

The  
History of al-Ṭabarī

VOLUME XXXV

The Crisis  
of the  
ʿAbbāsīd Caliphate



---

TRANSLATED BY GEORGE SALIBA

**This page intentionally left blank.**

**This page intentionally left blank.**

***THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ***

**AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION**

---

**VOLUME XXXV**

*The Crisis of the ʿAbbāsīd Caliphate*

**THE CALIPHATES OF AL-MUSTAʿĪN AND AL-MUʿTAZZ**

**A.D. 862–869/A.H. 248–255**



SUNY

SERIES IN NEAR EASTERN STUDIES

Said Amir Arjomand, Editor

---

The History of al-Ṭabarī

***Editorial Board***

Ihsan Abbas, American University of Beirut

C. E. Bosworth, The University of Manchester

Jacob Lassner, Wayne State University, Detroit (*Supervising Editor*)

Franz Rosenthal, Yale University

Ehsan Yar-Shater, Columbia University (*General Editor*)





**Bibliotheca Persica**  
Edited by Ehsan Yar-Shater

---

---

**The History of al-Ṭabarī**  
*(Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk)*

VOLUME XXXV

**THE CRISIS**  
**OF THE ʿABBĀSĪD CALIPHATE**

translated and annotated  
by

**George Saliba**

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

State University of New York Press

---

The preparation of this volume was made possible by a grant from the Translation Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent federal agency, and by the Persian Heritage Foundation.

Published by  
State University of New York Press, Albany  
© 1985 State University of New York

All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America

No part of this book may be used or reproduced  
in any manner whatsoever without written permission  
except in the case of brief quotations embodied in  
critical articles and reviews.

For information, address State University of New York  
Press, State University Plaza, Albany, N.Y., 12246

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Ṭabarī, 838?-923.

The Crisis of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate.

(The History of al-Ṭabarī = Ta'riḫ al-rusul  
wa'l-mulūk ; v. 35) (SUNY series in Near Eastern studies)  
Translation of extracts from: Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa-al-mulūk.

1. Islamic Empire—History—750-1258. 2. Abbasids—  
Early works to 1800. 3. World history—Early works to  
1800. I. Saliba, George, II. Title. III. Series:  
Ṭabarī, 838?-923. Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'al-mulūk.  
English ; v. 35. IV. Series: SUNY series in Near  
Eastern studies.

DS38.6.T33 1984 909'.1 83-24247

ISBN 0-87395-883-7

## Acknowledgements

---

In 1971 the General Editor proposed to the UNESCO to include a translation of al-Ṭabarī's *History* in its Collection of Representative Works. UNESCO agreed, but the Commission in charge of Arabic works favored other priorities. Deeming the project worthy, the Iranian Institute of Translation and Publication, which collaborated with UNESCO, agreed to undertake the task. After the upheavals of 1979, assistance was sought from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The invaluable encouragement and support of the Endowment is here gratefully acknowledged.

The General Editor wishes to thank sincerely also the participating scholars, who have made the realization of this project possible; the Board of Editors for their selfless assistance; Professor Franz Rosenthal for his many helpful suggestions in the formulation and application of the editorial policy; Professor Jacob Lassner for his painstaking and meticulous editing; and Dr. Susan Mango of the National Endowment for the Humanities for her genuine interest in the project and her advocacy of it.

**This page intentionally left blank.**

## Preface

---

THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far 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.

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 will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 38 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 original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Each volume has an index of proper names. A general index volume will follow the publication of the translation volumes.

