Bernard Lewis

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7

On the Meaning of the 'Abbasid Call to *al-Riḍā*

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IT IS WELL known that the recruiting officers of the Hāshimīya in Khurāsān called to *kitāb Allāh wa-sunnat nabīyihi wa'l-bay'a lil-riḍā min āl/ahl bayt Muḥammad/rasūl Allāh.*[1] What did contemporaries take this to mean? Apparently they took the first half of the slogan to mean that the movement involved principles. Whoever called to the book of God and the sunna of his Prophet in early Islam proclaimed himself to be acting "out of anger on behalf of God" (*ghaḍaban lillāh*), as opposed to out of anger on his own behalf.[2] The principles involved would be specified after the call to book and sunna, and the second half of the Hāshimite slogan duly identified the Hāshimīya as a movement committed to *ahl-bayt*ism. But what did the word *al-riḍā* mean? That is the question to which this birthday offering is devoted.

The sources tell us that *al-riḍā* was a cover name. Muḥammad ibn 'Alī, the first 'Abbasid imām, instructed the leaders of the Hāshimīya not to mention his name to ordinary recruits, but rather to refer to him as the *riḍā*; if asked to identify him, they should say, "we are in *taqīya*, and have been ordered to keep the name of our imām secret."[3] Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad, the second imām, likewise preferred to keep his identity secret.[4] Modern scholars generally accept this explanation, though they tend to see it in a somewhat Machiavellian light: the cover name did not merely serve to hide the 'Abbasids from the authorities, but also, and perhaps more importantly, from adherents of the 'Alids, whom they thus contrived to recruit for their own cause.[5] But there is reason to believe that this explanation should be rejected: the 'Abbasid use of *al-riḍā* would appear to have been neither precautionary nor Machiavellian in intent.

The word *riḍā* means "satisfaction" and "agreement," or, when applied to a person, "someone with whom one is satisfied, to whom one has given one's consent." If this meaning is taken seriously, a person who claims to be *al-riḍā* claims to owe his position to communal choice: in some sense or other he claims to have been elected. The literal meaning is of course somewhat lost on the modern reader, who generally assumes the 'Abbasids to have meant very little by their choice of this particular word: insofar as the cover name had any significance, it amounted to no more than a vague promise of future satisfaction with whatever ruler they might in due course produce. But in texts relating to the Umayyad period, the literal meaning of the word is very much alive. Here *al-riḍā* is precisely someone who owes his position to communal agreement; more specifically he is someone elected by *shūrā*, "consultation," as the following passages show.

1. In 77/696, Muṭarrif ibn al-Mughīra ibn Shu'ba and the Khārijites of Mesopotamia entered into negotiations with a view to an alliance. When asked to declare his stance, Muṭarrif announced, "I call you to . . . making this matter [sc. the caliphate] a *shūrā* among the Muslims, so that they can set up as their imām over themselves the person of whom they approve for themselves (*man yarḍawna li-anfusihim*), in the same way in which 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb left them to do it. The Arabs will agree when they know that by a *shūrā* one simply means *al-riḍā* of Quraysh" (*fa-inna al-'arab idhā 'alimat annamā yurādu bi'l-shūrā al-riḍā min Quraysh raḍū*). The Khārijites responded to this by declaring that Quraysh did not in their view have any better right to the caliphate than other Arabs [*sic*], that the Muslims should choose whoever was best, and that they themselves had already chosen "the person of whom we approve most and who is the strongest among us" (*qad ikhtarnā li-anfusinā arḍānā fīnā wa-ashaddanā*). Both sides thus took *al-riḍā* to mean somebody chosen by the community; they merely disagreed as to whether the choice should be made from within Quraysh or, on the contrary, from within the entire community of Arabs/Muslims.[6]

2. 'Abdallāh ibn 'Umar is said to have voiced an opinion similar to Muṭarrif's on an earlier occasion. When Mu'āwiya put pressure on the Medinese to accept his son Yazīd as his successor, Ibn 'Umar objected that the caliphate was not hereditary, and that 'Umar had set up the *shūrā* on the assumption that within Quraysh it belonged to whoever was most fit for it, and of whom the Muslims approved as the most God-fearing and satisfactory person (*wa-innamā hiya fī Quraysh khāṣṣatan liman kāna lahā ahlan mimman irtaḍāhu al-muslimūn li-anfusihim man kāna atqā wa-arḍā*). Ibn 'Umar's *man irtaḍāhu al-muslimūn* is clearly synonymous with *al-riḍā*.[7]

3. When Ibn al-Zubayr had allegiance sworn to himself, Abū Ḥurra, the *mawlā* of Khuzā'a, is said to have exclaimed, "Is this what we helped you for? You used to call for *al-riḍā wa'l-shūrā*. Why did you not wait and consult (*a-fa-lā ṣabarta wa-shāwarta*)? We would have chosen you and given allegiance to you."[8]

4. Mu'āwiya is said to have argued against the Banū Hāshim along the following lines: "As for the caliphate, it has passed from one group of Quraysh to another by the consent of the masses and consultation of the elite (*bi-riḍā al-'āmma wa-bi-shūrā al-khāṣṣa*). . . . For what reason should you have it? By consent and agreement on you regardless of kinship, or by kinship regardless of agreement and consent, or by both together?" (*a-bi'l-riḍā wa'l-jamā'a 'alaykum dūna al-qarāba am lil-qarāba dūna al-jamā'a wa'l-riḍā am bihimā jamī'an?*). Here *riḍā*, *shūrā*, and *jamā'a* are enumerated as so many titles to power arising from communal agreement, in contradistinction to titles arising from descent.[9]

5. In 116/734–35, the Khurāsānī rebel al-Ḥārith ibn Surayj called his opponents to "the book of God and the sunna, and to allegiance to *al-riḍā*."[10] He frequently clamored for a *shūrā (ij'al al-amr shūrā)*.[11] The contexts in which he clamored for a *shūrā* show that he had the governorship and subgovernorships of Khurāsān in mind,[12] but one assumes that he also wanted the caliphate to be a matter of *shūrā*. (It is, after all, to the caliphate that the slogan *al-amr shūrā* normally refers.) His call for *al-riḍā* is thus likely to have been a call for a caliph to be elected by *shūrā*; at all events, it was obviously a call for "someone acceptable," and not for a specific person.

