accompanying him forced ‘Ali’s troops to withdraw in full flight, losing a great many killed and others captured. Pushing forward, Aḥmad b. Laythawayh reached Junday Sābūr.\[513\]

Meanwhile, ‘Alī b. Abān left al-Ahwāz to lend Muḥammad b. ‘Ubaydallāh assistance against Aḥmad b. Laythawayh. Muḥammad, with a troop of Kurds and a ragtag collection of others (ṣa‘ālīk), met up with ‘Alī, and, as Muḥammad approached each side proceeded along opposite banks of the Masruqān canal.\[514\] Muḥammad sent one of his aides with three hundred horsemen to join ‘Alī b. Abān. Both men arrived finally at ‘Askar Mukram. Muḥammad went alone to ‘Alī b. Abān, the two men meeting (for awhile) to discuss matters. Upon returning to his camp, Muḥammad sent to ‘Alī al-Qāsim b. ‘Alī and one of the Kurdish chiefs named Ḥāzim and a shaykh called al-Ṭalāqānī from among the associates of (Abū Layth) al-Šaffār; they arrived and greeted ‘Alī. Muḥammad and ‘Alī remained amicable until ‘Alī reached the Fārs bridge (qantarāh) and Muḥammad b. ‘Ubaydallāh entered Tustar. It reached Aḥmad b. Laythawayh’s attention that ‘Alī b. Abān and Muḥammad b. ‘Ubaydallāh planned to assist each other in fighting him, and so he departed from Junday Sābūr and made for al-Sūs.

Now ‘Alī reached the Fārs bridge on Friday. Muḥammad b. ‘Ubay-

\[512\] It is not clear whether the pronoun refers to Muḥammad or to the Zanj leader.
\[513\] Written thus in the text but also found as Jundi Sābūr. See Le Strange, Lands, 238.
\[514\] A canal that left the Dujayl river and rejoined it at a point near the city of ‘Askar Mukram. See Le Strange, Lands, 236–37.
dallāh had promised him to have the preacher make a sermon⁵¹⁵ that
day and invoke blessings upon the leader of the Zanj and ‘Ali from
the minbar⁵¹⁶ of the mosque in Tustar. ‘Ali remained [at the Fārs
bridge], expecting such to happen, and he sent Bahbūd b. ‘Abd al-
Wahhāb to attend the Friday prayer and bring him news of it. When
the prayer session commenced, the preacher rose and invoked bless-
‘Ubaydallāh. Bahbūd returned to ‘Ali with this news. Immediately
‘Ali set out upon his horse and ordered his troops to leave for al-Ah-
wāz, sending them on in front of him with his nephew Muḥammad
b. Śāliḥ, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Kirmānī his deputy, and his sec-
retary. ‘Ali stayed behind until his troops had crossed over the
bridge, and then he destroyed it so that he could not be followed by
horses.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan said: “I was among those of ‘Ali’s troops
who had been sent on ahead. The army traveled swiftly all that
night, reaching ‘Askar Mukram by sunrise. ‘Askar Mukram had nego-
tiated a peace with the abominable one, but now his soldiers broke
the pact, attacking and pillaging the city. ‘Ali b. Abān arrived in the
wake of what the troops had done, found out what they had done, but
was unable to change it, and proceeded directly to al-Ahwāz. When
word of ‘Ali’s withdrawal reached Aḥmad b. Laythawayh, he re-
traced his way toward Tustar. There he clashed with Muḥammad b.
‘Ubaydallāh and his followers. Muḥammad escaped, but the one
called Abū Dā‘ūd al-Ṣu‘luk fell into Aḥmad’s hands, and he was
transported to the court of the al-Mu‘tamid. Aḥmad himself re-
mained in Tustar.”

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan—al-Faḍl b. ‘Adi al-Dārīmi, one of the as-
sociates of the Zanj leader who had been attached to Muḥammad b.
Abān, ‘Ali’s brother, recounted as follows: After Aḥmad b. Laytha-
wayh had settled himself in Tustar, ‘Ali b. Abān set out with his
army toward him. He stopped at a village called Baranjān, and
arranged for scouts to bring him information about Aḥmad. They re-

⁵¹⁵ The sermon (al-khutbah) has a fixed place in the Friday service in the mosque.
It was customary for the preacher to mention the name of the sovereign in the prayer
on behalf of the faithful, thus indicating the preacher’s political opinion or loyalty.
See El.¹ s.v. “Khutba.”

⁵¹⁶ The “pulpit” of a mosque, from which the Friday prayer is given. See El.¹ s.v.
“Masjd.”
turned to tell him that Ibn Laythawayh was already on his way, his forward cavalry having reached a village called al-Bähiliyyin. 'Ali advanced toward Aḥmad, spreading good cheer among his troops, promising them victory, and recounting to them [the exploits] of the abominable one.

When 'Ali reached al-Bähiliyyin, Ibn Laythawayh met him with his cavalry of around four hundred horsemen; they were quickly joined by reinforcements. As the government's cavalry forces were overwhelming in numbers, a group of Arab tribesmen who were on the side of 'Ali b. Abān sought safe-conduct to join Ibn Laythawayh. The remainder of 'Ali's cavalry was routed with only a small detachment of foot soldiers standing firm, most of them too having scattered. The fighting intensified between the two sides and 'Ali b. Abān dismounted and joined the battle by himself on foot with one of his slave soldiers called Ṣafṭ, who was known as the slave of Abū al-Ḥadid, joining him in the fray. Abu Naṣr Salhab and Bāḍr al-Rūmī al-Ṣaʿrānī, who knew 'Ali by sight, spotted him and shouted a warning to the troops. 'Ali fled seeking the safety of the Masrūqān canal. He threw himself into the water, followed by Ṣafṭ who threw himself into the water, followed by Ṣafṭ who threw himself in after 'Ali, but he drowned. 'Ali b. Abān reached Naṣr al-Rūmī, who pulled him out of the water and put him aboard a galley, 'Ali having received a wound in the leg from an arrow. Utterly defeated, he escaped. A large number of Zanj solders and their brave ones had been slain.

In this year al-Fadl b. Ḥishāq b. al-Ḥasan b. al-'Abbās b. Muḥammad led the pilgrimage.517

517. The same person who led the pilgrimage in the previous year.
Among the events taking place this year was the victory of `Uzayz b. al-Sari, the associate of Ya`qūb b. al-Layth, over Muhammad b. Wāsil, who was taken prisoner.

In this year as well there occurred a battle between Mūsā Dāljuwayh and Arab tribesmen in the district of al-Anbār. They defeated and routed him. Abū Ahmad sent his son Ahmad with a group of his commanders to seek out the tribesmen responsible for Mūsā Dāljuwayh's defeat.

This year, too, [Abū Ahmad] al-Dayrānī attacked [Muḥammad] b. Aws. He launched the assault during the night, dispersing his personnel and plundering his camp. Ibn Aws escaped and made his way to Wāṣīṭ.

One of the Farāghinah appeared along the Mosul Road this year indulging in highway robbery. He was finally captured and killed.

