

Dating Ibn A‘tham’s History: Of Persian Manuscripts, Obscure Biographies, and Incomplete *Isnāds**

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Abstract

This article is an attempt to settle the debate about the floruit of the largely obscure Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī and the date of the composition of his history. The standard death date given for him, 314/926–27, was recently revealed to be scholarly guesswork, and more than one scholar has argued in recent decades that the history may have been partially composed as early as 204/819–20. But the revision is mistaken, and this article presents three arguments to show why. First, manuscript evidence undermines the basis for the early dating. Second, the comparative examination of a cluster of isnāds in the history that have often been discarded as unusable reveals Ibn A‘tham’s connections to authorities active at the end of the third/ninth century. And third, building on the work of Ilkka Lindstedt, I affirm and further specify Ibn A‘tham’s likely floruit on the basis of a network of biographical connections to Ibn A‘tham. The conclusion offers a pair of suggestions for locating Ibn A‘tham’s history within the broader scheme of Islamicate historiography.

The study of Arabic historiography has often proceeded by guesswork. So few early works (that is, those written during the second/eighth century) survive in their original form that educated speculation based on minimal evidence is the norm.¹ It is for precisely this reason, however, that the two histories of the obscure Aḥmad b. A‘tham al-Kūfī are noteworthy.² On the one hand, the surviving portions of his *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* and

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1. As Chase Robinson put it: “Islamicists are used to this kind of hedging, but it should be striking to everyone else”; *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 19.

2. It has been noted that inattention to Ibn A‘tham’s history probably stems from its reputation as both a romantic and a Shi‘i history. As Qays al-‘Aṭṭār recently pointed out, however, Twelver Shi‘i authorities across a

his *Kitāb al-Taʾrīkh* together represent one of the largest surviving works of Arabic history composed during the “formative” period of Islamicate history writing, spilling across more than 2,700 pages and eight volumes in the best edition.³ On the other hand, we know exceedingly little about the author, and scholars have disagreed on the dating of his history for more than five decades now.⁴ The debate has sharpened of late: Lawrence Conrad recently pointed out that the death date typically cited for Ibn Aʿtham, 314/926–27, was based on nothing more than speculation in the first place.⁵ Already in the 1970s, scholars began to suggest that Ibn Aʿtham actually wrote at the beginning of the third/ninth century (circa 204/819–20). Indeed, following vociferous arguments in favor of the revised dating, some scholars have accepted the newer hypothesis, and more than one reference work now includes the early date.⁶

In theory, the stakes of the debate are quite high. If some significant part of Ibn Aʿtham’s history was written in 204/819–20, it would be not only one of the earliest surviving relatively intact works of Arabic historiography but also one of the largest surviving pieces of Arabic prose *tout court*.⁷ Closer scrutiny of the relevant evidence both inside and outside

millennium have almost always identified Ibn Aʿtham as a non-Shiʿi writer, and as I argued in the third chapter of my dissertation, Ibn Aʿtham’s history bears all the hallmarks of being epistemologically grounded in the same problematic that guided, e.g., the approaches of Ibn Wāḍih al-Yaʿqūbī and Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭabarī. What has been less appreciated is that his approach to history writing has been obscured by the rough transmission history of the text. For al-ʿAṭṭār’s comments, see his introduction to Ibn Aʿtham, *Qitʿa min Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, ed. Q. al-ʿAṭṭār (Karbalā: Dār al-Kafil, 1438/2017), 13–19. For the epistemological problem, see my “Ibn Aʿtham’s History: Transmission and Translation in Islamicate Written Culture, 290–873/902–1468” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2021), 128–86.

3. The best edition of the text remains Ibn Aʿtham, *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, ed. M. ʿA. M. Khān et al., 8 vols. (Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1388–95/1968–75). For useful notes on existing editions, see M. Schönleber’s review of al-ʿAṭṭār’s *Qitʿa* in *Al-ʿUṣūr al-Wuṣṭā* 28 (2020): 421–29. On the separation of the history into *Futūḥ* and *Taʾrīkh*, stemming ultimately from a description made by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, see below.

4. For ease of exposition, I tend to refer to both the *Futūḥ* and the *Taʾrīkh*, which by all accounts continue one after the other, as “Ibn Aʿtham’s history.” Needless to say, it is highly likely that the works were written at different times, possibly over many years. Given both this likelihood and the general dearth of concrete evidence, “dating Ibn Aʿtham’s history” must be a relative claim, not an absolute one.

5. See L. Conrad, “Ibn Aʿtham and His History,” *Al-ʿUṣūr al-Wuṣṭā* 23 (2015): 87–125, at 92–93.

6. For the full argument in favor of revision, see Conrad, “Ibn Aʿtham and His History,” 90–96. For invocations of the early dating, see Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 34, n. 12; A. Borrut, *Entre mémoire et pouvoir: L’espace syrien sous les derniers Omeyyades et les premiers Abbassides (v. 72–193/692–809)* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 91–93; J. Scheiner, “Writing the History of the *Futūḥ*: The *Futūḥ*-Works by al-Azdī, Ibn Aʿtham, and al-Wāqidī,” in *The Lineaments of Islam: Studies in Honor of Fred McGraw Donner*, ed. P. M. Cobb, 151–76 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 162 and 172; R. J. Lynch, *Arab Conquests and Early Islamic Historiography: The Futuh al-Buldan of al-Baladhuri* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2020), 157. For citations in reference works, see E. L. Daniel, “Ketāb al-Fotuḥ,” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online ed., ed. E. Yarshater et al. (New York: Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation, 1996–) [hereafter *EIR*]; and S. C. Judd, “Ibn Aʿtham al-Kūfī,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd ed., ed. K. Fleet et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2007–) [hereafter *EI3*]. I owe the point about reference works to I. Lindstedt, “Al-Madāʾini’s *Kitāb al-Dawla* and the Death of Ibrāhīm al-Imām,” in *Case Studies in Transmission*, ed. I. Lindstedt et al., 103–30 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014), 123.

7. Among histories, it would be bested only by the relatively lengthy fragments of Sayf b. ʿUmar’s (fl. late second/eighth century?) *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* and *Kitāb al-Jamal*, as edited by Q. al-Samarrai, and it might surpass the

the text, however, reveals that the *Futūḥ* and the *Taʿrīkh* are all but certainly the product of the late third/ninth and early fourth/tenth centuries, as originally guessed more than a century and a half ago. Thus, Ilkka Lindstedt demonstrated with reference to two key pieces of biographical information Ibn A‘tham’s connections to two scholars through the first decades of the fourth/tenth century.⁸ Indeed, Lindstedt must be credited with turning up an absolutely crucial and otherwise unnoted report in Ḥamza al-Sahmī’s (d. 427/1038) *Taʿrīkh Jurjān*, the *isnād* for which offers a relative but clear date linking Ibn A‘tham to the turn of the fourth/tenth century.