**Ehsan Yar-Shater**



---

---

## Contents



Translator's Foreword / xi

### The Caliphate of al-Musta<sup>c</sup>in

*The Events of the Year 249 (863/864) / 9*

Reason for the death of <sup>c</sup>Ali b. Yahyā al-Armanī / 9

The Shākiriyyah riot in Baghdad / 10

Reason for the death of Utāmish and Shujā<sup>c</sup> / 12

*The Events of the Year 250 (864/865) / 15*

Causes of Yahyā b. <sup>c</sup>Umar b. Abī Ṭālib's uprising / 15

Reason for the rebellion of al-Ḥasan b. Zayd b. Abī Ṭālib / 21

*The Events of the Year 251 (865/866) / 28*

The killing of Bāghar / 28

The civil war between al-Mu<sup>c</sup>tazz and al-Musta<sup>c</sup>in / 34

Al-Madā'in during the civil war / 75

Al-Anbār and the civil war / 75

### The Caliphate of al-Mu<sup>c</sup>tazz

*The Events of the Year 252 (866/867) / 113*

Al-Mu<sup>c</sup>tazz removes his brother as heir to the throne / 130

The death of al-Mu'ayyad, and its cause / 131

The Death of al-Mustaʿīn / 132

The Ṭālibids carried off to Sāmarrā / 141

*The Events of the Year 253 (867) / 145*

The killing of Bundār al-Ṭabarī / 147

*The Events of the Year 254 (868) / 152*

The killing of Bughā al-Sharābī / 152

*The Events of the Year 255 (868/869) / 156*

Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth takes Fārs and captures ʿAlī b.  
al-Ḥusayn / 159

Bibliography / 166

Index / 169

## Translator's Foreword

---

The period covered in this volume is that of the upheaval following the assassination of Caliph al-Mutawakkil, who ruled from 847–861. Within eight years or so, three caliphs came to power only to be murdered by the same group of army officers that murdered al-Mutawakkil. The first of these caliphs, al-Muntaṣir, who survived barely a year, falls outside the scope of this volume. The caliphate of al-Musta'in (862–866) and that of al-Mu'tazz (866–869) are the concern here.

The period covered by al-Ṭabari highlights the accelerated breakdown of centralized authority and the formation of local petty-states within the larger 'Abbāsīd polity. Appointed by the caliph, and nominally loyal to him, the local governors were, in effect, semi-autonomous in conducting their affairs. Moreover, the caliphs had become totally dependent on the slave army that had initially been recruited to support caliphal authority—so dependent, that the military leaders decided the fate of the central authority. The commanders, mainly of Central Asian Turkish extraction—such as Waṣīf and Bughā—survived the successive changes of rulers, and often they were actively involved in plotting the downfall of a particular caliph. The caliph has been duly immortalized by the following lines:

[Behold] a caliph in a cage,  
between Waṣīf and Bughā

Repeating what they say to him,  
as the parrot itself would repeat.

In this period the caliphate, as an institution, was undergoing its critical test in the face of the military power which was by then based on professional foreign recruits. The tension between the "legitimate" power, as represented by the caliphate, and the "real" power, as represented by the military, had not yet resolved itself into a complementary mode of sharing authority; each party seems to have been totally preoccupied with plotting to control the other, or to overcome it if need be.

As Waṣīf and Bughā made and broke caliphs, they created a political and military infrastructure that paralleled the formal government. They groomed their sons for political power, handing over to them the military command they once held. Within the seven years covered in this volume, control of the regular army was passed on from Waṣīf and Bughā to their respective sons Ṣāliḥ b. Waṣīf and Mūsā b. Bughā. Having assimilated the lessons of clientage, the two power-brokers tightened their alliance by marital bonds when Bughā's daughter was given in marriage to Waṣīf's son.

The most significant episode of the time was the civil war between al-Musta'in and al-Mu'tazz. Economically, the conflict was, at the very least, extremely disruptive. The description of the events is rich with references to the cost of the war. We are even told the details of payments made to soldiers to fight, or to guard somebody, as well as the costs for an entire campaign. We are also informed that the total cost of government for a single year had become equal to the tax revenues (*kharāj*) of the whole realm for two years. Moreover, the professional soldiers fighting in the mid-ninth century no longer conducted war for ideological or religious reasons as did earlier Islamic armies. They fought for private gain. Indeed, their demands are echoed with every event. The caliph was always asked to produce additional service pay and bonuses. As traditional loyalties eroded, the central authorities, with increasing frequency, gave approval to political and monetary arrangements over which they could exercise no effective control. Critical positions were bought and sold, further accelerating the decline of centralized authority.