Ya`qūb b. al-Layth advanced from Fārs this year and, when he reached al-Nūbandajān, Åhmad b. Laythawayh departed from
Tustar. Then Yaʿqūb this year headed for al-Ahwāz. Before his departure from Tustar, Ahmād had engaged in a battle against the brother of ‘Alī b. Abān, who was defeated; many of his Zanj troops were taken.520

An Account of [the] Battle [at ‘Askar Mukram]521

Following Ibn Laythawayh’s defeat of ‘Alī b. Abān with the Bāhiliyyin in which he had been wounded, ‘Alī reportedly reached al-Ahwāz but, without remaining there, made his way to the camp522 of his master, the Zanj leader. There he was treated for his wounds until he completely recovered.

‘Alī then set out again for al-Ahwāz, despatching at the same time his brother al-Khalil b. Abān and his nephew Abū Sahl Muḥammad b. Sāliḥ with a huge army against Ibn Laythawayh, who at the time was stationed in ‘Askar Mukram. The two men advanced with their forces and were met by Ibn Laythawayh, who was heading toward them about a farsakh from ‘Askar Mukram. The two sides drew upon each other and Ibn Laythawayh, who had prepared an ambush, fell back when fighting flared up. In their zeal to get him, the Zanj pursued him, passing by the ambush Ibn Laythawayh had set up. The ambushers emerged behind the Zanj, who were routed and scattered. Ibn Laythawayh then turned back to attack them and finished the job, while the Zanj returned to base in full flight. Ibn Laythawayh set off for Tustar, taking with him enemy heads. ‘Alī b. Abān sent off to the Masruqān canal against Ahmād b. Laythawayh another army detachment led by Ankalwayh. Ibn Laythawayh despatched thirty of his best cavalry to engage Ankalwayh and, when al-Khalil b. Abān heard of their mission, he laid an ambush for them. They reached his position and he attacked; not one of them escaped, slain to the last man. Their heads were taken to ‘Alī b. Abān in al-Ahwāz and he forwarded them to the abominable one.

Then (Yaʿqūb) al-ṣaffār arrived in al-Ahwāz, while Ibn Laythawayh fled from it.

520. Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil. VII, 307–8, adds the detail that Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth established himself in Junday Sābūr before setting off for al-Ahwāz. Ṭabarī’s account is disjointed, and he mentions this point farther on, at p. 187, below.
521. Popovic, Révolte, 115.
522. This would be a reference to ‘Alī b. Muḥammad’s capital, al-Mukhtārah.
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An Account of [Ya`qūb] al-Ṣaffār’s Activities This Year

When Ya`qūb b. al-Layth reached Junday Sābūr and established himself there, all who were in the service of the central authorities had reportedly moved out of this district. Ya`qūb sent to al-Ahwāz on his behalf a man called al-Ḥiṣn b. al-ʿAnbar. As he approached the city, ʿAli b. Abān, the associate of the Zanj leader, left and set up camp at the Nahr al-Sidrah. ʿḤiṣn entered al-Ahwāz and established his quarters there. His troops and those of ʿAli b. Abān began to make forays against each other, and both sides suffered losses. This continued until ʿAli b. Abān was prepared to set out for al-Ahwāz where he clashed with al-Ḥiṣn and his troops in a vicious encounter in which a large number of Ya`qūb’s troops were killed, cavalry horses captured, and a great deal of booty seized. Al-Ḥiṣn and his followers fled to ʿAskar Mukram, while ʿAli remained in al-Ahwāz confiscating what was left in it. He then returned to the Nahr al-Sidrah and instructed Bahbūd to attack a Kurdish associate of [Ya`qūb] al-Ṣaffār stationed in Dawraq. Bahbūd did as he was ordered and slew a number of his men, taking the Kurd prisoner. However, he acted generously toward the man and released him. After this, ʿAli was expecting Ya`qūb to set out against him, but he did not; instead he sent as support to al-Ḥiṣn b. al-ʿAnbar his brother al-Faḍl b. al-ʿAnbar and ordered them to refrain from confronting the abominable one’s troops in battle and to restrict themselves to al-Ahwāz. Ya`qūb wrote to ʿAli b. Abān seeking to conclude a truce with him so that he might leave his troops in al-Ahwāz. ʿAli rejected this proposal, unless he could transfer food supplies from the city. [Ya`qūb] al-Ṣaffār withdrew, allowing him to move the food supplies while ʿAli in turn withdrew, so Ya`qūb could remove the animal forage in al-Ahwāz. So ʿAli had the food supplies moved and left the forage and the two sides, both ʿAli’s and Ya`qūb’s troops, refrained from interfering with each other.

In this year, the Khārijite Musāwir b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd died.

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523. See Popovic, Révolte, 115–17.
525. Yaqūt, Muʿjam, II, 258.
526. Here without the article.
528. Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, VII, 309, supplies a few more details.
On Friday, the 10th of Dhū al-Qa‘dah of this year (August 24, 877) ʿUbaydallāh b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān died, having fallen from his horse in the main square in a collision with his eunuch, Rashīq. With blood flowing from his nose and ears, he died three hours after his fall. Abū Aḥmad b. al-Mutawwakil performed the obsequies and accompanied the funeral procession.

The following day he appointed al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad as vizier. Then, on the 27th of Dhū al-Qa‘dah (August 11, 877), Mūsā b. Bughā arrived in Sāmarrā, and al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad fled to Baghdad. In his place Sulaymān b. Wahb was appointed vizier, on the 6th of Dhū al-Ḥijjah (August 20, 877). ʿUbaydallāh b. Sulaymān was appointed secretary of al-Mufawwad and al-Muwaffaq, in addition to his role of secretary to Mūsā b. Bughā. The palace of ʿUbaydallāh b. Yaḥyā was presented to Kayghalagh.

In this year the brother of Sharkab drove al-Ḥusayn b. Ṭāhir out of Naysābūr and occupied it. He forced its inhabitants to surrender to him a third of their wealth. Al-Ḥusayn went to Marv, where the brother of the Khwārazm Shāhs appealed to Muhammad b. Ṭāhir.

In this year the Slavs surrendered Luʾluʾah to the tyrant. In this year al-Faḍl b. Ishāq b. al-Ḥasan b. Ismāʿīl led the pilgrimage.

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529. On these developments, see Sourdel, *Vizirat*, I, 309ff.
530. See EI, s.v. “Khwārazm-Shāhs.” Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VII, 310, says it was the son, rather than the brother, who was in Marv.
531. See n. 461, above. “The tyrant” is Ẓābari’s epithet for the Byzantine emperor. Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VII, 308–9, gives more detail, revealing that the fortress was surrendered voluntarily by its garrison because payment of their allotments and supplies were long overdue.
532. This is the same person who led the pilgrimage in the two previous years; his full name is given on p. 167, above.
The events taking place this year included the despatch of an army by Ya‘qūb al-Ṣaffār to al-Ṣaymara. Ya‘qūb marched at the head of the army toward al-Ṣaymara. Šayghūn was arrested and brought to Ya‘qūb, and he died while being held his prisoner.533

On the 11th of al-Muḥarram (September 23, 877) Abū Aḥmad, together with Mūsā b. Bughā assembled the army in al-Qā‘im (in Sāmarra), and it was escorted in public procession by al-Mu‘tamid. Then the two men departed from Sāmarra on the 2nd of Ṣafar (October 14, 877). After they had reached Baghdad, Mūsā b. Bughā died, and he was transported back to Sāmarrā for burial.