But there is more to be said on the question in terms of critiquing the arguments of Conrad et al. in favor of the early dating and strengthening the link to the fourth/tenth century with evidence internal to the text, neither of which were attempted by Lindstedt. In this article, I aim to offer a conclusive examination of the debate around the dating of Ibn A‘tham’s history. My overarching contention is that Ibn A‘tham was writing near the end of the reign of the eighteenth Abbasid caliph, al-Muqtadir bi-llāh (r. 295–320/908–32), and likely died around the same time.⁹ I make my argument in three parts. First, I reexamine the argument in favor of the early dating, especially as advanced by Conrad. His key piece of evidence came from an early fourteenth/late nineteenth-century lithograph of the sixth/twelfth-century Persian translation of Ibn A‘tham’s *Futūḥ*. The lithograph claims that Ibn A‘tham’s *Futūḥ* was composed in 204/819–20. I show, however, that earlier manuscripts of the Persian translation do not include this claim; indeed, I found attestation of that date in no version of the translation other than the Bombay lithographs. The late provenance of that information casts serious doubt on its reliability for dating Ibn A‘tham’s history.

Second, by sorting out Ibn A‘tham’s relationship to a number of the sources he cited in the history, I show that Ibn A‘tham was actively gathering historical information at the end of the third/ninth century. There are evident difficulties in reading Ibn A‘tham’s *isnāds*.¹⁰ As a result, most of Ibn A‘tham’s readers have ignored the question of how he related to his sources. I demonstrate, however, that the *isnāds* in the text do not support the early dating and may, in fact, be interpreted as supporting the later dating. A little bit of spadework and some educated guesses show that everyone Ibn A‘tham cited as a direct source lived through the end of the third/ninth century, indicating that Ibn A‘tham himself must have lived beyond then.

Finally, I reexamine the biographical evidence turned up by Lindstedt, revising and specifying his readings. Lindstedt already ascertained the basic point: two different men

Taʿrīkh of Khalifa b. Khayyāt (d. 240/854), which comes down to 232/847 (meaning it was probably still being composed at the time).

8. Lindstedt, “Al-Madāʿini’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*,” 118–23. Lindstedt subsequently expanded the argument and published a more definitive statement in his “Sources for the Biography of Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī,” in *Contacts and Interaction: Proceedings of the 27th Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, Helsinki 2014*, ed. J. Hämeen-Anttila et al., 299–309 (Leuven: Peeters, 2017).

9. The commonsensical conclusion that Ibn A‘tham died around the time his history concluded, as reported by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1229) in his *Kitāb al-Irshād*, was drawn already by several scholars writing in Arabic, but none of them added additional evidence. See below.

10. For a discussion of these difficulties, see Conrad, “Ibn A‘tham and His History,” 114–20, esp. 114–15.

(ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAdī, a famous scholar of hadith, and al-Sallāmī, a famous historian of Khorasan) who lived through the fourth/tenth century reported meeting Ibn Aʿtham in person. However, Lindstedt did not consider the problems surrounding the death date of al-Sallāmī, which is evidently incorrect as reported in the biographical dictionaries. A rereading of the biographical evidence reveals connections between Ibn Aʿtham and a handful of other figures of the fourth/tenth century. These reports all but confirm that Ibn Aʿtham was active after the turn of the fourth/tenth century, and they help us narrow down the possible date of his death to sometime around the year 320/932.

Textual corruptions and references to unknown figures in Ibn Aʿtham’s *isnāds* present significant challenges to dating these chains of transmission, and so my efforts are necessarily tentative. (As already noted, a little hedging is unavoidable.) The overall picture, however, is clear and consistent. Combining the three types of evidence we have—manuscripts of the Persian translation, *isnāds* in the history, and biobibliographical information—allows me both to affirm and to specify the initial estimate offered by Lindstedt.

1. Debating the Date: Problems with the Early Third/Ninth-Century Dating

A handful of important studies on both Ibn Aʿtham and his history have been published in recent years.¹¹ As a group, these publications have significantly advanced our understanding of the text’s history and methodology.¹² One study, in particular, calls for a response—namely, Conrad’s long-circulated, but only lately published, “Ibn Aʿtham and His History,” the most extensive of the recent studies. It was in this article that Conrad made the strongest statement in favor of revising the dating of Ibn Aʿtham’s history to 204/819–20.

First, Conrad pointed out that the commonly accepted date for Ibn Aʿtham’s death, 314/926–27, is based on nothing but a conjecture made by the Germano-Russian orientalist C. M. Frähn (d. 1267–68/1851) in the nineteenth century.¹³ In a bibliographical survey addressed to Russian imperial agents in Central Asia, Frähn asked the agents to search for copies of the Arabic version of Ibn Aʿtham’s *Futūḥ*, which at the time was known only through a partial Persian translation begun at the very end of the sixth/twelfth century. In his note on the *Futūḥ*, Frähn suggested that Ibn Aʿtham may have died in 314/926–

11. The following summary is indebted to Antoine Borrut’s introductory note to Conrad’s article (Conrad, “Ibn Aʿtham and His History,” 87), which is based on Borrut, *Entre mémoire et pouvoir*, 91–93. See also Lindstedt, “Sources for the Biography,” 299–300, and Daniel, “Ketāb al-Fotūḥ.”

12. Especially significant are Lindstedt’s “Al-Madāʿini’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*” and “Sources for the Biography.” Conrad’s notes on the manuscript tradition are amply supplemented by M. Schönleber, “Notes on the Textual Tradition of Ibn Aʿtham’s *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*,” in *Contacts and Interaction: Proceedings of the 27th Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, Helsinki 2014*, ed. J. Hämeen-Anttila et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 427–38.

13. For a short biography of Frähn, who for a time directed the Asiatic Museum of the Russian Academy of Sciences, see *The Encyclopaedia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature, and General Information*, 11th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910–14), s.v. “Frähn, Christian Martin.” For a preliminary version of the critique, see Conrad’s lemma “Ibn Aʿtham al-Kūfī (fl. Early Third/Ninth Century),” in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, ed. J. S. Meisami and P. Starkey, 1:314a–b (London: Routledge, 1998), 1:314a.