Such is the larger picture contained within these pages. The careful reader will also note myriad details that reflect the more prosaic aspects of life, for, here as elsewhere, the narratives of al-Ṭabarī are rich in allusions to daily life.



[1501]

---

---

**The Caliphate of al-Musta'in**  
**The Caliphate of**  
**Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Mu'taṣim,**  
**Known as al-Musta'in. His Patronymic**  
**was Abū al-'Abbās**



*The Account of His Rule and the Time*  
*Allegiance Was Rendered to Him*

It was reported that when al-Muntaṣir died—that was on Saturday afternoon, the fourth of Rabi' II, 248 (June 7, 862)—the mawlās<sup>1</sup> gathered at the Hārūnī<sup>2</sup> (Palace) on Sunday. Among them were Bughā the Elder, Bughā the Younger, and Utāmish. They took the oath of allegiance from the commanders of the Turks, the Maghāribah and the Ushrūsaniyyah. It was 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Abd al-A'lā al-Iskāfī, the secretary of Bughā the Elder, who took the oath

---

1. The word *mawlā*, pl. *mawālī*, has several meanings in Arabic. In this period it refers mainly to the military personnel who were employed by the 'Abbāsīd caliphs and were mostly of Central Asian origin.

2. That is, the palace built by al-Mutawakkil (847–861), Mas'ūdi, *Murūj*, VII, 276.

from them. They were to accept whomever was acceptable to Bughā the Elder, Bughā the Younger and Utāmish, a procedure already arranged by Aḥmad b. al-Khaṣīb. The group took the oath; they had consulted with one another and were averse to having any of al-Mutawakkil's sons declared caliph, for the commanders had killed his father and were afraid that they would, in turn, be murdered by any of al-Mutawakkil's sons who assumed the caliphate. But Aḥmad b. al-Khaṣīb and those mawlās who were present concurred in choosing Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Mu'taṣim, saying, "The caliphate should not depart from the offspring of our patron Mu'taṣim." Previous to this, they had mentioned some of the Banū Hāshim. They rendered the oath of allegiance to him at the time of the second 'ishā' prayer on Monday evening, the sixth of Rabi' II, 243 (June 9, 862). He was then twenty-eight years old,<sup>3</sup> and his patronymic was Abū al-'Abbās. Al-Musta'in took Aḥmad b. al-Khaṣīb as his secretary, and Utāmish as his wazīr.

On Monday, the sixth of Rabi' II (June 9, 862), Abū al-'Abbās went

---

3. Note the account of Šūlī of the election of al-Musta'in which is included by the Leiden editors: "I received an account on the authority of Abū 'Abdallāh al-Ḥusayn b. 'Abdallāh b. Ḥafṣ b. 'Umar al-Akhbārī — 'Ali b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Abd al-A'lā al-Iskāfi: When al-Muntaṣir Billāh died on Saturday afternoon, the fourth of Rabi' II, 248 (June 7, 862), the *mawlās* gathered together including Bughā the Elder and Utāmish. They took an oath from the commanders of the Turks and Maghāribah that they would accept whomever they themselves accepted. They did swear to that. 'Ali b. al-Ḥusayn said: I was taking the oath of allegiance from them as arranged by Aḥmad b. al-Khaṣīb. They were of the unanimous opinion that they would not elevate any of al-Mutawakkil's sons to the caliphate, lest he assassinate them in revenge for his father's blood. They then agreed upon Aḥmad b. al-Mu'taṣim saying: 'The son of our lord al-Mu'taṣim.' Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Munajjim came to Aḥmad b. al-Khaṣīb and Bughā asking: 'Would you give authority to a man who thought that he is more worthy of the Caliphate than even al-Mutawakkil, and that you kept him from it, and that he is indeed worthier than both al-Mutawakkil and al-Muntaṣir? How then do you expect him to respect you? Wouldn't you rather obey a man who honors you?' Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Munajjim had done so on account that Aḥmad b. al-Mu'taṣim was a friend of al-Kindī the philosopher, and al-Kindī himself was an enemy of Muḥammad and Aḥmad the two sons of al-Munajjim. They all accepted his opinion except for Bughā the Elder who remarked. 'We will appoint someone whom we fear and respect for then we shall remain with him. If we brought someone who fears us, we would then compete among ourselves and kill one another.' It was then that they mentioned Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad b. al-Mu'taṣim, saying: 'He is a descendant of our Lord al-Mu'taṣim, and (the Caliphate) should not be taken away from them. If we hold him in high esteem he will be indebted to us. They kept on persuading Bughā the Elder until he accepted. Then they brought Aḥmad b. Muḥammad on the eve of Monday, the sixth of Rabi' II (June 9, 862), who was twenty-eight years old.'"