In the month of Rabi‘ I (November 11—December 10, 877) Qabīḥah, the mother of al-Mu‘tazz, died.

In this year Ibn al-Dayrānī went to al-Dīnawar,534 where Ibn ‘Iyāḍ

533. Manuscript C adds that he died on the 11th of al-Muḥarram (September 23, 877), though the copyist may have confused it with the line immediately following, on the mustering of the army by Abū Aḥmad, which (by coincidence?) occurred on the same day.

534. A city in the province of Jībāl, between Ḥulwān and Hamadhān. See Le Strange, Lands, 188, 189.
and Dulaf b. ʿAbd al-ʿAziz b. Abi Dulaf united against him, forcing him to flee, after which they seized his property and estates. Ibn al-Dayrānī returned to Ḥulwān in defeat.

In this year as well, the Byzantines captured ʿAbdallāh b. Rashīd b. Kāwus.535

An Account of [the] Capture [of ʿAbdallāh b. Rashīd]

The reason for this was that ʿAbdallāh had entered Byzantine territory with four thousand troops of the Syrian frontier districts (thughūr).536 He ventured to Ḥiṣnayn and al-Maskanin.537 The Muslims seized booty and then set off on the return journey. They had just left al-Badandūn538 when they were surrounded by the army commanders (bitriq)539 of Salūqiyah540 — Qadhaydhīyah, Qurrah, Kawkab, and Kharshanah. The Muslims dismounted and hoisted their animals, and in the fighting all of them were slain, save for five or six hundred who laid on the whips to their riding beasts and escaped. The Byzantines killed many and captured ʿAbdallāh b. Rashīd, who was struck down by numerous blows; he was taken to Luʾluʾah and then on to the tyrant,541 along the post road.

Muḥammad al-Muwallad was made governor of Wāsīṭ this year. Sulaymān b. Jāmiʿ, who gathered the taxes of areas adjacent to Wāsīṭ on behalf of the Zanj leader, engaged Muḥammad in battle, defeated him and, after driving him from Wāsīṭ, occupied it.

An Account of [the] Battle [at Wāsīṭ]542

Sulaymān b. Jāmiʿ had been sent by the leader of the Zanj to the districts of al-Ḥawānīt and the marshlands. Following his defeat of Juʿ-

537. The force led by ʿAbdallāh took one of the most common routes through the Taurus mountains into Byzantine-controlled territory, the Darb al-Salāmah, or Safety Pass, which went through the famous Cilician Gates. See Le Strange, Lands, 134.
538. See Le Strange, Lands, 133, where he transliterates it Badhandūn. This was the place, near Tarsus, where the Caliph al-Maʾmūn died.
539. See Lane, Lexicon, s.v. b-ṭ-r-q; he equates the Byzantine term bitriq with qdʿid “commander” in Muslim military ranks.
540. The ancient Seleucia, southwest of Tarsus. See Le Strange, Lands, 133.
541. Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, VII, 312, uses the more polite expression “king of Rūm.”
lān al-Turki, the central authorities' tax collector, and his battle against Aghartimish, whose army he routed, and his killing Khu-shaysh, whose camp he plundered, Sulaymān wrote to the Zanj leader, seeking permission to come and renew his bond with him and put in order various of his own domestic affairs.

After he had sent the letter, Aḥmad b. Mahdī al-Jubbāʾī advised Sulaymān to attack the forces of Ṭakin al-Bukhārī, who at the time was stationed in Bardūdā. Sulaymān agreed and set out for Bardūdā. He arrived at a spot called Akramahr, which was about five farsakh(s) from Ṭakin’s army camp.

When he reached the place, al-Jubbāʾī said to Sulaymān that in his opinion Sulaymān should remain [in Akramahr] while he would proceed in the boats to attract the enemy toward him, causing them considerable trouble and effort on the way. He said, “By the time they reach you, they will be exhausted, and you can deal with them as you wish.” Sulaymān followed this advice and mustered his cavalry and foot soldiers on the spot, while Aḥmad b. Mahdī set out early in the morning in the galleys. He reached Ṭakin’s camp and fighting broke out for a while as Ṭakin prepared his own cavalry and infantry. Al-Jubbāʾī fell back from him and despatched a young man to inform Sulaymān that Ṭakin’s troops were approaching him with their cavalry. The messenger found that Sulaymān had already begun to follow after al-Jubbāʾī when news was slow in reaching him. The messenger sent him back to his camp, while another messenger from al-Jubbāʾī arrived with the same information. After Sulaymān returned to his troops, he sent off Thaʾlab b. Ḥafs al-Bahrānī and one of the Zanj commanders called Maninā with a detachment of Zanj. They were to set up an ambush in the countryside along the route that Ṭakin’s cavalry would have to take, and Sulaymān ordered them to attack from the rear once they had passed by. When al-Jubbāʾī learned that Sulaymān had strengthened their position with his horsemen and ordered the setting up of an ambush, in a voice loud

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543. See Le Strange, Lands. 41; Le Strange, “Ibn Serapion’s Description,” 271. The Bardudī was a canal issuing from the Tigris and flowing into the great swampland (al-balīkhah). The reference here could be to the canal or to a place of the same name located on it.

544. About 30 km.

545. Throughout the passage describing these events, Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, VII, 313, refers to him as al-Ḥayāṭī.
enough to allow Takin's troops to hear, he addressed his own troops saying, "You have deceived me! Destroyed me! I ordered you not to enter this canal," but you insisted. Now you have put us in this position from which I can see no escape." When Takin's troops heard al-Jubbā'ī's remarks, they eagerly renewed the pursuit, shouting that they had "a bird in a cage."