27, appending parenthetically the ever-useful question mark of scholarly uncertainty.¹⁴ In the absence of other information—we still know of no source offering any dates for Ibn A‘tham—Carl Brockelmann incorporated Frähn’s guess into his biobibliography of premodern Arabic literature.¹⁵ As Conrad noted, however, Frähn gave neither sources nor rationale for his suggestion; its subsequent inclusion in an authoritative reference work conferred on it the impression of a certainty it did not have.¹⁶ Even descriptions of the history made independently of Brockelmann, such as that in Charles Rieu’s catalog of Persian manuscripts in the British Library, ultimately relied on Frähn’s conjecture.¹⁷ Conrad must be correct on this point: however reasonable the guess, it was just a guess.¹⁸

The second of Conrad’s points is more troublesome. Drawing on shorter, earlier statements by ‘Abd Allāh Mukhlis,¹⁹ Charles Storey,²⁰ and M. A. Shaban,²¹ he argued that a significant part of the *Futūḥ* was written near the beginning of the third/ninth century. He emphasized a single piece of evidence. As mentioned, a significant portion of Ibn A‘tham’s *Futūḥ* was translated into Persian in southern Khorasan beginning around the year 596/1199.²² In the early fourteenth/late nineteenth century, this Persian translation

14. Frähn, *Indications bibliographiques relatives pour la plupart a la littérature historico-géographique des arabes, des persans et des turcs* (St. Petersburg: L’Imprimerie de l’académie impériale des sciences, 1845), 16 (no. 53). The title page of the bilingual Russian-French work reads: “Addressed especially to our employees and voyagers in Asia.”

15. C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1943–49) [hereafter *GAL*], supplement 1:220.

16. Conrad, “Ibn A‘tham and His History,” 92–93.

17. Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1879–83), 1:151a.

18. As we will see, Frähn’s guess was closer to the likely truth, but it remains unclear how he came up with 314/926–27. For one possible explanation of Frähn’s oddly specific conjecture, see Lindstedt, “Madā’ini’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*,” 121.

19. “Ta’riḫ Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfi,” *Majallat al-Majma‘ al-‘Ilmī al-‘Arabī* 6 (1926): 142–43.

20. Storey’s note about the 204/819–20 date was in the supplementary volume. For the full entry on Ibn A‘tham, see his *Persian Literature: A Bio-Bibliographical Survey* (1927–1958, repr. London: Luzac, 1970), 1.1:207–9; for the dating suggestion, see 1.2:1260. Devin DeWeese was generous enough to provide detailed notes on the Persian Ibn A‘tham from Yuri Bregel’s Russian revision of Storey’s work (*Persidskaia literatura: Bio-bibliograficheskii obzor* [Moscow: GRVL, 1972], 1:612–16, with supplementary notes at 3:1425) and A. T. Tagirdzhanov’s catalog of manuscripts at Leningrad State University (*Opisanie tadzhikskikh i persidskikh rukopisei Vostochnogo otdela Biblioteki LGU*, vol. 1, *Istoriia, biografii, geografiia* [Leningrad: Izdatel’stvo Leningradskogo Universiteta, 1962], 90–96, nos. 50–54, MSS 127, 137, 279, 280, and 581), which were otherwise unavailable to me. They do not add any information relevant to this question, but I am very grateful for Professor DeWeese’s help.

21. M. A. Shaban, “Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfi,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1954–2005) [hereafter *EI2*]; Shaban, *The ‘Abbāsīd Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), xvii–xix.

22. For the Persian translation, see Daniel, “Ketāb al-Fotuḥ,” and E. L. Daniel, “The Rise and Development of Persian Historiography,” in *Persian Historiography*, ed. C. Melville, 101–54 (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 118–20. For the discovery of the Arabic manuscripts, see A. N. Kurat, “Abū Muḥammad Aḥmad b. A‘tham al-Kūfi’s *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* and Its Importance Concerning the Conquests of Central Asia and the Khazars,” *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* 7 (1949): 274–82, at 274–76, and Schönleber, “Notes on the Textual Tradition,” 427–28.

was published in multiple lithograph editions in Bombay, whence the key piece of evidence. In the first pages of the lithograph, it is claimed that Ibn A‘tham’s *Futūḥ* was composed in the year 204/819–20.²³ This was the basis of Conrad’s theory: given that the Persian translation of the *Futūḥ* runs from the election of Abū Bakr in 11/632 to the massacre of al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī and his supporters at Karbalā’ in 62/680,²⁴ Conrad suggested that the 204/819–20 date in the lithographs must refer to a first version of the *Futūḥ*. Ibn A‘tham, he reasoned, might have lived a couple of decades after its composition, but anything in the text beyond the mid-third/ninth century must have been added later by someone else.²⁵

Conrad argued for the plausibility of the date on the grounds that there would have been no point for the Persian translator(s) to fabricate the date at the end of the sixth/twelfth century. Without such a motive, the given date must have some sort of evidential basis. He suggested it might have come from the colophon of the Arabic manuscript from which the Persian translator worked.²⁶ Further, Conrad downplayed the possibility that the date might be a copyist error or a misinterpretation on the part of the translator, as did Elton Daniel, who thought corruption “unlikely since dates in manuscripts are usually spelled out instead of written using numerals.”²⁷

There is, however, a specific reason to suspect the accuracy of that date: it seems to find attestation only in the modern Bombay lithographs. Mukhlīṣ, Shaban, and Conrad cited the lithographs only and no manuscripts. Even Ghulām-Riḍā Ṭabāṭabā’ī Majd, the editor

23. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī A‘tham-i Kūfī, *Tarjama-yi Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, trans. Muḥammad Mustawfī (wr. 596/1199–1200) (Bombay: Mīrzā Muḥammad Shīrāzī Malik al-Kuttāb, 1300/1883), 3.4 = *Tarjama-yi Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, trans. al-Mustawfī (Bombay: Mīrzā Muḥammad Shīrāzī Malik al-Kuttāb, 1305/1888), 3.3: *dar sana-yi diwīst u-chahār 204 ta’līf karda ast*. (Hereafter, these lithographs are cited as “Bombay 1300” and “Bombay 1305,” respectively.)

24. Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, 1:1–5:251.

25. Conrad, “Ibn A‘tham and His History,” 93–94, 109. Conrad’s argument is more complex than this brief summary, for reasons of space, lets on. He also sought to explain the text’s composition history in terms of the socioreligious context of the time, arguing that Ibn A‘tham (whom he identified, on the basis of the text’s contents, as a Shī‘ī storyteller-preacher, a *qāṣṣ*) must have set out to rewrite Islamic history from a Shī‘ī perspective after al-Ma’mūn named the eighth of the Twelver Imāms, ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā, as heir apparent to the caliphate in 201/816. When al-Riḍā died a couple of years later, Conrad imagined, the polemical wind fell from Ibn A‘tham’s theological sails, and the *Futūḥ* was left incomplete, to be continued later to the fourth/tenth century. For this hypothesis, see the next section.