6. The earlier rebel Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab is likewise said to have favored the principle *al-amr shūrā* on his capture of Basra in 102/720, and to have called to *al-riḍā*, more specifically *al-riḍā min Banī Hāshim*, shortly thereafter.[13] That Yazīd meant the same thing by these two slogans seems likely, though it cannot be proved:[14] he proceeded to call to al-Faḍl (or al-Mufaḍḍal) ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-'Abbās ibn Rabī'a ibn al-Ḥārith ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib without a *shūrā fī Banī Hāshim* having been enacted.[15] But however this may be, his call for *al-riḍā min Banī Hāshim* was clearly a call for "whatever Hāshimite will turn out to be acceptable," not for a specific member of that

family whom he did not dare to name: *al-riḍā* was somebody who remained to be chosen.

7. 'Abdallāh ibn Mu'āwiya, the 'Alid who staged a revolt in Kufa and western Persia in 127–29/744–47, is said to have called either to *al-riḍā min āl Muḥammad* or else to himself.[16] The import of this information is evidently not that he called either to a Hāshimite whose name he did not dare to divulge or to himself, but rather that he called either to the Hāshimites in general (more precisely, to "whatever Hāshimite will be acceptable"), or else to himself in particular. This suggests that Ibn Mu'āwiya's *da'wa* underwent the same evolution as that of Ibn al-Zubayr; in other words, that he began by calling to *al-riḍā wa'l-shūrā* (this time within the Prophet's family), but proceeded to dispense with the *shūrā* in the belief that the choice was a foregone conclusion.

8. Juday' ibn 'Alī al-Kirmānī, the leader of the Yamanīya in Khurāsān, is said to have called to *al-kitāb wa'l-sunna wa'l-riḍā min āl Muḥammad* upon his escape from Naṣr ibn Sayyār's prison, that is, before his alliance with Abū Muslim.[17] This may well be wrong. Whether it is right or wrong, however, al-Kirmānī is clearly envisaged as calling to *al-riḍā* in the sense of "someone acceptable to all," not a specific person, let alone someone whose name he did not wish to divulge; for he explained his call with reference to the fact that "he could not accept Naṣr and his governors as rulers of the Muslims" (*lā yarḍā bi-Naṣr wa-'ummālihi wulātan 'alā al-muslimīn*). Moreover, an alternative account of his wishes at that time states that he wanted the Khurāsānīs to choose "a man from Bakr ibn Wā'il on whom we can all agree (*narḍāhu jamī'an*) and who can govern all of us until a caliphal command arrives."[18] Al-Kirmānī was thus remembered as having wanted a *riḍā*, whether from Bakr ibn Wā'il or from the Prophet's family; a *riḍā* in the sense of someone acceptable to all and who still remained to be chosen.

9. Adherents of al-Mukhtār are said to have called followers of Muṣ'ab ibn al-Zubayr to "the book of God and the sunna of His messenger, and to allegiance to the *amīr* al-Mukhtār, and to making this matter a *shūrā* in the family of the messenger."[19] The idea of a *shūrā* in the *ahl al-bayt* was thus a familiar one in Shī'ī circles, or more specifically, those circles with which the leaders of the 'Abbasid revolution are generally believed to have been connected.

In sum, the word *al-riḍā* is associated with *shūrā* in passages relating to persons as diverse as Mu'āwiya, Ibn al-Zubayr, Muṭarrif ibn al-Mughīra, and the Khārijites of Mesopotamia. The association is also attested for Khurāsān at the time of al-Ḥārith ibn Surayj, when 'Abbasid missionaries were active there. The call for *al-riḍā* recurs in other contexts, two of them contemporary with the revolution, in which it must have been a call for a person yet to be elected or approved; and finally, the call for a *shūrā* in the Prophet's house is documented for the revolt of al-Mukhtār, a revolt with which the 'Abbasid revolution was connected. In short, the Hāshimite call to *al-riḍā* can hardly have been intended or understood as anything other than a call for a caliph elected by *shūrā fī ahl al-bayt*; the movement called to *al-riḍā* because it had no specific candidate for the throne.

This conclusion is corroborated by the fact that a *shūrā fī ahl al-bayt* was in fact attempted after the revolution. Indeed, it is possible that such a *shūrā* was also attempted before the revolution. As regards the pre-revolutionary attempt, we are told by Abū 'l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, a Shī'ī author, that a number of 'Alid and 'Abbasid members of the Hāshimite house (including Ibrāhīm and the future al-Manṣūr) met at al-Abwā' near Mecca shortly after the murder of al-Walīd II; with the exception of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, all agreed to acknowledge Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh (al-Nafs al-Zakīya) as the *mahdī*.[20] They met again in the reign of Marwān II, but on this occasion Ibrāhīm was informed by a messenger that the Khurāsānīs were gathering troops for his cause, whereupon the 'Alids dissociated themselves from him.[21] The story of the second meeting is also found in *Akhbār al-'Abbās*, a pro-'Abbasid work, in a slightly different form. A number of Hāshimites met at Mecca in 129/746–47 in order to pay homage to Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh as the *mahdī*. Ibrāhīm heard of this and joined them, but a messenger informed him of the activities of the Khurāsānīs on his behalf, whereupon he managed to have the meeting postponed. When 'Abdallāh ibn al-Ḥasan, the *mahdī's* father, despaired of winning Ibrāhīm for his son's cause (or alternatively, when Marwān II got wind of the movement in Khurāsān, and suspected 'Abdallāh ibn al-Ḥasan of being its leader), the latter denounced Ibrāhīm and dissociated himself from his deeds.[22] The 'Abbasid version thus stresses that Ibrāhīm's presence at the meeting was accidental, that he avoided paying allegiance to the 'Alid, and that the 'Alids publicly renounced such rights as they might have to the fruits of the revolution; but it does not deny that 'Alids and 'Abbasids had in fact come together on the eve of the revolution to elect a leader from among themselves. Quite different sources also inform us that the caliph al-Manṣūr had paid allegiance to Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh at Mecca.[23]