Al-Jubbā'ī hastened off, with Takin's troops following and raining arrows down upon them. They passed by the spot where the ambush was set, approaching Sulaymān's camp where he himself was concealed behind a wall with his horsemen and soldiers. Sulaymān then advanced to meet the enemy army as the ambush emerged behind the cavalry and al-Jubbā'ī turned the fronts of his galleys around (to face) those (of the enemy) who were on the canal. Victory over the enemy was achieved on all fronts. The Zanj pursued them, killing and plundering, for a distance of some three farsakhs. Then Sulaymān stopped and said to al-Jubbā'ī, "Let's turn back. We have won easily and are in good shape. Security is preferable to anything else." To which al-Jubbā'ī replied, "On the contrary! Our trick worked well on them and we have made their hearts faint. The best thing now is to take them again by surprise this very night. Perhaps we could drive them out of their camp and scatter them." Sulaymān put al-Jubbā'ī's advice into action and marched toward Takin's camp, reaching it at sunset. He attacked, and Takin and his followers responded as a ferocious battle developed. Then Sulaymān and his troops finally withdrew from the fighting. He halted to restore order to his troops and then despatched Shibl with a detachment of horsemen, together with some foot soldiers, into the countryside. He ordered al-Jubbā'ī to sail his galleys along the canal. Sulaymān set off with his cavalry and infantry, leading them himself, and he reached Takin without obstacle. They, however, withdrew entirely, abandoning their camp. Sulaymān seized as booty all that could be found and then burned the camp. Upon returning to his own camp with all the booty that had been gathered, he found a letter awaiting him from the abominable one granting him permission to return home. Sulaymān left al-Jubbā'ī behind in charge. He took with him the banners found in Takin's camp, the barges seized from Abū Tamīm, Khu-

546. Literally "entrance" or "mouth," here clearly meaning a canal.
547. Literally bulbul, a nightingale.
548. About 18 km.
The Events of the Year 264

Yahyā b. Khalaf's al-Jubba'i left for Mazrawān in the galleys and with the troops over which Sulaymān had given him charge. This was reportedly after Sulaymān b. Jāmi' had departed from his camp following the battle with Takin and gone to the leader of the Zanj. Al-Jubba'i headed there in search of supplies, together with a group of blacks, but Ju‘lān’s troops challenged him and seized the boats accompanying him; they routed him and he returned in defeat to Tahitha. There he received letters from villagers informing him that when Manjūr, a mawlā of the Commander of the Faithful, and Muhammad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥabīb al-Yashkūri learned of Sulaymān b. Jāmi‘s absence from Tahitha, they joined forces, assembled their soldiers and set upon the village, killing and burning, and then departed. Those who escaped from the village went to another called al-Ḥajjājiyyah and remained there.

Al-Jubba'i wrote to Sulaymān with the information contained in the villagers’ communication and also mentioned his encounter with Ju‘lān’s troops. The Zanj leader bade Sulaymān to hasten back to Tahitha. He arrived there and gave it about that he intended to go into battle against Ju‘lān and mustered his army in preparation. Al-Jubba'i was sent in advance of Sulaymān with the galleys containing horses and men and with orders to reach Mazrawān and station himself opposite Ju‘lān’s army. He was instructed to let the horses be exposed to graze where Ju‘lān’s troops could see them, but (al-Jubba'i) was not to attack them.

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549. Ibn al-Athir, Kamīl, VII, 314, says this event occurred in the year 263.
550. Popovic, Révolte, 118–119.
551. This subheading is not in the form usually employed by Tabari.
552. Manuscripts B and C have this reading, albeit a corrupt one, for al-Jubba'i's name was Ahmad b. Mahdi.
553. These may have been from the village of Marwān, which, as noted on p. 177, above, was near Tahithā.
Sulaymān, for his part, rode out with his entire army, except for a handful that he left behind in his camp, and entered the region of the Ahwar. He at last came upon two such stretches of open water called al-Rabbah and al-ʿAmraqah. Sulaymān then headed for Muḥammad b. ʿAli b. Habib, who was at that time at a spot called Tallfakhkhār. When he reached him, a major battle broke out. Many were slain and Sulaymān was able to seize a large number of horses and abundant booty. He killed a brother of Muḥammad b. ʿAli, though Muḥammad himself escaped. Sulaymān set out on return journey and when he was in the open countryside between al-Bazzāq and the village, horsemen of the Banū Shaybān appeared. Now Sulaymān had struck down one of the chiefs of the Banū Shaybān in Tallfakhkhār, killing him, taking one of his young sons prisoner, and confiscating the mare he was riding. News of this had reached the tribe, and so now they confronted Sulaymān in the open with four hundred horsemen. At the time Sulaymān had marched against Ibn Ḥabib, he had sent for his deputy in al-Ṭaff, ʿUmayr b. ʿAmmār, to act as guide owing to his knowledge of the roads. When Sulaymān spotted the horsemen of the Banū Shaybān, he sent off all his troops leaving ʿUmayr b. ʿAmmār on his own. The Banū Shaybān fought and killed him, carrying off his head when they left. The abominable one was greatly distressed at the news of ʿUmayr’s death. Sulaymān had transported to the abominable one all that had been acquired in the territory of Muḥammad b. ʿAli b. Ḥabib, this occurring at the end of Rajab (March 9 – April 7, 878) of this year.

In Shaʿbān (April 8 – May 6, 878) Sulaymān took a detachment of his troops to Qaryat Ḥassān, where, at the time, one of the central authorities’ commanders called Jaysh b. Ḥamartakin was stationed. Sulaymān attacked the village, causing Jaysh to flee in fear and allowing Sulaymān to capture, plunder, and burn it. He took with him horses (as booty) and returned to his own camp.

Next, on the 10th of Shaʿbān (April 17, 878), Sulaymān left for the

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554. Ibn Serapion describes a hawr (pl. ahwār) as a great sheet of clear water in which no reeds grow. See Le Strange, “Ibn Serapion’s Description,” 297–98; El’s.v. “Maisān.”

555. The reading is uncertain.

556. The name of the place is not specified, but it may refer to the village of Marwān, as earlier in this passage.

557. A certain area in the district of al-Kūfah. See Yaqūt, Muʿjam, IV, 36.

558. A village between Dayr al-ʿĀqūl and Wāsit. See Yaqūt, Muʿjam, II, 266.
region of al-Hawānit and sent al-Jubbā'ī upstream in the galleys toward Bar[r] Musāwir. There he found a number of large boats, which Ju’lān had wanted to use to reach the Nahr Abān; they contained his horses, with which he used to go out hunting. Al-Jubbā’ī attacked the vessels, killed the crews, and seized the horses, of which there were twelve, and then returned to Țahithā.

On the 26th of Sha’bān (May 3, 878) Sulaymān attacked Tall Ru-mānā. The inhabitants evacuated the place, and Sulaymān gathered all he could in booty and returned to his camp. Next, on the 10th of Ramaḍān (May 16, 878), he went to al-Jazirah, where Abbās was at the time, while Ju’lān was in Mazrawān. Sulaymān had written to the abominable one, asking that he send him barges; he provided ten with a man from ‘Abbādān in charge called al-Ṣaqr b. al-Ḥusayn. When al-Ṣaqr reached Sulaymān with the barges, he pretended to be planning to attack Ju’lān. The news that Sulaymān intended to advance on him soon reached Ju’lān’s ears, and thus his main concern was to protect his own camp. But, as Sulaymān approached Abbā’s location, he turned aside to Abbā and attacked him, thus taking him by surprise, when he was not expecting him. Sulaymān succeeded in achieving his goal and in acquiring six barges.

Muḥammad b. al-Hasan said—Jabbāsh the eunuch said that Sulaymān actually found eight barges in Abbā’s camp, and two of them, which were on the shore, he burned. He seized horses, weapons, and other booty and returned to his own camp.