26. Conrad, “Ibn A‘tham and His History,” 94. Conrad claimed that there are “several” Bombay lithographs independently repeating the date, implying widespread attestation. Aside from the two Bombay lithographs cited in an earlier note, which were issued by the same publisher (and were perhaps based on the same manuscript), Brockelmann (*GAL*, S1:220) noted an earlier version dated 1270/1853–54, but I have been unable to locate it. I know of no other versions.

27. Daniel, “Ketāb al-Fotuḥ.” Numerals would be more easily conflated than the Persian *diwīst* (دویست, 200) and, e.g., *sīṣad* (سیصد, 300), which have rather different consonantal skeletons. The date in the lithographs, however, is given in two ways—once in a logograph with the numerals over the word *sana* and once written out, with both styles being relatively common. In other words, it is possible that the spelled-out date derives from numerals (e.g., in the colophon of the Arabic version consulted by the translator, as hypothesized by Conrad), which are much easier to confuse. For logographs, see A. Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts: A Vademecum for Readers* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 86.

of the most critical edition of the Persian translation, which relies on seven manuscripts, including the earliest surviving copy, had to cite the lithograph for the 204/819–20 date, indicating that none of the earlier manuscripts included it.²⁸ It was Storey alone who cited another source, Muḥammad Wafādār Murādī’s catalog of manuscript holdings in the state library in Mashhad, which include a copy of the Persian translation. Storey noted that Murādī indicated that Ibn A‘tham’s history might have been written in 204/819–20. The implication, then, is that the Mashhad manuscript may have reproduced the date, offering some corroboration for the lithographs.

But there are several reasons to doubt that the Mashhad manuscript in question is a good source for the date. The catalog entry is ambiguous: Murādī stated only that the Arabic *Futūḥ* was “composed in 204” (*dar sana-yi 204 ta’lif namūda*).²⁹ That is, he did not specify that the manuscript in question includes the 204/819–20 dating. What is more, Murādī mentioned having compared the manuscript with the Bombay lithograph, leaving open the possibility that he, too, had the date from the lithograph, not the manuscript. Indeed, his language is decidedly reminiscent of the phrasing in both lithographs (*dar sana-yi 204 ta’lif karda ast*), differing only by a verb.³⁰ Most importantly, however, the manuscript Murādī described was copied in 1296/1879—not very long before the Bombay lithographs themselves were done.³¹ In short, then, Murādī did not cite an independent source for the date.³² And fourteenth/eighteenth-century copies of a sixth/twelfth-century translation can hardly be called an ideal evidentiary basis for dating a third/ninth-century original.

Further, neither the manuscripts of the Persian translation I have been able to examine nor the catalog descriptions of other copies mention the 204/819–20 date.³³ Admittedly,

28. Ibn A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, trans. al-Mustawfī, ed. G.-R. Ṭabāṭabā’ī Majd (1372sh/1993, repr. Tehran: Shirkat-i Intishārāt-i ‘Ilmī wa-Farhangī, 1392sh/2013–14), p. *panjāh u-chahār*, n. 11, citing Bombay 1305 (cf. *ibid.*, *sī wa-du* for the sigla, in this case *cha*, for *chāp*, “print”). To prevent confusion with the Arabic edition, Majd’s edition of the Persian translation will hereafter be cited as Mustawfī, *Futūḥ*. Lindstedt (“Madā’ini’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*,” 120 and 123) also denied the validity of the Persian manuscript dating, but he did so more by assertion than by argumentation. In particular, he claimed that the date was written out in the Edinburgh manuscript used as the base text of Majd’s edition and suggested that it probably represents a scribal error. But this point is incorrect on the grounds I have given in this note and the last one, namely that the date appears neither in the Edinburgh manuscript nor only in a written-out form.

29. Murādī, *Fihrist-i kutub-i khaṭṭī-yi Kitābkhāna-yi Markazī-yi Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī* (Mashhad: Sāzmān-i Kitābkhāna-yi Mūza-hā wa-Markazī-yi Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī, 1389–90/1970), 3:76 (chapter 14, no. 11). Cf. the slightly updated catalog by M. Ā. Fikrat, *Fihrist-i alifbā’ī-yi kutub-i khaṭṭī-yi Kitābkhāna-yi Markazī-yi Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī* (Mashhad: Kitābkhāna-yi Markazī-yi Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī, 1369/1990), 99b, which includes the 204/819–20 date in connection with the same manuscript but does not resolve the confusion.

30. Bombay 1300, 3.4 = Bombay 1305, 3.3.

31. Or perhaps even after; recall that Brockelmann cited a lithograph done in 1270/1853–54.

32. Additionally, there is at least one suggestion that the Bombay lithographs stem from an Indian family, not an Iranian one. Tagirdzhanov claimed (*Opisanie*, 95–96, describing MS 127) that they represent an abbreviated and late redaction of the Persian translation, copied in India in 1124/1712. It is unclear to me how he would have known this, as the lithographs themselves (unsurprisingly) do not name their exemplar text.

33. Manuscripts: Khuda Bakhsh 493 2a.15–16. (I thank M. Kaur for sending me photos of the relevant portions of the text.) See also the plates of the manuscripts used in Mustawfī, *Futūḥ*, pp. *sī u-sih-chihil u-shish*, none of which include the dates. Catalogs: E. G. Browne, *A Supplementary Hand-List of the Muḥammadan Manuscripts*,

my survey has been limited: more than fifty copies of the Persian *Futūḥ* survive, scattered throughout Eurasia.³⁴ Given that the date in the lithographs appears immediately after the title of the work, however, it is exceedingly unlikely that the catalogers—who all successfully located the title—would have ignored the date if it appeared in the manuscripts they examined.³⁵ As neither Majd nor the catalogers mention the date as appearing in any manuscript, it is most likely absent from the majority of witnesses.

Conrad's theory is complex, and he sought to interpret other parts of the text as supporting the earlier dating. Certain of his points will be returned to below. In light of all these hints, however, it is most likely that the 204/819–20 date emerged late in the life of the text and cannot be read as credible evidence for the dating of Ibn Aʿtham's history.