Even so, however, the story may not be true. Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh does not refer to his supposed election by the Hāshimite house in his correspondence with al-Manṣūr regarding their respective rights to the caliphate, though he would certainly have mentioned it there if it had actually taken place (and if the correspondence is authentic)[24]; and the story of the second *shūrā* makes no reference to the first.[25] Moreover, even if we accept the reality of these meetings, the fact that 'Abbasids participated in them is no guarantee that they were arranged by the Hāshimīya movement.[26] Further, they are not explicitly called *shūrās*; and though they could obviously be qualified as such in the general sense of "consultation," they were not electoral bodies nominated by the community and/or its representatives; that is, they were not *shūrās* in the technical sense of the word.[27] All in all, then, they will have to be discounted.

The *shūrā* which was attempted after the revolution presents a different case. As regards this episode, we are told that the death of Ibrāhīm al-Imām shortly before the arrival of the Khurāsānī troops in Iraq prompted Abū Salama, the leader of the Kufan organization, to contact three senior 'Alids, either because he wished to transfer the caliphate to one of them,[28] or else because he intended to "make it [the caliphate] a *shūrā* between the sons of 'Alī and al-'Abbās."[29] Either way, his plans came to nothing,[30] but his behavior has always been something of a puzzle. It is not very likely that Abū Salama should have been a secret adherent of the 'Alids all along: if his heart had never been in the Hāshimīya movement, then why would he have invested his life and fortune in it? Nor does it seem likely that Ibrāhīm's death should have caused him radically to reconsider the objective to which his life had been devoted. The chances are that he was acting out of loyalty to the movement as he had always known it, and the oddity of his behavior disappears if we assume it to have stood for *al-riḍā min ahl al-bayt* in the sense of "Hāshimite singled out by *shūrā*": if Abū Salama took Ibrāhīm to have been the *riḍā* in this sense, the latter's death evidently meant that another *shūrā fī ahl al-bayt* had to be staged.[31] That this is how he reasoned cannot be proved, but he plainly did not regard Ibrāhīm's rights, however acquired, as hereditary; and what is more, many other members of the movement apparently did not do so either. The sources are, of course, at pains to assure us that the imamate had been hereditary within the 'Abbasid family since Muḥammad ibn 'Alī acquired it from Abū Hāshim, but there are three good reasons for rejecting their claim.

First, Ibrāhīm's death caused too many members of the Hāshimīya to look for candidates among the 'Alids. According to *Akhbār al-'Abbās*, Ibrāhīm's death caused a schism in the 'Abbasid movement, as some argued that the imamate now reverted to the 'Alids[32]; according to Ibn A'tham, Kufa at the time of the arrival of the Khurāsānīs was divided between people who expected an 'Alid to be enthroned and others who expected the enthronement of an 'Abbasid;[33] and according to all, the senior leader of the revolution was one of those who wanted an 'Alid, or who wanted a *shūrā* between 'Alids and 'Abbasids (possibly meaning that he hoped and/or expected a *shūrā fī ahl al-bayt* to produce an 'Alid candidate). What we are confronted with here are not naive philo-'Alids duped by the use of labels such as *al-riḍā, ahl al-bayt*, or *āl Muḥammad* into supporting a cause which they now wished to abandon, but on the contrary, members of the leadership aware of and satisfied with the candidature of the 'Abbasid Ibrāhīm. If a whole section of the Hāshimīya loyal to Ibrāhīm could turn to the 'Alids on Ibrāhīm's death, Ibrāhīm's rights to the imamate cannot have been widely regarded as hereditary.

Second, the sources are too obsessed with the idea of *shūrā*. Thus, one version of the events surrounding Ibrāhīm's death has it that Qaḥṭaba approved of Ibrāhīm's *waṣīya* to Abū 'l-'Abbās on the ground that without it "the matter would become a *shūrā* within his family."[34] Another story has it that, as already mentioned, Abū Salama attempted to convoke such a *shūrā*. A third story reassures us that some sort of *shūrā* was indeed enacted: the result was the election of Abū 'l-'Abbās.[35] How can this obsession with elective procedures be squared with the assertion that Ibrāhīm had acquired hereditary rights which he passed on by bequest to his brother?

Finally, there is a conspicuous absence in all this of people who held that the imamate had passed to Ibrāhīm's sons. If Ibrāhīm had inherited the imamate from his father, he would indeed have been able to bequeath it to his brother; however, given that the circumstances in which Ibrāhīm was alleged to have made the bequest (that is, on his deathbed in prison) were such that the reality of the bequest was disputed, one would have expected some to have advocated the cause of his sons. Yet nobody did so: the choice was between Abū 'l-'Abbās and the 'Alids. It is true that both of his best-known sons were too young to qualify for the caliphate at the time,[36] but one does not get the impression that it was their age which disqualified them: nobody seems to have displayed the slightest interest in the fact

that they even existed.[37] How can this be reconciled with the claim that the imamate was hereditary within the 'Abbasid line?