Sulaymān next made it known that he intended attacking Takīn al-Bukhārī. To this end he equipped some boats with [the assistance of] al-Jubbā’ī and Ja‘far b. Ahmad, a maternal uncle of Ankalay, son of the accursed abominable one. But, when the boats neared Ju’lān’s camp, Ju’lān pursued, attacked, and seized possession of them. Sulaymān then launched an assault on Ju’lān from the landward side and drove him to flight toward al-Ruṣāfah. He recovered

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559. See Le Strange, “Ibn Serapion’s Description,” 46.
560. The reading is very uncertain. See p. 176, above.
561. Popovic, Révolte, 117, queries whether this person might be one of Ju’lān’s officers. It is possible, too, that he is same Abbā al-Turkī, who has already been reported as operating in this area. See p. 178, above.
562. Halm, Traditionen, 55, notes that Ankalay is a Persian name, which supports the view that the Zanj leader, ‘Ali b. Muḥammad, was of Persian origin.
563. A town lying on the east bank of the Tigris below Wāsīt. See Le Strange, Lands, 40; Yaqūt, Mu’jam, II, 782.
the boats, as well as twenty-seven horses, two foals of Ju`lān’s, and three mules, to say nothing of considerable quantities of other booty and weapons. Once again Sulaymān returned to Ṭahitha.

Muḥammad (b. al-Ḥasan) said that Jabbāsh denied any mention of Takīn in this context; nor did he know anything concerning him from the evidence of [al-Ṣaqr b. al-Ḥusayn] al-ʿAbbādānī but claimed that Sulaymān’s only objective was against Ju`lān.564 In fact, Sulaymān’s troops had no information of him until it was rumored that he and al-Jubbāʾī had both been killed, which caused great anxiety among his followers.565 Then hard news emerged of developments in the fighting against Ju`lān. They calmed down and waited quietly until Sulaymān came to them. Sulaymān wrote to the abominable one of his exploits and sent him banners and weapons.

In Dhū al-Qa‘dah (July 5 – August 3, 878) Sulaymān went to al-Ruṣāfah and attacked Maṭār b. Jāmiʿ, who was stationed there. He seized much booty, burned and plundered al-Ruṣāfah, and sent banners to the abominable one. On the 5th of Dhū al-Ḥijjah 264 (August 8, 878) Sulaymān arrived at the abominable one’s city.566 He stayed to celebrate the feast567 and remain at home. Maṭār b. Jāmiʿ went and attacked the village of al-Ḥajjājiyyah, taking a number of its inhabitants captive. One of these was Sulaymān’s religious judge called Saʿīd b. al-Sayyid al-ʿAdawi, who was captured and sent to Wāsiṭ along with Thaʿlab b. Ḥafṣ [al-Bahrānī] and four commanders who were with him. They had gone to al-Ḥarjaliyyah, about two and a half farsakhs from Ṭahitha, when al-Jubbāʾī set out with horses and men to thwart Maṭār. Al-Jubbāʾī arrived in the district, however, after Maṭār had already committed his acts there, and so al-Jubbāʾī returned and sent the news to Sulaymān, who arrived on Tuesday, the 28th of Dhū al-Ḥijjah of this year (August 31, 878).

564. There appears to be some confusion or misunderstanding among the sources Ṭabari is using here. There is a parallel, however, between Sulaymān’s two campaigns against Abbā and Ju`lān, each of which was preceded by the spread of “disinformation” on his real intention. Jabbāsh seems not to have known about the first attack against Abbā, when Sulaymān had pretended to be campaigning against Ju`lān.

565. Apparently Sulaymān had left his main army and was using only the boats and the troops on them in his forays against Abbā and al-Jubbāʾī.

566. That is, al-Mukhtārah.

567. That is, the feast of the sacrifice, the major celebration of the pilgrimage. See El. s.vv. “Ḥadjū,” “Īd al-ʿAdhā.”
Ju‘lān was removed from his post, and Aḥmad b. Laythawayh arrived and stationed himself in al-Shadidiyyah.\textsuperscript{568}

Sulaymān ventured to the Nahr Abān where he discovered one of Ibn Laythawayh’s commanders called Ṭurnāj,\textsuperscript{569} whom he attacked and killed.

Muḥammad (b. al-Ḥasan)—Jabbāsh said that the one killed at that place was Binak; and, as for Ṭurnāj, he was slain in Māzrawān.

Next Sulaymān reached al-Ruṣāfah, where the army of Maṭar b. Jāmi‘ was then located. Sulaymān attacked and plundered his camp, capturing from it seven barges, two of which he burned. That was in the month of Rabi‘ II (December 11, 877–January 8, 878) of the year 264.\textsuperscript{570}

Muḥammad—Jabbāsh said that six barges were seized and that this conflict was at al-Shadidiyyah.

Following this, Sulaymān ventured forth with five barges aboard which he had arrayed the very finest of his commanders and troops. Takin al-Bukhārī engaged him in battle in al-Shadidiyyah, as Ibn Laythawayh had by then already proceeded to the district of al-Kūfah and Junbulā‘. Takin vanquished Sulaymān, seizing his barges with their war machines, weapons, and fighters. In this encounter the most experienced of Sulaymān’s commanders were slain. Ibn Laythawayh afterward marched to al-Shadidiyyah and administered these districts until Abū Aḥmad appointed Muḥammad al-Muwal-lad governor of Wāṣīt.\textsuperscript{571}

Muḥammad—Jabbāsh said that, when Ibn Laythawayh arrived in al-Shadidiyyah, Sulaymān marched upon him and for two days they fought against each other. Finally, on the third day Sulaymān fell back and Ibn Laythawayh and his followers rushed to pursue him. Then Sulaymān returned to the attack and threw Ibn Laythawayh into the mouth of the Bardūdā canal; he saved himself after nearly drowning. Sulaymān captured seventeen of his riding animals.

\textsuperscript{568} Ju‘lān had been prefect of Wāṣīt and was replaced by Aḥmad b. Laythawayh.

\textsuperscript{569} The reading is uncertain.

\textsuperscript{570} Unless Sulaymān attacked al-Ruṣāfah twice in the same year, this account is out of place in the chronological ordering of events. Tabārī has already reported, p. 196, above, Sulaymān’s defeat of Maṭar b. Jāmi‘ in al-Ruṣāfah in Dhū al-Qa‘dah, toward the end of the year.