2. Yāqūt's Description of Ibn Aʿtham's History

Given that the 204/819–20 date has no particularly reliable basis, we must begin again with the evidence for the likely date of the work's composition. There is only one independent description of the text, namely, the report of Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1229) in his *Irshād al-arīb*, which has been dismissed as unreliable on a number of grounds. Let us reconsider the report in full:

By [Ibn Aʿtham] are the *Kitāb al-Maʿlūf* and the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, which is well known³⁶ and in which he recounts [events] down to the days of al-Rashīd [r. 170–93/786–809]. Also by him is the *Kitāb al-Taʾrīkh*, [which runs down] to the end of the days of al-Muqtaḍir and which begins with the days of al-Maʿmūn and verges on being a continuation (*yūshik an yakūn dhaylan*) to the first book. I have seen both books.³⁷

Including All Those Written in the Arabic Character, Preserved in the Libraries of the University and Colleges of Cambridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 147 (no. 890 = King's 105); E. Sachau and H. Ethé, *Catalogi codicum manuscriptorum bibliothecae Bodleiana*, vol. 13, *Catalogue of the Persian, Turkish, Hindūstānī and Pushtū Manuscripts*, part 1, *The Persian Manuscripts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889), 69–72 (nos. 124–26); W. H. Morley, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Historical Manuscripts in the Arabic and Persian Languages Preserved in the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (London: J. W. Parker, 1854), 16–17 (no. VIII); W. Ouseley, *Catalogue of Several Hundred Manuscript Works in Various Oriental Languages* (London: A. J. Valpy, 1831), 10 (nos. 349–51); Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts*, 1:151–52; A. Sprenger, *A Catalogue of the Bibliotheca Orientalis Sprengeriana* (Giessen: W. Keller, 1857), 3 (nos. 32–33).

34. For a listing, see my “Ibn Aʿtham's History,” appendix 2.

35. Thus, Rieu (*Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts*, 1:151b) paraphrased the very passage in which the date occurred and did not mention it.

36. I am disinclined to think that the *Kitāb al-Maʿlūf* actually refers to a second work (pace Lindstedt, “Madāʿini's *Kitāb al-Dawla*,” 119, and Judd, “Ibn Aʿtham al-Kūfī”). Rather, it seems more likely to me to be some sort of comment by Yāqūt about the *Futūḥ*. For instance, the rhyme in Yāqūt's phrase is concealed in translation: *kitāb al-maʿlūf wa-kitāb al-futūḥ maʿrūf*. Moreover, Yāqūt said explicitly that he saw two books (*al-kitābayn*). See further the discussion of this passage in my dissertation: “Ibn Aʿtham's History,” 191–94.

37. Yāqūt, *Kitāb Irshād al-arīb ilā maʿrifat al-adīb*, ed. D. S. Margoliouth (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1923–31), 1:379.2–4 = ed. I. ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1993), 1:202.2–5.

Thus, at face value, Yāqūt’s report indicates that Ibn A‘tham wrote two works of history, the latter of which continued to the end of the reign of al-Muqtadir (r. 295–320/908–32). Some scholars have accepted this information as indicating that Ibn A‘tham must have died sometime around 320/932, although none adduced any additional evidence in favor of this conclusion.³⁸ Other scholars have rejected Yāqūt’s description, albeit for different reasons. Conrad made two arguments. First, he pointed out that it is unlikely that an author writing in 204/819–20 could have lived long enough to write a history that covered the reign of al-Muqtadir.³⁹ Given what we now know about that date, however, this argument may be discarded. Second, following on from the first argument, Conrad suggested that there were certain shifts in both the content and the style of the history that indicated a transition from one author to another, namely from a fervent partisan of the Shi‘a writing in an early, monographic style (i.e., Ibn A‘tham) to a more neutral (or Sunnī) continuator writing in a later, annalistic style (i.e., an anonym).⁴⁰ Conrad’s specific argument about this transition does not bear directly on dating the history, thus exceeding the limits of this study, but I have sought to refute it elsewhere, arguing that the transition in style is far from clear-cut.⁴¹

As discussed by Conrad, Lindstedt, and others, several problems are evident. Yāqūt’s description omits mention of al-Amīn, passing directly from al-Rashīd to al-Ma‘mūn, but al-Amīn’s caliphate is treated in the work that survives.⁴² What is more, the break in the text that survives is different from the one described by Yāqūt: instead of the scribal conclusion coming at the end of the reign of al-Rashīd, the surviving text continues with accounts of al-Rashīd for another forty pages and ends well before the reign of al-Muqtadir, concluding with the briefest mention of al-Musta‘īn (r. 248–52/862–66).⁴³ And although Yāqūt referred to two works, the copyist of the only manuscript that attests to the later portions of the text (namely, MS Ahmet III 2956 in the Topkapı Sarayı library) referred to the whole work as the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*.⁴⁴

What is important to address here is a third argument, adduced by Lindstedt, namely, that the continuator of the history is named in the text itself. Lindstedt argued that Yāqūt’s description was flawed, that only the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* survives, and that the work was continued by ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Balawī (fl. fourth/tenth century), better known as the author of the *Sīrat Ibn Ṭūlūn*, an account of the semi-independent military ruler

38. Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharī‘a ilā taṣānīf al-Shi‘a* (Najaf: Maṭba‘at al-Gharri, 1356–90/1936–70), 3:221–22; M. J. Abū Sa‘da, *Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī wa-manhajuhu al-ta’rīkhī fi Kitāb al-Futūḥ* (Cairo: self-published, 1987), 47–48; and al-‘Aṭṭār in Ibn A‘tham, *Qīṭ‘a*, 23.

39. Conrad, “Ibn A‘tham and His History,” 121–22.

40. Conrad, “Ibn A‘tham and His History,” 96–104.

41. McLaren, “Ibn A‘tham’s History,” chapter 2, esp. 79–125.

42. Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, 8:286–311.

43. Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, 8:245–86 (al-Rashīd) and 354.5–7 (al-Musta‘īn).

44. See, e.g., the colophon of the second volume: MS Ahmet III 2956, 2:278a.6–17, reproduced in Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, 8:354, n. 7.

of Egypt Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn (r. 254–70/868–84).⁴⁵ The strength of this argument depends on how one interprets the apparent scribal conclusion (*tamām*) located two-thirds of the way through the eighth volume of the Hyderabad edition, where it is announced: “*The Book of Conquests has finished*” (*tamma Kitāb al-Futūḥ*).⁴⁶ The *tamām* is followed by an *isnād* that seems to begin with an ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Balawī, and the work then continues for another 110 pages.

We cannot solve all of these problems decisively here.⁴⁷ But we can clear up one of them—namely, the question of whether al-Balawī actually continued Ibn A‘tham’s history. Indeed, the answer to this question is decisive for determining when the coverage of the work ended, which, in turn, suggests something about when it was composed and when Ibn A‘tham lived and died. To resolve it, we must compare *isnāds* across Ibn A‘tham’s history, beginning with the closest thing we have to Ibn A‘tham’s own statements about where he landed in time. Once we have sorted out this puzzle, we can return to considering the biobibliographical evidence, which the *isnād* data will help disambiguate in certain problematic places.