In short, it would seem that the revolutionaries called to *al-riḍā min ahl al-bayt* in the same spirit in which Muṭarrif ibn al-Mughīra called to *al-riḍā min Quraysh*: they happened to believe that the caliphate belonged to whoever was chosen as the most suitable person from within the groups in question. Given that the revolution resulted in the establishment of a new dynasty, rather than a succession of caliphs elected by *shūrā*, it must soon have come to appear obvious that the revolutionaries had called to *al-riḍā* in the loose sense of "acceptable person," with reference to the imām from among themselves; by the time Abū 'l-Sarāyā had oaths of allegiance taken *'alā al-riḍā min āl Muḥammad*, the word had come to mean little more than "legitimate imām"[38]; and though al-Ma'mūn emphasized that his al-Riḍā had been chosen from among 'Alids and 'Abbasids as the most suitable candidate,[39] the very fact that he called him al-Riḍā transformed the programmatic word into a personal name.[40] But it was evidently not as a meaningless word that the revolutionaries had first adopted it.

If this is accepted, three points follow automatically. First, the story of Abū Hāshim's testament is spurious. According to this story, Abū Hāshim ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīya bequeathed his imamate to Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abdallāh ibn 'Abbās, from whom it passed to Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad, and therafter to the 'Abbasid caliphs: it was precisely because Muḥammad ibn Alī had acquired rights which he hoped to encash that he organized (or took over) the mission in Khurāsān.[41] Now if the 'Abbasids had regarded themselves as legitimate imāms by hereditary right since the mid-Umayyad period, then their call to *al-riḍā* would indeed have to be explained on the assumption that *al-riḍā* was a cover-name; but if their call to *al-riḍā* was a call for a *shūrā*, it follows that they cannot have regarded themselves as such imāms after all: the story must be false. This is not to deny that there are links between the revolt of al-Mukhtār and the 'Abbasid revolution: it was presumably thanks to these links that the 'Abbasids seized on Ibn al-Ḥanafīya when they decided to claim the caliphate by hereditary right.[42] But the story of Abū Hāshim's testament cannot have made its appearance before the *shūrā* ideal had broken down.[43]

Second, the Hāshimīya movement owed its name to Hāshim, the eponymous ancestor of the Prophet's house, not to Abū Hāshim, the supposed bequeather of 'Alid rights to the 'Abbasids.[44] In fact, one scarcely needs the *riḍā/shūrā* theory to see this point. If members of a clan called Hāshim led a movement called Hāshimīya devoted to the rights of the clan in question, it would be very odd if the reference were not to Hāshim, the eponymous ancestor of the Hāshimite clan, but rather to an obscure member of it remembered or invented only for his supposed transfer of the imamate from one branch of this clan to another. Differently put, in a culture in which poetry about the *ahl al-bayt* was known as *Hāshimīyāt* with reference to the founder of the family in question, a movement sponsoring the rights of the *ahl al-bayt* could scarcely call itself, or come to be known as, *Hāshimīya* with reference to someone else. Both the missionaries and their opponents are frequently made to single out Banū Hāshim as central to the concerns of the *da'wa*, whereas Abū Hāshim never figures.[45] Given that the story of Abū Hāshim's testament came to be invented, we should not be surprised that some heresiographers assumed the term Hāshimīya to be derived from his name;[46] but it is, in fact, more likely that Abū Hāshim owes his name to the revolutionary movement than the other way round.

Finally, the relationship between the 'Abbasids and the revolution customarily named after them is nothing if not problematic. Why did the organizers of this revolution choose to stage it on behalf of a member of the Prophet's family still to be chosen? If we accept that the organizers were 'Abbasids, a plausible answer would be that their own membership in this family was too marginal for them to claim the imamate on the basis of descent alone, or indeed to claim it at all: to contemporaries of the revolution, the term *ahl al-bayt* conjured up descendants of 'Alī.[47] If their membership in the *ahl al-bayt* was so marginal as to count for nothing, we must envisage them as laymen hankering for a Hāshimite ruler, without having a Hāshimite candidate to hand: they called for an acceptable member of the Hāshimite house in the same spirit in which al-Kirmānī is supposed to have done so, that is, with a view to handing over to an 'Alid as soon as one had been chosen. Alternatively, their membership in the *ahl al-bayt* was sufficiently real for them to qualify for election by *shūrā*, a procedure which had the advantage of placing strong emphasis on personal merit: as organizers of the revolution, they were demonstrably superior to the 'Alids in terms of political talent. This seems more likely, especially in view of the parallel with Ibn Mu'āwiya; but in either case, things were unlikely to turn out as calculated. If the 'Abbasids succeeded in acquiring power, they were going to think twice about handing over to an 'Alid figurehead. At the same time, the

'Alids were unlikely to renounce such power by consenting to the election of an 'Abbasid; sooner or later, the 'Abbasids would thus have to justify their possession of power with reference to hereditary rights. Since it was the 'Alids rather than the 'Abbasids who were regarded as kinsmen of the Prophet, this meant postulating that the 'Alids had bequeathed their rights to the 'Abbasids, or in other words, it meant inventing the story of Abū Hāshim.

If this is so, the shift from an ideology of *shūrā* to one of *waṣīya* may well have been initiated by Ibrāhīm. A Shī'ī author such as Abū 'l-Faraj has no doubt that the story of the testament was invented about this time;[48] and it would seem difficult to deny that the Hāshimīya expected Ibrāhīm al-Imām to succeed, for all that no *shūrā* appears to have elected him. But Ibrāhīm can hardly have claimed more than that Abū Hāshim had designated him as his successor:[49] the fully developed story in which Abū Hāshim makes a permanent transfer of rights to the imamate from one branch of the Hāshimite house to another must reflect the establishment of the new dynasty, for all that this dynasty was soon to reject it.[50]

We must, however, also consider the possibility that, contrary to what is usually claimed, the 'Abbasids were not the organizers of the revolution which enthroned them. Thus, a passage in *Kitāb al-'uyūn wa'l-ḥadā'iq* has it that it was the Khurāsānīs who chose the 'Abbasids, rather than the other way round: when the Khurāsānīs wanted to set up a mission in favor of the Prophet's family, they looked for a candidate who could be described as the noblest, the most generous, and the most meritorious in respect of religion; they decided on 'Abdallāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan, whom they approached without revealing their true intentions; but 'Abdallāh ibn al-Ḥasan led them to Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abdallāh ibn 'Abbās.[51] If the Khurāsānīs began by working for the Prophet's family in general, as this story implies, then *al-riḍā min āl al-rasūl* was indeed the obvious slogan for them to adopt.

