

fate of Abū Salamah's appointees. All the same, he was prevented from assuming authority.⁶⁴

Despite some indications to the contrary, Abū Muslim's ruthlessness was never translated into a demonstration of rash temper when such a demonstration did not serve him. His order to his appointee to 'coax' the intruders but to curb them can have only one indication. He had not put his act, in Kūfah, together yet. Although it is not possible to work out a meaningful, even if approximate, chronology of the entire three months between the capture of Kūfah and the accession of al-Saffāh, the internal logic of certain events places them in an obvious sequence. When Abū Muslim's men in Kūfah pulled off their coup, his men in Fars were ordered to kill Abū Salamah's detained appointees. And it must have been at this point that Abū Muslim officially marked the end of this period of the tug-of-war, exactly as he had done with Naṣr ibn Sayyār a little over two years before, and with other adversaries as well. It could not have been earlier, as Ibn 'Abd Rabbih suggests:

When he became reprehensive of his intentions, [Abū Muslim wrote] to Abū Salamah al-Khallāl, [citing the Holy Qur'ān, II: 14.]: 'When they meet those who believe, they say: 'We believe'; but when they go privily to their Satans, they say: 'We are with you.'⁶⁵

If Abū Salamah was a hypocrite, which is most likely an unfair slander, his futile efforts did not take him nearly as far as Abū Muslim's maneuvers took Abū Muslim. Abū Salamah's one-man show in Kūfah lasted for only three months,⁶⁶ and, beneath all his forceful exercise of executive powers and what appeared to be a controlled situation, it was marked by an extremely fluid state of affairs.

⁶⁴ Ṭabarī, III: p. 71; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, VIII: p. 343.

⁶⁵ Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, IV: pp. 218-9. English rendering of this Quranic verse is that of Arberry's.

⁶⁶ Two and a half months only according to Jahshayārī, p. 87.

Saleh Said Agha, The Revolution Which Toppled the Umayyads: Neither Arab nor Abbasid, Leiden: Brill, 2003
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CHAPTER FIVE

THE 'ABBASID COUP AND THE DEMISE OF THE ORGANIZATION

I. A Methodological Interlude

Over and above its being a decisive historical landmark, the advent of the Khurāsāniyyah in Kūfah drastically changed the historiographical rules of the propaganda game for the doctors of the 'Abbāsīd *riwāyah*. Prior to this juncture, most of what it took to weave the 'Abbāsīd thread into the strand of events was simply to naively thrust the 'Abbāsīd *Imām* onto the historical theater—dark enough under the thick blanket of the clandestine phase. Most of what it takes the modern historian in order to neutralize these interpolations, and to restore a semblance of coherence to the historical narrative is to perform a simple 'surgery' to remove the 'Abbāsīd 'appendix'.

It is from this juncture on that the propaganda game became more demanding, and the 'Abbāsīd *riwāyah* most aggressive, transparently abrasive, and all-pervasive. The mainstream of events had started to unfold under the public eye—the army alleged to be the *Imām*'s entered the new capital city but could not proclaim its *Imām* before two or three months had elapsed!¹ To bridge this conspicuous gap, the doctors of the 'Abbāsīd *riwāyah* did not spare any detail from their crude interference, be it 'cosmetic' or 'bone surgery'. It is not, therefore, so startling to find that a careful examination of the body of accounts which were produced or tolerated by the 'Abbāsīd propaganda machine, and of the very few accounts which escaped its censorship,² brings to light some ludicrous

¹ The Khurāsāniyyah entered Kūfah on 10 Muḥarram 132/29 August 749 (Khalīfah, II: p. 423; Azdī, p. 119; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, VI: p. 57; Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, VIII: p. 334), or on 11 Muḥarram (Jahshayārī, p. 84; Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, II: pp. 344-5). Abū al-'Abbās was proclaimed caliph on 12 Rabī' II 132/28 November 749 (Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf III*, p. 141). Other dates are also given to the proclamation of the caliph; the earliest is 3 Rabī' I 132/20 October 749 (Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, VIII: p. 335; Suyūfī, p. 257); and the latest is 28 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 132/7 August 750 (Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, II: p. 349). See also other dates in: Ṭabarī, III: p. 23; Azdī, p. 123; Khalīfah, p. 262; Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, II: p. 349). Be that as it may, even the latest date of the Khurāsāniyyah's arrival, and the earliest date of Abū al-'Abbās' proclamation, leave a gap of more than fifty days for the 'Abbāsīd propaganda machine to explain.

² In this respect, the source material may be classified in three general categories. The first category comprises the majority of early sources, which carried basically the general corpus of accounts which represent the 'Abbāsīd version. The uncritical

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