3. Ibn A‘tham’s *Isnāds*: Evidence for the Fourth/Tenth-Century Dating

The *isnāds* in Ibn A‘tham’s history are difficult to interpret. They vary in form, occasionally mention unidentifiable figures, and often include misspellings, omissions, and other infelicities. In general, two sorts of conclusions have been drawn in previous scholarship examining Ibn A‘tham’s *isnāds*. First, it has been remarked that the *isnāds*, being, on the whole, assembled unsystematically, represent problematic grounds for dating the text.⁴⁸ Despite the problems, however, scholars have still ventured various guesses about Ibn A‘tham’s or the history’s dates on the basis of links between Ibn A‘tham and a

45. Lindstedt, “Madā’ini’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*,” 119, n. 107; 120; and 122, n. 128. For the sketchy details of al-Balawī’s life, see G. E. Shayyal, “Al-Balawī,” in *EI2*.

46. Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, 8:244–45.

47. I have argued elsewhere (“Ibn A‘tham’s History,” 237–41 and 332–55) that we confront a very tricky manuscript problem. To wit, there are several pieces of evidence to indicate that MS Ahmet III 2956, although not apparently damaged itself, was based on an exemplar that had both missing and rearranged pages. For this reason, it seems more likely to me that Yāqūt, who directly reported seeing a copy of both “parts” of the history more than two centuries before Ahmet III 2956 was copied, had better knowledge of the work than that which can be gained from a single problematic manuscript. This does not resolve every problem; we are left with Yāqūt’s omission of al-Amīn, for instance. Still, it seems more likely that Yāqūt simply neglected to mention al-Amīn, even though the latter was included in Ibn A‘tham’s history, than that the original history omitted him.

48. See, e.g., Conrad, “Ibn A‘tham and His History,” 114–20, esp. 116: “It is true, of course, that matters of *isnād* criticism were far more important in the field of hadith . . . than they were in *akhbār*. But this is not the point at issue here. The features discussed above demonstrate that Ibn A‘tham did not handle *isnāds* with critical considerations in mind, and consequently, that one cannot assess them in terms of the formal critical principles which we know prevailed in his day. When we add to this problem his frequent citation (as in *isnāds* for individual reports) of unknown informants, his references to names which could refer to numerous persons, and the highly defective editorial state of many of the chains, it becomes amply clear that at present it is difficult to do much with these *isnāds*.”

source mentioned in the text with a known death date. Thus the second conclusion: what readings of the *isnāds* are possible support the earlier dating.⁴⁹ But we have seen that the manuscript evidence indicates the 204/819–20 dating is very likely incorrect.⁵⁰ Therefore, the argument that Ibn A‘tham must have lived into the fourth/tenth century contradicts most interpretations of the *isnāds*.⁵¹ One conclusion or the other needs revision, and given the weakness of the case for the 204/819–20 composition, it seems clear that it is the *isnād* findings that need reconsidering.

In the following sections, I demonstrate that the *isnāds*, with a few emendations, reveal a generally coherent picture (albeit one with a few idiosyncrasies). Ultimately, the point I seek to make here is that none of the *isnāds* that seem to indicate that Ibn A‘tham heard reports from second/eighth-century figures actually place Ibn A‘tham in that period. Instead, where it is possible to identify the dates of Ibn A‘tham’s affiliates, they are figures belonging to the end of the third/ninth century, not its beginning. Among these figures is the al-Balawī Lindstedt identified as the continuator, who I will argue must be someone other than the author of the *Sīrat Ibn Ṭūlūn*. Once we have a basic sense of how Ibn A‘tham figures into the relative chronologies of the history’s *isnāds*, we can examine how Ibn A‘tham is related to dateable figures appearing in other texts.

3a. Reading Ibn A‘tham’s Isnāds: Problems and Possibilities

Before we can turn to examining the *isnād* information in Ibn A‘tham’s history, however, a few points about the nature of reading *isnāds* must be made, particularly because the reliability of Ibn A‘tham’s handling of such material has been so widely doubted. Let us begin with the root assumption: citing a report (hadith, *khābar*, or otherwise) with an *isnād* tends to entail a claim that all the discourse reproduced is a quotation. This claim, in turn, contains the assumption that the quotation is verbatim and direct, and that each narrator heard (or otherwise received) the report from a previous authority and transmitted it without altering it. These relationships are founded, at least in theory, on the ideal of aural transmission. Although it was possible to gain authorization to transmit in other ways, the vocabulary of transmission tends to reflect this ideal. The strongest claim one could make is that someone “narrated to me” (*ḥaddathanī*), which suggests one heard it directly from

49. Kurat, “Ibn A‘tham’s *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*,” 277 (Wāqidi, d. 207/822); Shaban, *‘Abbāsīd Revolution*, xviii (Madā‘inī, d. 228/843?); Conrad, “Ibn A‘tham and His History,” 95 (Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, d. 148/765), 116 (‘Alī b. ‘Āṣim, d. 201/816, and al-Madā‘inī), and 120 (courtiers of al-Manṣūr [r. 136–58/754–75] and al-Mahdī [r. 158–69/775–85]). There is one exception: Lindstedt (“Madā‘inī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*,” 122) identified at least two figures who connect Ibn A‘tham to the beginning of the fourth/tenth century.

50. Thus Lindstedt, “Madā‘inī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*,” 118 (citing Shaban, *‘Abbāsīd Revolution*, xviii): “Shaban says that further proof [for the earlier dating] can be found [in the fact] that Ibn A‘tham uses isnads such as ‘*ḥaddathanī* al-Madā‘inī,’ which means, according to [Shaban], that Ibn A‘tham was al-Madā‘inī’s contemporary. This does not, of course, prove anything; Ibn A‘tham and his fellow historians were not utilizing the *isnād* in such a systematic way as Shaban says they were.” (Lindstedt does not, however, substantiate his claim of non-systematic use.)

51. Excepting Lindstedt’s identification (“Madā‘inī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*,” 121–22) of two figures whose appearance in *isnāds* he thought supported the later dating. They will be discussed below.

the source.⁵² Indeed, the assumption of such face-to-face transmission is foundational to traditional *isnād* criticism, which tests the plausibility of links between two figures. Could they have met? Did they live at the same time? Did they pass through the same places?

Modern scholars have disagreed over the extent to which an *isnād* can be trusted as an accurate record of a report's transmission history. Some have found *isnāds* to be largely reliable; others regard them as susceptible to potentially insoluble problems.⁵³ The rest land somewhere in the middle, arguing that comparing variations of the same report and their various *isnāds* can help show who was responsible for circulating the tradition in a given form.⁵⁴ But this debate, which has focused on the possibility of distinguishing genuine information from the first/seventh century, has mostly to do with the *origins* of particular reports—that is, the extent to which the earliest links in *isnāds* actually connect their reporters to original eyewitnesses. Here, however—and this is an important distinction—we are concerned primarily with later links in the chains, for Ibn Aʿtham usually stands at or near the end of the chains of transmission in question. Later links, the scholarly logic holds, tend not to be subject to the same ideological pressures (i.e., the desire to connect information to a source both early and authoritative) assumed to have motivated the fabrication of the opening sequences of *isnāds*. In short, if we can correctly identify Ibn Aʿtham's relationship to the authorities at the top of his *isnāds*, there is reason to think that we can ascertain useful, if relative, chronological information.