The same source also tells another story in which the 'Abbasids make their appearance in the *da'wa* at a late stage. According to this story, the Prophet himself predicted that the 'Abbasids would rule, and the 'Abbasids were eagerly awaiting their appointed time. Meanwhile there were Shī'ī missionaries in Khurāsān who were calling to Banū Hāshim in general, and others who were calling to Abū Hāshim in particular, the leaders of the former [*sic*] being Ibn Kathīr and Abū Salama. When Abū Hāshim was poisoned, he transferred his rights to the 'Abbasids and wrote to his missionaries informing them of this

fact; they accepted it, even though Abū Salama was secretly in favor of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. Abū Hāshim was poisoned by al-Walīd II (d. 125/743), and the transfer took place *fī awwal riyāsat Abī Muslim*.[52] Now there is obviously something wrong with this story. If Ibn Kathīr and Abū Salama were missionaries on behalf of the Hāshimites in general (as indeed they would seem to have been), then they were not the missionaries over whom Abū Hāshim had control;[53] and if we emend the story to say that they were missionaries on behalf of Abū Hāshim, then the reference to the others working on behalf of the Hāshimites in general becomes pointless. This suggests that the story had an earlier version in which the Shī'ī missionaries in Khurāsān begin by working for Banū Hāshim in general, whereupon the leadership of the Hāshimite family passes to Abū Hāshim, whereupon Abū Hāshim dies bequeathing the leadership to the 'Abbasids. In other words, what we have here seems to be an alternative account of how Khurāsānīs working for Hāshimites in general ended up by sponsoring 'Abbasids in particular. Even if this interpretation is rejected, the story explicitly dates the 'Abbasid connection with the *da'wa* to the 740s, and more precisely, to *after* Abū Muslim's arrival in Khurāsān in 128/745–46. However the story is understood, the Khurāsānīs must thus have adopted the call to *al-riḍā* before they committed themselves to the 'Abbasids, as the first story also implies.

This is not the only information in the tradition which suggests that Khurāsānīs and 'Abbasids only came together late.[54] Thus, the story of the meetings at al-Abwā' and Mecca present Ibrāhīm as unaware that the Khurāsānīs were preparing a revolution on his behalf,[55] and several members of the 'Abbasid house, including the future al-Manṣūr, joined the revolt of 'Abdallāh ibn Mu'āwiya on the eve of the Khurāsānī revolution, in apparent ignorance of the fact that this revolution was being prepared.[56] Admittedly, if Ibn Mu'āwiya had called to *al-riḍā min āl Muḥammad*, the 'Abbasids could have joined him in an effort to further the common aim (instructing Abū Muslim to liquidate him as soon as he ceased to be useful, as he proceeded to do in 129/746–47). But one would have expected at least one 'Abbasid to have gone to Khurāsān to assist matters there. Why was the future al-Manṣūr happy to administer a minor district in al-Ahwāz on behalf of Ibn Mu'āwiya, when he could have participated in the raising of black banners among his own followers in Khurāsān?[57] Why was neither he nor any other 'Abbasid instructed to move on when the Khurāsānī missionaries asked for a member of the *ahl al-bayt* and

got Abū Muslim instead?[58] Why, in short, was there no 'Abbasid involvement with the Khurāsānī war effort until the Khurāsānīs arrived in Iraq? It must be added that other participants in Ibn Mu'āwiya's revolt seem to have been equally ignorant of the supposed 'Abbasid involvement with Khurāsān. Thus, Sulaymān ibn Ḥabīb ibn al-Muhallab, Ibn Mu'āwiya's governor of al-Ahwāz, belonged to a family which was both well connected with Khurāsān and favorable to the revolution once it was underway;[59] indeed, he himself is said to have called to Abū Salama [*sic*] on the arrival of the Khurāsānī troops in Iraq.[60] But that the future al-Manṣūr was more than an ordinary subgovernor had not apparently come to his knowledge: he would scarcely have been so foolhardy as to beat and extort money from a member of the 'Abbasid family if he had known that the 'Abbasids were preparing a bid for the caliphate on their own.[61]

The relationship between the dynasty and the movement which enthroned it is evidently a problem which takes us far away from the meaning of *al-riḍā*, but it should be clear that the history of this movement has been subject to more ideological rewriting than is normally assumed: if *al-riḍā* meant what it appears to have meant, we must confess that we do not yet (or any longer) know how or why the 'Abbasid revolution came to be 'Abbasid.

POSTSCRIPT

T. Nagel, *Untersuchungen zur Entstehung des Abbasidischen Kalifates* (Bonn, 1972) also argues that *al-riḍā* was a person chosen by *shūrā*.

NOTES

1. *Akhbār al-dawla al-'abbāsīya wa-fīhi akhbār al-'Abbās wa-waladihi*, ed. 'A. 'A. al-Dūrī and 'A. J. al-Muṭṭalibī (Beirut, 1971), pp. 200, 204, 282 f., 287, 291, 323, 329, 335, 340, 365, 389, 391; Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*, ed. M. J. de Goeje *et al.* (Leiden, 1879–1901), II, 1957, 1988 f., 1993, 2003; III, 24; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, Vol. III, ed. 'A. 'A. al-Dūrī (Beirut and Wiesbaden, 1978), pp. 115, 130 f., 136; *Kitāb al-'uyūn wa'l-ḥadā'iq*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1871), p. 192; cf. also Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, III, 183; G. van Vloten, "Zur Abbasidengeschichte," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* LII (1898), p. 225, on al-Manṣūr in Basra. Needless to say, some sources present the missionaries as having called to Banū 'l-'Abbaās right away, see for example Dīnawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, ed. V. Guirgass (Leiden, 1888), p. 335; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa'l-nihāya fī 'l-ta'rīkh* (Cairo, 1351–58), X, 30, 32.