to the Public Audience Hall (Dar al-ʿĀmmah),<sup>4</sup> by way of the 'Umari<sup>5</sup> Road, between the gardens. They had dressed him in long robes and in the caliphal raiment.<sup>6</sup> Ibrāhīm b. Ishāq carried the spear (ḥarbah)<sup>7</sup> in front of him; this took place before sunrise. Wājīn al-Ushrūsānī arrived at the gate of the Public Audience Hall by way of the main thoroughfare leading to the public treasury (*bayt al-māl*).<sup>8</sup> After arranging his troops in two lines, he took his position in line together with the notables among his men. Present at the hall were the men of rank (*aṣḥāb al-marātib*). These included the sons of al-Mutawakkil, the ʿAbbāsids, the Ṭālibids and others of stature. While they were stationed in this manner—an hour and a half of the day had already passed—shouting was heard from the direction of the main thoroughfare and the markets.<sup>9</sup> Suddenly, there were fifty horsemen of the Shākiriyyah<sup>10</sup>—it is reported that they were men of Abū al-ʿAbbās Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh<sup>11</sup>—accompanied by a group of Ṭabariyyah cavalry and mixed forces (*akhlāṭ al-nās*). They were joined by the hotheads and the rabble from the market, amounting to a group of about one thousand men. Drawing their weapons, they shouted "Victory to Mu'tazz! (*yā Mu'tazz yā manṣūr*)"<sup>12</sup> and charged the two lines of the Ushrūsaniyyah formed

4. For this translation see Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, VII, 365, and *Le Strange, Lands*, 54. This Dār was also sometimes called Dār al-Sultān. See Ya'qūbī, *Buldān*, 255.

5. The reference is to al-Qaṣr al-'Umari, built by 'Umar b. Faraj for al-Mu'taṣim. See Ya'qūbī, *Buldān*, 258.

6. For the caliphal dress, see Šābi', *Rusūm*, 73–74.

7. Originally it was the spear of the king of Abyssinia. It was given as a gift to Prophet Muḥammad and was passed thereafter from one caliph to the next as a sign of authority. See Khwārizmī, *Mafātīḥ*, 118–119.

8. For the thoroughfare leading to the *bayt al-māl*, see Ya'qūbī, *Buldān*, 255, 260, and Sāmarrā'i, *Sāmarrā' fi Adab*, appended map where the main street runs parallel to the Tigris in a north-south direction.

9. For the arrangement of the markets around the main thoroughfare, see Ya'qūbī, *Buldān*, 260.

10. The probable origin of the word is from Persian *shāgird*, meaning apprentice. See Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, VII, 276. But sometimes it is used to mean simply mercenary soldiers. See Jāhīz, *Ḥayawān*, II, 130.

11. Ṭabari, Cairo ed., IX, 188 mentions the arrival of this Muḥammad from Khurāsān in the year 237 (851/852) and his appointment as al-Mutawakkil's lieutenant over Baghdad in that year. See Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, V, 92–93, and Kutubī, *Fawāt*, III, 403–4. The text here refers to the possibility that Muḥammad's men may have been still loyal to the descendants of al-Mutawakkil and were here objecting to al-Musta'in's usurpation of their power.

12. *Yā . . . yā manṣūr* is obviously a battle cry, rendered in Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VII, 117, as *nafīr yā manṣūr* (call to arms! O victorious one!).