One further distinction is necessary. Although there is a significant amount of *isnād*-like data in the text, not all of it is *isnād* data for the text. Because Islamic history writing in this period often relied on quoting or reproducing parts of other, earlier texts, a later work may sometimes absorb the narrational structure of its sources. Such absorption may include the direct-but-abridged quotation of an eyewitness to events that the author of the history in question could not possibly have heard. For example, there are several instances in Ibn Aʿtham's history in which the early Kufan jurist ʿĀmir b. Sharāḥīl al-Shaʿbī (d. circa 110/728–29) appears to be quoted directly: all that is reported is “Al-Shaʿbī said . . .”⁵⁵

52. Especially as opposed to, e.g., claims that something “was said” (*qīla*) anonymously. There are, of course, certain exceptions: sometimes one might transmit just the gist of a statement rather than the verbatim wording (*riwāya bi-l-maʿnā*).

53. For example, contrast H. Motzki, “The Muṣannaf of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī as a Source of Authentic *aḥādīth* of the First Islamic Century,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 50 (1991), 1–21 (carefully credulous of ʿAbd al-Razzāq's *isnāds*) with M. Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma: A Source-Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), chapter 11 (structurally skeptical of *isnāds*).

54. There is a great deal of literature on this question. Useful surveys include F. M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1998), 5–25 (which is broader than hadith, but not unrelated to it); H. Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2000), chapter 2; and N. Haider, *The Origins of the Shīʿa: Identity, Ritual, and Sacred Space in Eighth-Century Kūfa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), chapter 2. One of the central ideas has been Joseph Schacht's theory about “common links” (*The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953], 172–75 and ff.), particularly as elaborated in G. H. A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition: Studies in Chronology, Provenance, and Authorship of Early Ḥadīth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 206–17.

55. Ibn Aʿtham, *Futūḥ*, 7:109.3, 109.9, 109.11, 110.5, 111.3.

But even using the early third/ninth-century dating, it would be a stretch to think that Ibn A‘tham himself heard what al-Sha‘bī reported about any situation. Rather, Ibn A‘tham must have borrowed those reports, and thus the quotation of al-Sha‘bī, from earlier sources. In other words, some of the passages that resemble *isnāds* in the history (that is, appear to indicate relative chronology) are almost certainly quoted from other texts and thus cannot refer to Ibn A‘tham.⁵⁶ To date the history relatively on the basis of its *isnāds*, therefore, requires separating the parts of the text that reveal its narrational structure (i.e., that attributable to Ibn A‘tham) from parts of the text that reveal borrowed narrational structure (i.e., that carried forward from earlier sources).

This point brings us back to the initial two attempts to date the text. Conrad and others are correct that the *isnād*-like data in Ibn A‘tham’s history, taken in the aggregate, paint an inconsistent picture. This inconsistency, however, does not mean the history itself is entirely inconsistent; rather, it stems from the juxtaposition of multiple narrational structures, caused by the quotational nature of Islamic historiographical discourse.⁵⁷ Similarly, although Shaban and others were right to suggest that quoted sources with known dates might in theory be used to date Ibn A‘tham relatively, they have often misinterpreted the relationships in question because they considered only one instance and thus did not distinguish “native” from “borrowed” narrational structures. Let us turn now to considering those *isnāds* that demonstrably go back to Ibn A‘tham.⁵⁸

3b. Relative Isnād Chronology: Ibn A‘tham and al-Madā‘inī

In this and the following sections, I demonstrate how a series of *isnāds* revolving around the early third/ninth-century historian Abū al-Ḥasan al-Madā‘inī (d. 228/843?), when aligned, provide a clear suggestion for Ibn A‘tham’s floruit. My approach here is to lay out *isnāds* with certain repeated sources next to each other in order to build a relative

56. This rule applies for the quotation, cited by Conrad (“Ibn A‘tham and His History,” 95, 118) and Lindstedt (“Madā‘inī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*,” 121), of Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, which is credited to “my father.” See Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, 2:92.18.

57. For a typology and index of *isnāds* in the text, see my “Ibn A‘tham’s History,” appendix 3.

58. It has already been noted that some cited figures who died near the turn of the fourth/tenth century appear to be direct sources for Ibn A‘tham, but the *isnāds* illustrate precisely some of the challenges involved. The figures in question are Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Yamānī, i.e., al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898), cited in Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, 8:252.8–9, and Ibn al-Ḥubāb al-Muqrī‘ (d. 301/914), cited at 8:211.ult. See Conrad, “Ibn A‘tham and His History,” 105–8 (ascribing the citations to continuators), and Lindstedt, “Madā‘inī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*,” 122, citing only Ibn al-Ḥubāb. Both *isnāds* seem to suggest that Ibn A‘tham was active in the last decades of the third/ninth century, but they are not without difficulties. For instance, between Ibn A‘tham and al-Mubarrad stands an unnamed figure called only “one of the people of knowledge” (*ba‘ḍ ahl al-‘ilm*)—a rather unhelpful chronological indicator. Similarly, the anecdote transmitted on the authority of Ibn al-Ḥubāb does not begin with any reference to Ibn A‘tham, implicit or otherwise. It simply reads: “Al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥubāb al-Muqrī‘ al-Baghdādī said . . .” At the least, this leaves open the possibility that the attached report is perhaps an interpolation. Lindstedt also identified a certain “Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā” (“Madā‘inī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*,” 122, citing Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, 8:212.5) as perhaps referring to al-Balādhurī—but this *isnād* (of only two links) is also somewhat dubious for the same reason, namely, because it does not begin with any reference to Ibn A‘tham.

chronology for all the *isnāds* together and thereby determine where Ibn A‘tham ought to stand in relation not just to any given *isnād*, but to his sources more generally.