\textsuperscript{571} That is, replacing Aḥmad Ibn Laythawayh, who had held the post. See Popovic, Révolte, 117.
[Muḥammad] continued, saying that Sulaymān communicated with the abominable one requesting reinforcements. The Zanj leader despatched al-Khalil b. Abān and al-Mudhawwab572 to him with about fifteen hundred horsemen. Upon the arrival of these reinforcements, Sulaymān straightaway went to engage Muḥammad al-Muwallad in battle. In the course of it Muḥammad fled and the Zanj occupied Wāsiṭ. A large number of persons were killed and the city was pillaged and burned. Kanjur al-Bukhārī was in Wāsiṭ at the time and he held on, putting up a defense throughout that day until the afternoon, when he was killed. The ones who led the horsemen in Sulaymān’s army that day were al-Khalil b. Abān and ‘Abdallāh, who was known as al-Mudhawwab. Al-Jubbā’ī was in charge of the galleys; al-Zanjī b. Mihrān was in charge of the barges. Sulaymān b. Jāmi‘ led his black commanders and their infantry; Sulaymān b. Mūsā al-Sha‘rānī and his two brothers led his horses and foot soldiers along with Sulaymān b. Jāmi‘. The entire force performed to perfection.573

Sulaymān b. Jāmi‘ later left Wāsiṭ and with his entire army headed for Junbulā’, causing despoliation and destruction. Discord broke out between him and al-Khalil b. Abān who wrote to his brother ‘Ali about it. ‘Ali b. Abān begged the Zanj leader to relieve al-Khalil of his duties with Sulaymān, and permission was given for al-Khalil to return to the abominable one’s city with ‘Ali b. Abān’s associates and slaves. Al-Mudhawwab remained behind with Sulaymān in charge of the Arab tribesmen. Sulaymān stayed in his camp for some days and then moved to the Nahr al-Amīr where he reestablished his camp. He despatched al-Jubbā’ī and al-Mudhawwab to Junbulā’, where they remained for ninety days while Sulaymān was encamped at the Nahr al-Amīr.

Muḥammad—Jabbāsh said that Sulaymān’s camp was in al-Sha‘didiyyah.

In this year Sulaymān b. Wahb departed from Baghdad for Sāmarrā. He was accompanied by al-Ḥasan b. Wahb, while Aḥmad b. al-Muwaffaq, Masrūr al-Balkhi, and the army commanders escorted them in public procession. When Sulaymān reached Sāmarrā, al-Mu‘tamid grew angry with him and imprisoned him, bound in fet-

572. Tabari enlightens us a few lines below. This man’s name was ‘Abdallāh, his nickname al-Mudhawwab, literally “melted (fat).”
573. Literally “as one hand.”
The Events of the Year 164

Al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad was made vizier on the 27th of Dhū al-Qa‘dah (July 31, 878).\[1927\]

[Al-Ḥusayn b. Muʿāwiyah] left Baghdad with ‘Abdallāh b. Sulaymān.\[574\] As he approached Sāmarrā, al-Muʿtamid transferred to the west bank [of the Tigris] and assembled his camp there, while Abū ʿĀhmard and his entourage settled on the island of al-Muʿayyad. Messengers went back and forth\[576\] between the two. A few days after the beginning of Dhū al-Ḥijjah al-Muʿtamid boarded a fire boat\[577\] on the Tigris, as his brother Abū ʿĀhmard headed toward him in a light rivercraft. Then the Caliph bestowed robes of honor upon Abū ʿĀhmard, Masrūr al-Balkhī, Kayghalagh, and ʿAḥmad b. Mūsā b. Bughā. On Tuesday, the 8th of Dhū al-Ḥijjah, which was yawm al-tarwiyah\[578\] (August 11, 878), Abū ʿĀhmard’s troops crossed over the river to al-Muʿtamid’s camp.

Sulaymān b. Wahb was released from prison, and al-Muʿtamid returned to the Jawsaq palace. Al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad fled with ʿĀhmard b. Ṣāliḥ b. Shirzād, and instructions were given for the confiscation of their property and that of their supporters.\[579\] ʿĀhmard b. Abī al-ʿĀṣ-bagḥ was imprisoned. The army commanders stationed in Sāmarrā fled to Takrit.\[580\] Abū Mūsā b. al-Mutawakkil went into hiding but reappeared thereafter. Those commanders who had gone to Takrit went farther on, to Mosul, and began to help themselves to the tax revenues.

This year the pilgrimage was led by Ḥārūn b. Muḥammad b. Ḳaḥf b. Mūsā b. ʿĪsā al-Ḥāshimi al-Kūfī.

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574. See Sourdel, *Vizirat*, I, 315–26, for details.
576. Ibn al-Athir, *Kāmil*, VII, 316, reproduces this passage from Ṭabarī almost verbatim, though with certain shifts in the order of sentences. He glosses this sentence, stating that al-Muʿtamid was angry with al-Muwaqqaf, and then an agreement was reached.
578. Literally “day of providing oneself with water” the 8th of Dhū al-Ḥijjah, during the annual pilgrimage ceremonies. See El, s.v. “Hadjijj.”
Among the events taking place during this year was a battle in the district of Junbulā' between Aḥmad b. Laythawayh and Sulaymān b. Jāmi', the Zanj master's commander.

An Account of the Battle of Junbulā'

Sulaymān b. Jāmi' had reportedly written to the Zanj leader, informing him of the situation on Nahr al-Zuhayrī. He requested permission for expenses to dig a canal from it into the Sawād al-Kūfah and the plain. Sulaymān informed him the distance was not great and that once the canal was dug it would be easy for the Zanj leader to arrange shipments of food supplies from the districts of Junbulā' and the Sawād al-Kūfah. The abominable one sent him a man called Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-BAṣrī to help in carrying out the task. He

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582. See Popovic, Révolte, 118; Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, VII, 322.
583. Reading al-barāz, according to Tabari, Addenda et Emendanda, DCCXCII, rather than al-barār, as in the text.
wrote to Sulaymān to supply all his needs in terms of expenses and lodging with him and his army until the task for which he had been sent was completed. Sulaymān moved his entire force to stay in al-Sharītīyyah for almost a month and set the laborers to work on the canal. During this time Sulaymān did not touch [the provisions] at hand belonging to the villagers from nearby Khusrū Sābūr. Rather, supplies reached him from the district of al-Ṣīn and adjacent areas, until the moment when Ibn Laythawayh, Abū Ahmad’s financial administrator over Junbulā’, attacked Sulaymān and killed fourteen of his commanders.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan said that forty-seven commanders had been killed and untold numbers of others. Sulaymān’s camp was pillaged and his boats, which were moored in this canal that he was engaged in digging, were burned. Sulaymān withdrew in utter defeat to Ṭahīthā, where he remained. Al-Jubbāʾi arrived in the wake of the defeat and later went back upstream to stay in Barratīmurtā, leaving a boat master called al-Zanji b. Mihrān in charge of the barges.

The central authorities had sent [Abū Ḥamzah] Nuṣayr to have Shāmrāj sent in bonds to the court and appointed him to Shāmrāj’s duties. After this, Nuṣayr came upon al-Zanji b. Mihrān on the Barratīmurtā canal and seized nine of his barges, six of which al-Zanji was able to recover.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan said that Jabbāsh denied that al-Zanji b. Mihrān had recovered any of the barges, claiming that Nuṣayr got away with them all.

Al-Zanji headed for Ṭahīthā, forwarding a letter to Sulaymān before he arrived. Sulaymān stayed in Ṭahīthā until news reached him that al-Muwaffaq was coming his way.