[1504] by Wājīn. A great melee ensued, and the men collided with one another. Some of the Mubayyidah<sup>13</sup> guarding the Public Gate (Bāb al-'Ammah) broke rank and joined the Shākiriyyah, thus increasing their number. At this the Maghāribah and the Ushrūsaniyyah attacked, and, routing the rebels, they forced them onto the great road (*darb*) named after Zurāfah and 'Azzūn.<sup>14</sup> A group of them charged the followers of al-Mu'tazz, and, having defeated them, they pursued them to the residence of Azzūn b. Ismā'il's brother where the latter held a narrow part of the road. Al-Mu'tazz's followers held their ground there, whereupon the Ushrūsaniyyah fired arrows at some of them and engaged them with swords. As the battle raged between them, the followers of al-Mu'tazz and the rabble proclaimed "God is Great!" Many of the protagonists fell, slain, as the battle continued until the third hour of the day. The Turks then departed, having rendered allegiance to Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Mu'taṣim. They left (by the road that runs) beside the 'Umārī (Palace) and the gardens. Before leaving, the mawlās obtained the oath of allegiance from all those present at the Public Audience Hall, including, among others, the Hāshimites and the men of rank. Al-Musta'in departed by way of the Public Gate for the Hārūnī (palace) where he spent the night.

The Ushrūsaniyyah (also) went to the Hārūnī; both factions had lost many men. A group of Ushrūsaniyyah had entered some private quarters, whereupon the rabble overwhelmed them and took their shields, weapons, coats of mail and their mounts. The rabble and the plundering mob entered the Public Audience Hall en route to the Hārūnī (Palace). They freely pillaged the storehouse containing weapons, shields, coats of mail, swords, and *thaghrī* bridles. None of them refrained from looting a coat of mail or a lance that happened to be lying by.<sup>15</sup> They also pillaged the residence of Armash b. Abī

[1505]

13. The name *Mubayyidah* was commonly used to describe a non-orthodox sect believing in the possibility of God's incarnation. See Sāmarrā'i, *al-Ghulūw*, 143, on the authority of Isfarāyīnī, *Tabṣīr*, 70. They seem to have been recruited into the army as a sect.

14. The reference is probably to Zurāfah, al-Mutawakkil's chamberlain (see Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, VII, 394 and *FHA*, III, 555) and to 'Azzūn, al-Mu'taṣim's boon companion (see Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, II, 163).

15. The text reads *rubbamā marra aḥaduhum bi-l-jawshan wa-l-ḥirāb fa-akthara*, which is difficult to understand with the previous *fa-akthara*.

Ayyūb, accompanied by the sellers of barley juice (*fuqqā'*),<sup>16</sup> taking shields and headless spears of bamboo. As a result, spears and shields became plentiful in the hands of the rabble, the bath attendants and the boys who delivered groceries.<sup>17</sup> A contingent of Turks, including Bughā the Younger, then came at them from the direction of Darb Zurāfah and forced them away from the storehouse, killing several of them and detaining a few.

Both factions now departed, having suffered many losses. But the rabble began confiscating the weapon of any Turk passing by the lower reaches of Sāmarrā while heading through the thoroughfares towards the Public Gate. They killed a contingent of Turks near the residences of Mubārak al-Maghribī and Habash the brother of Ya'qūb Qūsarrah.<sup>18</sup> Most of those seizing these weapons were reportedly sellers of barley juice and dried fruits (*nāʾif*), bath attendants, water bearers and the rabble from the markets. They continued in this way until midday. The prisoners at Sāmarrā became agitated on that day (as well), and a group of them managed to escape. The receipt of military pay (*aṭā'*) was now made contingent on swearing allegiance to the new Caliph, and the document of the oath of allegiance was sent to Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir on the day when allegiance was sworn to al-Musta'in. The document reached Muḥammad on the second day; it was brought to him by a brother of Utāmish, when Muḥammad was out on a walk. Muḥammad's chamberlain sent Utāmish's brother to his patron after informing him of Ibn Ṭāhir's whereabouts. At this, Muḥammad returned immediately and sent for the Hāshimites and for the commanders and troops. He granted them all their allotments (*waḍā'a lahum al-arzāq*).