2. P. Crone and M. Hinds, *God's Caliph, Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 61 f.

3. *Akhbār al-'Abbās*, p. 204. Cf. p. 194; Ṭabarī, II, 1988; III, 24.

4. *Akhbār al-'Abbās*, p. 391.

5. Cf. most recently, M. Sharon, *Black Banners from the East* (Jerusalem and Leiden, 1983), pp. 147, 157 f.

6. Ṭabarī, II, 984 ff. The edition by M. A. F. Ibrāhīm (*Ta'rīkh al-Ṭabarī* [Cairo, 1960–69], VI, 287) reads *anna mā*, which makes nonsense of the passage unless an *illā* is inserted before *al-riḍā*. The meaning of Muṭarrif's message is quite clear from the Khārijite counter-argument (note especially . . . *mā dhakarta lanā min al-shūrā ḥīna qulta inna al-'arab idhā 'alimat annakum innamā turīdūna bi-hādha al-amr Qurayshan*. . . .). It follows that we must here have the word *annamā* in the same sense as in Qur'ān 21:108; cf. E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, 1863–93), I, col. 109a, s.v. *anna*.

7. Ibn Qutayba (attrib.), *Kitāb al-imāma wa'l-siyāsa* (Cairo, 1909), p. 162. Cf. Ṭabarī, II, 446 f., on the Basrans in the second civil war: at first they disagreed about whom they should make their emir, "then they agreed that two men were to make the choice for them: when the two had agreed, they would give their consent" (*thumma tarāḍaw bi-rajulayn yakhtārān lahum khīratan fa-yarḍawna bihā idhā ijtama'ā 'alayhā*). "They agreed on . . . [X and Y] to choose whomever they might find acceptable for them" (*fa-tarāḍaw bi . . . an yakhtārā man yarḍayān lahum*). "[X] made people promise that they would accept whomever he might choose" (*la-yarḍawna bimā yakhtāru*). "He said, 'I have chosen this one on your behalf'; so they cried, 'we accept'" (*qāla a-lā innī qad raḍītu lakum bihi, fanāḍaw qad raḍīnā*). The person chosen by this form of *shūrā* could clearly also be described as *al-riḍā*.

8. Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, Vol. V, ed. S. D. F. Goitein (Jerusalem, 1936), p. 188.

9. *Akhbār al-'Abbās*, pp. 51, 74 (the reply is unilluminating). Cf. Ṭabarī, II, 488 f., where the Khurasānīs in the second civil war are invited to pay homage to Salm ibn Ziyād *'alā al-riḍā ḥattā yastaqīma amr al-khilāfa*, "on the basis of agreement on him until the caliphate should be put in order," that is, on the basis of popular choice as opposed to caliphal appointment.

10. Ṭabarī, II, 1567.

11. Ṭabarī, II, 1918–19, 1931.

12. Cf. Ṭabarī, II, 1919, where Naṣr ibn Sayyār, the governor of Khurāsān, has to step down so that "the matter" can be resolved by *shūrā*; and II, 1918, where a *shūrā* for the selection of subgovernors is actually set up.

13. F. Gabrieli, "La Rivolta dei Muhallabiti nel 'Irāq e il nuovo Balāḏurī," *Rendiconti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, classe di scienze morali, storiche

e filologiche, 6th ser., XIV (1938), pp. 214 f., with reference to al-Balādhurī (unpublished) and *'Uyūn*, pp. 58, 65 (I owe this reference to Martin Hinds).

14. Balādhurī would seem to have found the two programs contradictory: cf. his *za'ama*, discussed by Gabrieli, "Rivolta," p. 214 n.

15. Gabrieli, "Rivolta," p. 215 n; *'Uyūn*, p. 66.

16. Abū 'l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, *Kitāb maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn* (Najaf, 1353), pp. 121 f. idem, *Kitāb al-aghānī* (Cairo, 1927–74), XII, 228.

17. Al-Maqdisī, *Le Livre de la création et de l'histoire*, ed. and trans. C. Huart, Vol. VI, (Paris, 1919), p. 62.

18. Ṭabarī, II, 1866.

19. Ṭabarī, II, 722.

20. *Maqātil*, pp. 161, 178.

21. Ibid., p. 178.

22. *Akhbār al-'Abbās*, pp. 385 f., 389. The date of this meeting is given as "while 'Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Sulaymān ibn 'Abd al-Malik was *amīr* of the *ḥajj*."

23. Ṭabarī, III, 152 (cf. III, 264); van Vloten, "Zur Abbasidengeschichte," citing a Zaydī manuscript (cf. *Maqātil*, p. 145).

24. A point noted by van Vloten, "Zur Abbasidengeschichte," p. 215. R. Traini, "La Corrispondenza tra al-Manṣūr e Muḥammad 'an-Nafs az-zakiyyah,' " *Annali del Istituto Orientale di Napoli*, n.s. XIV (1964), defends the authenticity of the correspondence (pp. 785 ff.), and holds that it once did refer to Muḥammad's election (pp. 795 ff.); T. Nagel, "Ein früher Bericht über den Aufstand des Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh im Jahre 145 h," *Der Islam* XLVI (1970), pp. 247 ff., is more skeptical without reaching any firm conclusions regarding either the correspondence or the meetings in question.

25. Abū Salama seems to have been unaware of the election of Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh, cf. below.

26. They could have taken place before the 'Abbasids became involved with the Khurāsānī *da'wa*, cf. below; indeed, the story of the second meeting implies that Ibrāhīm knew nothing of the activities of the Khurāsānīs on his behalf before the messenger informed him.