In al-Muharram of this year (September 3–October 2, 878) Ahmad b. Ṭulūn fought against Simā the Tall in Antioch, besieging him until he conquered the city and killed Simā.

In al-Muharram of this year [September 3 – October 2, 878] Muḥammad al-Muwallad joined Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth. The central authorities ordered the confiscation of his money and lands.

In Jumādā I of this year [December 30, 878–January 28, 879] Arab tribesmen killed Juʿlān the ruffian [al-ʿayyar] in Dimimmā.⁵⁹⁴ He had been providing protection for a caravan when he was killed. The central authorities despatched a group of mawlās to seek out the perpetrators of the crime, but they fled. The searchers got as far as ʿAyn al-Tamr⁵⁹⁵ and then returned to Baghdad, a number of them having died of the gripping cold that lasted for some days, with snow even falling in Baghdad.

Abū Aḥmad ordered the imprisonment in his palace of Sulaymān and his son ʿUbaydallāh,⁵⁹⁶ along with a number of their relations. The palaces of some of these latter were plundered, but a guard was ordered to protect the palaces of Sulaymān and his son. Their estates and wealth, along with the wealth and estates of their relatives, with the exception of Aḥmad b. Sulaymān, were confiscated. A settlement was later arranged with Sulaymān and his son ʿAbdallāh for the sum of nine hundred thousand dinars, and they were moved to a location where anyone they wished could come to visit.

This same year as well witnessed the assembly of troops of Mūsā b. Utāmish, Ishāq b. Kundājiq, Yanghajūr b. Urkhūz, and al-Fāḍl b. Mūsā b. Bughā at the Shammāsiyyah Gate. They crossed over the [main] Baghdad bridge⁵⁹⁷ and ventured to al-Safinatayn, followed by

bic chronicles, between Antioch in Syria and other places of the same name in Asia Minor—e.g., Antioch of Pisidia. Here the locale intended is Antioch in Syria, the ancient Antiochia; this is confirmed on p. 204, below, and by the report in Ibn al-Athir, Kāmil, VII, 324, that, when Ibn Tulūn left Egypt for Syria in this year he appointed his son ʿAbbās his deputy. See El.¹ s.v. “Antākiya.”

⁵⁹³. In 254/868 his father had sent him to Junday ʿĀbīrā and Tustār to collect taxes. See Ṭabarī, III, 1697.
⁵⁹⁵. The district of ʿAyn al-Tamr lay west of the Euphrates; the fortified town itself was situated just south of Hit. See Le Strange, Lands, 65, 81.
⁵⁹⁶. The text has incorrect ʿAbdallāh; see Sourdel, Vizirat, I, 311.
⁵⁹⁷. See n. 21, above.
Ahmad b. al-Muwaffaq. 598 They did not return but encamped at Sar-
sar.599

On the 17th of Jumādā II (February 14, 879) Abū Ahmad ap-
pointed Saʿīd b. Makhlad as his secretary. After having bestowed
upon him a robe of honor, Saʿīd traveled to the commanders in Sar-
sar. Abū Ahmad next sent his son Ahmād to them. He discussed
matters with them, and they returned together, after which robes of
honor were bestowed upon them.

According to report, five of the Byzantine commanders, with
thirty thousand troops, marched toward Adhanah. 600 Having
reached the oratory, they captured Urkhūz, who had been the gov-
ernor of the frontier districts, then removed from his post, but had
stayed on as part of the frontier guard. Some four hundred men were
captured with him, and the Byzantines killed some fourteen
hundred men who had rallied to them. The Byzantines withdrew af-
after four days; this was in Jumādā I (January 2, 879) of this year.

In Rajab (February 27 – March 28, 879) of this year Mūsā b. Utā-
mish, Ishāq b. Kundājiq, and Yanghājūr b. Urkhūz assembled troops
on Nahr Dayālā.602

In this same year Ahmād b. ʿAbdallāh al-Khujustānī conquered
Naysābūr. Al-Ḥusayn b. Ṭāhir, Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir’s prefect, went
to Marv and settled there. The brother of Sharkāb al-Jamālāl was be-
tween al-Ḥusayn and al-Khujustānī.

Ṭūs was devastated this year.

Ismāʿīl b. Bulbul was appointed vizier.603

Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth died this year604 in al-Ahwāz and was suc-
cceeded by his brother ʿAmr b. al-Layth, who wrote to the central au-
thorities to his obedience and loyalty. Ahmād b. Abī al-Aṣbāgh was

598. Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, VII, 326, who reproduces this passage with glosses, says
that al-Muwaffaq prevented the return of the soldiers.

599. A town on the Sar sar canal, reached by way of the southern road leading to al-
Kūfah from Baghdad. See Le Strange, Lands, 32.

600. The modern Adana. See Le Strange, Lands, 128, 130 – 31. It was one of the line
of fortresses (al-thughūr) defending Syria and was situated near the northern coast of
the bay of Alexandretta; El, s.vv. “Adana,” “al-Awāṣim.”

601. Al-musallā.

602. Having moved from their camp in Sar sar [see p. 174, above] to the eastern bank
of the Tigris, to the canal that irrigated the gardens of east Baghdad. See Le Strange,
Lands, 39 [vocalized Diyālā].

603. See Sourdel, Vizirat, 315 – 16.

604. See Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, VII, 325, for additional details.
despatched to him in Dhū al-Qa‘dah (June 25–July 24, 879) of this year.

A group of tribesmen of the Banū Asad this year killed ʿAli b. Masrūr al-Balkhi on the Mecca Road before he arrived at al-Mughithah. Abū Ahmad had appointed Muḥammad b. Masrūr al-Balkhi governor of the Mecca Road, and it was he who appointed his brother ʿAli b. Masrūr to the post.

The Byzantine emperor sent ʿAbdallāh b. Rashīd b. Kāwus, the tax collector of the frontier districts who had been captured by him, to Aḥmad b. Tūlūn, along with many other Muslim prisoners. The emperor also sent him a number of manuscripts as a gift.

A detachment of Zanj went to Jabbul in thirty galleys, seized four boats containing foodstuffs, and then returned.

Al-ʿAbbās b. Aḥmad b. Tūlūn and his followers took themselves off to Barqah in defiance of his father, Aḥmad who, according to report, had left him in charge of his administrative duties in Egypt when he departed for Syria. Upon Aḥmad’s return from Syria to Egypt, Al-ʿAbbās took what money there was in the Egyptian treasury, as well as furnishings and other things belonging to his father, and left for Barqah. Aḥmad despatched a force against him, which captured and brought al-ʿAbbās back. Aḥmad imprisoned him in his own quarters. Because of this action of al-ʿAbbās, a group of men who had joined up with him in this venture were killed.

The Zanj this year occupied al-Nuʿmāniyyah, burned its market and most of the inhabitants’ dwellings, and took prisoners. They next moved to Jarjarāyā, causing people of the Sawād region to enter Baghdad.

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606. For further details, see Ibn al-Athir, *Kāmil*, VII, 324–25; EI, s.v. “Barḳa.” The town and region attached to it were the classical Cyrenaica.