In Rajab, 248 (August 31–September 29, 862), word reached al-Musta'in of the death of Ṭāhir b. 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir in Khurāsān. Al-Musta'in now appointed Ṭāhir's son Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir b. 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir as governor of Khurāsān. Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh

[1506]

16. *Fuqqā'* is barley juice according to *Lisān*, VIII, 526, and those who sold such items were considered of low class. See Ya'qūbī, *Buldān*, 261.

17. Some occupational groups were apparently beginning to make themselves felt as especially threatening to the central authority. For more information on their interaction, see Dūri, *Abhāth*, 15–17. For their social position, see Ya'qūbī, *Buldān*, 261.

18. The vocalization is unclear.

was given control of Iraq as well as the Ḥaramayn<sup>19</sup>; (he was put in charge of) security (*shurṭah*), and (he was appointed) vice-ruler (*mu'āwin*) over the Sawād.<sup>20</sup> The appointment of Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir b. 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir over Khurāsān and the adjoining districts took place at the Jawsaq Palace<sup>21</sup> on Saturday, the twelfth of Sha'bān [October 11, 862].

Bughā the Elder fell ill in Jumādā II (August 2–30, 862) and was visited by al-Musta'in in the middle of the month. Bughā died that very day, and his son Mūsā was given all his duties, that is, all his father's duties, in addition to (heading up) the postal service (*barid*).

In this year, Unjūr the Turk arranged (*wajjahā*) to kill Abū al-'Amūd al-Tha'labī in Kafartūthā on the twenty-fourth of Rabi' II (June 27, 862).

In this year, 'Ubaydallāh b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān went on pilgrimage. A Shi'ite messenger called Shu'ayb was sent after Ibn Khāqān to inform him that he was being banished to Barqah<sup>22</sup> and was thus prohibited from continuing the pilgrimage.

[1507] In Jumādā I, 248 (July 3–August 1, 862), al-Musta'in bought from al-Mu'tazz and al-Mu'ayyad everything they possessed except for one item valued at one hundred thousand dinārs which al-Mu'tazz kept. The latter and Ibrāhīm (al-Mu'ayyad) were to receive annual revenues (*ghallah*) of eighty thousand dinārs.<sup>23</sup> And on Monday, the

19. Usually refers to Mecca and Medina. See *EF*, III, 175.

20. Ṣūli's account as given by the editors of the Leiden edition: "Al-Musta'in appointed his son Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir over Khurāsān, and his uncle Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh over Iraq. He also added Fars to the latter's responsibilities. He had previously intended to appoint Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh over Khurāsān, but al-Musta'in was told that he was their most distinguished person (i.e. the Ṭāhirids) and is like a hostage for them. He was then inclined to appoint 'Abdallāh's offspring of whom Sulaymān, Ṭalḥah and 'Ubaydallāh were in Khurāsān. Muḥammad was afraid, however, that they would seize authority (for themselves) and counselled al-Musta'in to appoint his nephew. Thus the two police departments were specifically given to Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh; his nephew Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir had no responsibility for them." The two police departments refer to the security arrangements for East and West Baghdad. See Dūri, *Abḥāth*, 17; *FHA*, III, 563.

21. The Jawsaq Palace was one of the most famous palaces built by al-Mu'taṣim. For the literary and historical sources concerning this palace, see Sāmarrā'i, *Sāmarrā' fi Adab*, 225–228; Ḥimyarī, *Rawd*, 301; Ya'qūbī, *Buldān*, 265; and Yāqūt, *Mu jam*, III, 175. The architectural details are discussed in Creswell, *Architecture*, 259f.

22. This is a reference to Barqah in North Africa (modern Tunis). See Aboulfeda, *Géographie*, 127, and Ḥimyarī, *Rawd*, 91.

23. This was obviously their pay-off to drop the claim to the caliphate.