27. The paradigmatic *shūrā* is the one appointed by 'Umar, who designated six men in his capacity of leader (in the sense of representative) of the community; 'Umar's example is said to have been strictly imitated by Sa'īd ibn Baḥdal al-Khārijī in the Jazīra in 127 (Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh*, ed. S. Zakkār [Damascus, 1967–68], pp. 568 f.). However, another version has it that he asked his *quwwād* to designate ten men, from among whom he selected four; these four chose two from among themselves, who were then asked to agree between themselves who was to be the leader (ibid.). In late Umayyad Khurāsān, Naṣr ibn Sayyār and al-Ḥārith ibn Surayj each designated two men, who were to choose the governors of Transoxania (clearly not from among themselves), and who were also to draw up the rules which these governors had to follow (Ṭabarī, II, 1918). In mid-Umayyad Basra, the community itself designated two men to make the choice for it (above, n. 7; this procedure is not, however, explicitly called a *shūrā*).

28. Thus the majority of the sources, see F. Omar, *The 'Abbāsid Caliphate* (Baghdad, 1969), pp. 139 ff.

29. *Arabskii anonim XI veka*, ed. P. A. Gryaznevich (Moscow, 1960), fol. 290a; *'Uyun*, p. 196; cf. p. 191.

30. The response of the 'Alids was unencouraging, while in the meantime, impatient Khurāsānīs elevated Abū 'l-'Abbās to the throne. Cf. Omar, *Caliphate*, pp. 143 ff.

31. If so, he can scarcely be said to have made a "bewildered" convocation for a "prosaic" *shūrā* (P. Crone, *Slaves on Horses, the Evolution of the Islamic Polity* [Cambridge, 1980], p. 65).

32. *Akhbār al-'Abbās*, p. 403.

33. Ibn A'tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, Vol. VIII (Hyderabad, 1975), p. 177.

34. *'Uyūn*, p. 191.

35. Cf. Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, VIII, 178, where Abū Salama makes the choice on behalf of the community: "O people, will you accept what I do?" (*hal antum rāḍūna bimā aṣna'u*). They said, "we accept your command" (*raḍīnā bi-amrika*), "do what you like." He said, ". . . Abū Muslim . . . wrote to me ordering me to set up a Hāshimite caliph for the people . . . we have considered the best (*akhyār*) of Banū Hāshim . . . and have accepted 'Abdallāh ibn [Muḥammad ibn] 'Alī ibn 'Abdallāh ibn 'Abbās on your behalf . . . do you agree?" (*qad irtaḍaytu lakum . . . fa-hal raḍītum?*). They answered, "Yes, we agree" (*raḍīnā*). Normally, Abū 'l-'Abbās is said to have been Ibrāhīm's legatee; here he is *al-riḍā*, chosen in open competition with other Hāshimites.

36. Both were minors at the time according to Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat ansāb al-'arab*, ed. 'A. S. M. Hārūn (Cairo, 1962), p. 31. Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm was born in 122, and was thus only ten years old at the time of the elevation of Abū 'l-'Abbās (Ṭabarī, II, 1716). His brother 'Abd al-Wahhāb seems to have been granted his first public office in 139 or 140, seven or eight years after Abū 'l-'Abbās' accession, when he was put in charge of a summer campaign and/or appointed governor of the Jazīra (Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. M. J. de Goeje [Leiden, 1868], p. 187; Ṭabarī, III, 125; Kalīfa, p. 641; cf. *Akhbār al-'Abbās*, p. 404). Ibrāhīm's other sons are rarely mentioned; they died without issue (Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, III, 127), which could be taken to mean that they died in childhood.

37. Both were present in Kufa along with the rest of the 'Abbasids (Ṭabarī, III, 27; Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 419), and their existence could thus have been expected to elicit some comment.

38. *Maqātil*, p. 343; the word comes alive at pp. 349 f., where Abū 'l-Sarāyā's imām has testated in favor of another 'Alid: *wa-in raḍītum bihi fa-huwa al-riḍā wa-illā fa'khtārū li-anfusikum*. They end up by choosing another.

39. "His choice . . . from the two families as a whole has been 'Alī ibn Mūsā . . . on account of . . . his perfect excellence, his clear knowledge, his manifest godliness, his genuine abstinence, his leaving off of this world, and his assertion of freedom from the people," as al-Ma'mūn put it in the document of succession (Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, p. 138). Compare Ibn Khallikān, *Wafāyāt al-a'yān*, ed. I. 'Abbās (Beirut, 1970–72), III, 270 (no. 423), where we

are told that al-Ma'mūn gathered the *khawāṣṣ al-awliyā'*, and told them that of all the descendants of al-'Abbās and 'Alī he had found no one more meritorious and deserving of the caliphate than 'Alī al-Riḍā.

40. The choice of the epithet was al-Ma'mūn's. Cf. Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, p. 138; *Maqātil*, p. 369.

41. Cf. S. Moscati, "Il Testamento di Abū Hāšim, *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* XXVII (1952); Sharon, *Black Banners*, ch. 5.

42. Cf. Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, n. 456.

43. It is reassuring to see that Islamicists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries generally regarded this story as apocryphal (J. Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall*, trans. M. G. Weir [Calcutta, 1927], p. 503; Nöldeke and others in Moscati, "Testamento," p. 35).

44. *Pace* a number of scholars of whom Wellhausen seems to be the earliest (*Kingdom*, pp. 503 f.), and Sharon the most recent (*Black Banners, passim*).