608. Ibn al-Athir, *Kāmil*, VII, 325, where it is stated that al-ʿAbbās was still in prison in the year 268/881–82.


611. This marked the northernmost point of the Zanj expansion, the closest to Baghdad that their campaigns brought them.
During the course of this year Abū Aḥmad made ʿAmr b. al-Layth governor of Khūrāsān, Fārs, ʿIsfahān, Sijistān, Kirmān, and al-Sind,612 and had the formal investiture declared in the presence of witnesses. Ahmad b. Abi al-ʿAṣbagh was sent to ʿAmr with the document of his investiture, together with a contract and robe of honor.

In Dhū al-Hijjah (July 25 – August 22, 8791 of this year Masrūr al-Balkhī marched on al-Nīl,613 and ʿAbdallāh b. Laythawayh withdrew from it with his brother’s troops. ʿAbdallāh had been in open conflict with the central authorities and had gone with his followers to Aḥmadābād. He was pursued by Masrūr al-Balkhī, who intended to engage him in battle. Then ʿAbdallāh b. Laythawayh and his followers unexpectedly came to Masrūr on foot and yielded to him in obedience and loyalty. ʿAbdallāh b. Laythawayh, with his sword and girdle hung about his neck, proffered his apologies to Masrūr and swore an oath that he had been incited to do what he did. His apology was accepted, and robes of honor were ordered bestowed upon him and several of his commanders.

Takin al-Bukhārī ventured forth to al-Ahwāz as vanguard for Masrūr al-Balkhī.

An Account of Takin’s Arrival in al-Ahwāz

According to Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, Masrūr al-Balkhī appointed Takin al-Bukhārī governor of the districts of al-Ahwāz at the time Abū Aḥmad had appointed Masrūr over them.615 Takin set out and arrived at al-Ahwāz. ʿAlī b. Abān had already reached there and was on his way to Tustar, which he surrounded with a large force of his Zanj troops and others. The populace was terrified at the development and was about to surrender the city when, in this situation, Takin arrived. He had not even had time to change from his travel attire when he went into battle against ʿAlī b. Abān and his troops. Defeat was the lot of the Zanj, as they were slain, routed, and scat-

612. Ibn al-Athir, Kāmil, VII, 326, adds to these posts that of commandant of police in Baghdad.

613. A town on Nahr al-Nīl, which was a continuation, of the Great Šarāt canal west of the town; it flowed from the Euphrates to the Tigris below Baghdad. See Le Strange, Lands, 73; Le Strange, “Ibn Serapion’s Description,” 261.


615. See Popovic, Révolte, 119.
tered. ‘Ali was forced to retreat with the remnants of his shattered forces. This was the famous battle of Bāb Kūdak616 at Tustar, after which Takin al-Bukhārī returned and settled in the city. Many freebooters [ṣa‘ālīk] and others swelled his forces. ‘Ali b. Abān also set out for Tustar with a sizable collection of his troops and encamped on the eastern side of the Masruqān canal. He placed his brother on the western side, together with a troop of horse and Zanj infantry. He sent on ahead a number of the Zanj commanders, among them Ankluwayh and Ḥusayn al-Ḥammāmī and others, and ordered them to station themselves at the Fārs bridge (qantarah). Information about ‘Ali b. Abān’s arrangements reached Takin by means of a slave called Waṣīf al-Rūmī, who was a fugitive from ‘Ali b. Abān’s army. He reported on the enemy’s position at the Fārs bridge, on their indulgence in wine drinking, and on the dispersal of their troops to gather food. So during the night Takin made his way toward them with a detachment of troops and attacked, killing from among their commanders Ankalwayh, Ḥusayn al-Ḥammāmī, Abū Ṣāliḥ Mufarrāj, and Andarūn. The rest fled and caught up with al-Khalil b. Abān, telling him what had happened to them. Takin then ventured along the eastern side of the Masruqān and eventually found ‘Ali b. Abān with a detachment of troops. But ‘Ali did not pause to fight and withdrew, although a slave called Ja‘farawayh from ‘Ali’s cavalry was taken captive. ‘Ali and al-Khalil returned with their detachments to al-Ahwāz, while Takin went back to Tustar. ‘Ali wrote to Takin to request he refrain from killing Ja‘farawayh, and so he was imprisoned. There then occurred an exchange of messages and courtesies between ‘Ali and Takin, news of which reached Masrūr, who thoroughly disapproved. Masrūr even heard that Takin had besmirched his loyalty by going over to ‘Ali b. Abān.

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan—Muhammad b. Dinār—Muḥammad b. Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan b. ‘Ali al-Ma‘mūnī al-Bādhghīṣi, who was one of the associates of Takin al-Bukhārī, said that when Masrūr heard the news of Takin’s audacious behavior against him, he paused until he learned the true state of affairs and then set out toward the districts of al-Ahwāz, making a show of his pleasure with and approval of Takin. He took the road to Shābarzān617 and

616. The reading is very uncertain, Manuscript B having k-d-d, C m-r-dh-k, and Ibn al-Athir, Kāmil, VII, 323, Kūrak.
617. The reading is uncertain.
thence to al-Sūs. Takin already knew what Masrūr had heard about him, and this distressed him very much, as well as the group of his commanders who had followed in Masrūr’s company. Messages went back and forth between Masrūr and Takin until Takin felt safe and secure. Masrūr went to Wādī Tustar, where he sent for Takin, who crossed over to greet Masrūr. Masrūr ordered that his sword be removed and that he be placed in custody. When Takin’s army saw that, they immediately dispersed, a section of them making for the territory of the Zanj leader, another section joining the Kurd Muḥammad b. ‘Ubaydallāh. When Masrūr heard of this [reaction], he extended a safe-conduct to all who remained of Takin’s army, and they joined him.

Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan al-Ma’mūnī said, “I was among those who went to Masrūr’s camp when he handed Takin over to Ibrāhim b. Ju‘lān. Takin remained in his custody until his appointed time arrived and he died.” Some of the affair of Masrūr and Takin that we have mentioned occurred in the year 265 (878–79) and some in the year 266 (879–80).

The pilgrimage this year was led by Hārūn b. Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Mūsā b. ‘Īsā al-Ḥāshimi.

In this year as well, a detachment of Zanj under Abū al-Mughirah b. ‘Īsā b. Muḥammad al-Makhzūmī attacked Mecca.\textsuperscript{618}

\textsuperscript{618} See Popovic, Révolte, 120, who queries whether Ṭabāri intends “attack,” rather than “conquer,” which is what the Arabic word mutaghalliban suggests.
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The index contains all proper names of persons, places, and tribal and other groups, as well as topographical data and most transliterated technical terms that occur in the Translator's Foreword, the text, and the footnotes, except that only names belonging to the medieval and earlier periods are listed for the footnotes. When a name occurs in both the text and the footnotes on the same page, only the page number is given. The definite article, the abbreviation b. (for 'ibn "son") and bt. (for 'ibn "daughter"), and everything in parentheses have been disregarded for the purposes of alphabetization.

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