45. Thus a certain *naqīb* acted as story-teller, *fa-yadhkuru maḥāsin Banī Hāshim wa-yadhummu Banī Umayya* (Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, X, 32). Yūsuf ibn 'Umar al-Thaqafī would imprison anyone known for *muwālāt Banī Hāshim wa-mawaddat ahl al-bayt* (Dīnawarī, *Akhbār*, p. 339). Qaḥṭaba called the Syrians to *mā fī hādhā al-muṣḥaf min tafḍīl Muḥammad ṣl'm wa-tafḍīl Banī Hāshim* (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, VIII, 172). The missionaries called to *imāmat Banī Hāshim* (Maqdisī, *Création*, VI, 59). The mission was a *da'wa li-Banī Hāshim* (Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 408–409 and *passim*). Abū Salama was ordered to enthrone a *khalīfatan Hāshimīyan*, and chose Abū 'l-'Abbās as the best of Banū Hāshim (Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, VIII, 178). And so on.

46. But as Sharon notes, we have to await al-Shahrastānī before we see them do it (*Black Banners*, p. 84 n.).

47. Cf. Sharon, *Black Banners*, ch. 4.

48. *Maqātil*, p. 161: the missionaries of Banū Hāshim went out to preach in favor of the 'Alids on the death of al-Walīd II; when things began to go well for them, each *farīq* would adduce a *waṣīya* in favor of its own candidate.

49. If so, the transition from an ideology of *shūrā* to one of *waṣīya* may have been less drastic than it sounds. In Umayyad court poetry, 'Uthmān's position rests on both *shūrā* and *waṣīya*, in the sense that he was elected by a *shūrā* set up by 'Umar on his deathbed, sc. by *waṣīya* (Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, p. 32, n. 41). By the time we reach Abū 'l-Sarāyā, the person chosen directly by the imām on his deathbed was the *riḍā* if the community would accept him (*Maqātil*, p. 349).

50. There is surprisingly little reference to it in the historical (as opposed to heresiographical) literature. Neither Abū 'l-'Abbās nor Dāwūd ibn 'Alī refers to it in the accession speeches of 132; they also do not say anything incompatible with it (Ṭabarī, III, 29 f.). It must be with reference to the alleged testament that Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakīya asks al-Manṣūr how the 'Abbasids can claim to have inherited 'Alī's power, given the fact that 'Alī's descendants are still alive (ibid., p. 209); but al-Manṣūr himself does not invoke it, being well on the way to adopting the position which his son al-Mahdī

was later to make official, namely, that the 'Abbasids had not inherited the imamate from an 'Alid, but rather from al-'Abbās himself (especially ibid., p. 215; cf. Traini, "Corrispondenza," p. 794). Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakīya's question demonstrates the polemical weakness of Abū Hāshim's testament vis-à-vis 'Alid claims.

51. *'Uyūn*, pp. 179 f.

52. *'Uyūn*, pp. 180 f.

53. The text is explicit: *qad intashara bi-Khurāsān du'āt min al-shī'a wa-qad inqasamū qismayn, qism minhum yad'ū ilā āl Muḥammad 'alā al-iṭlāq wa'l-qism al-thānī yad'ū ilā Abī Hāshim ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīya, wa-kāna al-mutawallī li-hādhihi al-da'wa ilā āl rasūl Allāh ṣl'm Ibn Kathīr wa-kāna al-du'āt yarji'ūna fī 'l-ra'y wa'l-fiqh ilā Abī Salama.* And it is quite true that Ibn Kathīr and others called to *āl Muḥammad*, Abū Salama himself being known as *wazīr āl Muḥammad* and Abū Muslim as *amīn āl Muḥammad*. None of them breathed a word about Abū Hāshim.

54. Similarly Sharon, *Black Banners*, but in a quite different vein.

55. Cf. above, n. 26.

56. Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 468; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, III, 182; Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-wuzarā' wa'l-kuttāb*, ed. M. al-Saqqā *et al.* (Cairo, 1938), p. 98; Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara*, p. 369 (I owe these references to Martin Hinds); Ibn Khallikān, *Wafāyāt*, II, 410 (no. 276); Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, ed. Sh. al-Arna'ut *et al.* (Beirut, 1981–), VII, 23, 83; van Vloten, "Zur Abbasidengeschichte," pp. 214, 226. According to Jahshiyārī, *all* Hāshimites joined Ibn Mu'āwiya, whether they were of 'Alid, 'Abbasid, or other descent.

57. He was governor of Īdhaj (thus Jahshiyārī, Balādhurī, and van Vloten in the preceding note) on behalf of Sulaymān ibn Ḥabīb ibn al-Muhallab, Ibn Mu'āwiya's governor of al-Ahwāz (thus all except Jahshiyārī).

58. Ṭabarī, II, 1949.

59. Cf. Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, pp. 133 f. One Muhallabid was in charge of Abū Muslim's vanguard in 131 (namely, Abū Sa'īd ibn Mu'āwiya ibn Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab; cf. *Akhbār al-'Abbās*, p. 337); two Muhallabids appear as members of Qaḥṭaba's army at Isfahan and Nihāwand in the same year (namely, 'Umar ibn Ḥafṣ al-'Atakī and Yazīd ibn Ḥātim; cf. ibid., pp. 338 f. (corrupt), 352 f.; Ṭabarī, III, 4, 139); another one appears as a member of this army in Iraq ('Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab, *Akhbār al-'Abbās*, p. 378; but cf. Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, III, 138); and two of them rebelled in Basra on behalf of the approaching armies (Sufyān ibn Mu'āwiya and Rawḥ ibn Ḥātim, *Akhbār al-'Abbās*, pp. 355 f.; M. Hinds, *An Early Islamic Family from Oman: al-'Awtabi's Account of the Muhallabids* (forthcoming), pars. 102–105 and the notes thereto).

60. Hinds, *Early Islamic Family*, par. 106.

61. Cf. the references given above, n. 56. Some of the sources (especially Jahshiyārī) credit Abū Ayyūb al-Mūryānī, Sulaymān ibn Ḥabīb's secretary, with the foresight which Sulaymān lacked. His rough treatment of Abū Ja'far was to cost him his life.