It was M. A. Shaban who argued most strongly in favor of the possibility that Ibn A‘tham transmitted directly from al-Madā’inī.⁵⁹ To substantiate this claim, Shaban cited one of Ibn A‘tham’s collective *isnāds* (hereafter “CIs”).⁶⁰ There are four such CIs in Ibn A‘tham’s *Futūḥ*, each supporting lengthy accounts of major events.⁶¹ The CI in question (the second one in the history, hereafter “CI2”) introduces Ibn A‘tham’s account of the murder of ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān, the third caliph (r. 23–35/644–55). Al-Madā’inī is one of several authorities cited.⁶² Shaban found corroboration for the link between Ibn A‘tham and al-Madā’inī in the fact that “in the course of the narrative, [al-Madā’inī’s] name always occurs in its proper form as one of the most frequently mentioned authorities for significant traditions.”⁶³ But this is a problematic claim: There are no citations of al-Madā’inī in the narrative following CI2, which belongs to the *Futūḥ*; instead, al-Madā’inī is cited directly (several times) only in the *Ta’rīkh*, as a source for the Abbasid period.⁶⁴ With one exception, these other citations of al-Madā’inī are not usable for dating the text because they do not appear in the form of *isnāds*. Rather, Ibn A‘tham simply remarked, as he did with al-Sha‘bī, “Al-Madā’inī said . . .” and then provided the report.⁶⁵ In other words, these citations offer none of the narrational

59. Shaban, *Abbāsīd Revolution*, xviii (and cf. the earlier, less detailed statement in Shaban, “Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī”). Although Shaban’s claims are in need of revision, his explorations are nevertheless to be appreciated, particularly because he worked on the text without the aid of the Hyderabad edition, which was not fully published until later.

60. For collective *isnāds*, see M. Lecker, “Wāqidi’s Account of the Status of the Jews of Medina: A Study of a Combined Report,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 54 (1994), 15–32; T. Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 31–33, 38–39, 48–49; Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, 264–66; Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 97 (citing Lecker and Donner).

61. Al-Wāqidi (attrib.), *Kitāb al-Ridda wa-nubdha min futūḥ al-‘Irāq: Kilāhumā riwāyat Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī*, ed. M. Ḥamīd Allāh (Paris: Tougui and Beirut: al-Sharīka al-Muttaḥida li-l-Tawzī‘, 1989), 19 (for the account of the dispute over succession at the Prophet Muḥammad’s death, “CI1”); Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, 2:207–9 (the murder of ‘Uthmān, “CI2”); 2:344–45 (the battle of Ṣiffin, “CI3”); and 4:209–11 (the murder of al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī, “CI4”). For the (mis)attribution of the *Kitāb al-Ridda*, see M. Muranyi, “Ein neuer Bericht über die Wahl des ersten Kalifen Abū Bakr,” *Arabica* 75 (1978), 233–60. For its relationship to Ibn A‘tham’s *Futūḥ*, see Schönleber, “Notes on the Textual Tradition,” esp. 432–38.

62. Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, 2:147–49 = MS Ahmet III 2596 1b.2–13.

63. Shaban, *Abbāsīd Revolution*, xviii.

64. Most citations of al-Madā’inī are for the Abbasid revolution, which is covered in the seventh and eighth volumes. These are the materials discussed in Lindstedt, “Madā’inī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*,” esp. 106–8. Lindstedt claimed (at 107) that “It should be noted that Ibn A‘tham does not include much al-Madā’inī material before the ‘Abbāsīd revolution anonymously, either.” I demonstrated in a paper presented to the School of Abbasid Studies, however, that Ibn A‘tham’s, al-Balādhurī’s, and Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd’s accounts of the caliphate of al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī are all adaptations of one (or perhaps two) accounts written by al-Madā’inī; al-Balādhurī and Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd cited him, but Ibn A‘tham did not. This is not to suggest that Lindstedt is wholly incorrect but rather to point out that it is always difficult to draw such a wide-sweeping conclusion about a large work so laconic about its sources. McLaren, “Ibn A‘tham’s Archive.”

65. Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, 6:253–54 (the exception, a single-report *isnād*); 7:278.11; 8:159.9–10, 160.9–10, 190.4, 190.17, 192.4, 192.14, 195.7–8, 196.7, 202.3, 205.6, 206.12, 207.16, 218.1. Cf. Conrad, “Ibn A‘tham and His History,” 99 and 118, and Lindstedt, “Madā’inī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*,” 107.

structure that might help us to discern where Ibn A‘tham stood relative to his predecessor.⁶⁶ Thus, the only direct link between Ibn A‘tham and al-Madā’ini is that found in CI2, and it does seem as though Shaban drew the obvious conclusion from the relevant strand of the *isnād*: “Abū Muḥammad Aḥmad b. A‘tham al-Kūfī said, ‘Abū al-Ḥusayn ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Qurashī reported to me, saying . . .’”⁶⁷

Shaban is certainly right that the latter figure is al-Madā’ini, although he noted that the latter’s teknonym (*kunya*) was actually Abū al-Ḥasan, as it appears later in the text.⁶⁸ But there are good reasons to think that the *isnāds* describing how Ibn A‘tham got his reports from al-Madā’ini suffer from textual corruption. Indeed, a consistent picture of Ibn A‘tham’s place relative to al-Madā’ini appears only when comparing *all* the *isnāds* in which the latter appears. Such a comparison reveals that an intervening figure between Ibn A‘tham and al-Madā’ini is likely missing from the *isnāds* as we know them. Let us now turn to this missing link.

3c. CI2: A Baseline Reconstruction

Ibn A‘tham’s first citation of al-Madā’ini is only one strand of a broader collective *isnād*, the aforementioned CI2. We may begin by establishing the internal chronology of this particular strand, which reads as follows:

Abū Muḥammad Aḥmad b. A‘tham al-Kūfī said: [1] Abū al-Ḥusayn ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Qurashī related to me, saying: [2] ‘Uthmān b. Salīm reported to me from [3] Mujāhid from al-Sha‘bī and [2] Abū Miḥṣan from Abū Wā’il and [4] ‘Alī b. Mujāhid from Abū Ishāq . . .⁶⁹

Let us work through the problem of identifying the various figures in the *isnād*. (1) Shaban already pointed out the small error in al-Madā’ini’s *kunya*, given here as Abū al-Ḥusayn rather than Abū al-Ḥasan. But the personal names and *nisba* reveal this individual to be certainly the historian al-Madā’ini.⁷⁰ (2) Certain of the figures—namely, ‘Uthmān b. Salīm and Abū Miḥṣan—I was unable to identify.⁷¹ But we have enough biographical information on the others that we can reconstruct the *isnād*’s internal chronology. (3) Biographical sources record no Mujāhid as transmitting from al-Sha‘bī, but they do mention Mujālid

66. Perhaps Ibn A‘tham was here quoting a written copy of al-Madā’ini’s text, as suggested by Conrad (“Ibn A‘tham and His History,” 99, n. 77, and 116, n. 153) and Lindstedt (“Madā’ini’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*,” 107–8).

67. Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, 2:147.3–4.

68. Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, 6:253.14. Also noted by Lindstedt, “Madā’ini’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*,” 107, n. 25.

69. Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, 2:147.3–5.

70. See now I. Lindstedt, “Al-Madā’ini,” in *EI3*.

71. The only person with the teknonym “Abū Miḥṣan” I have found in the biographical dictionaries is ‘Ukkāsha b. Miḥṣan, a companion of the Prophet who was killed in the Ridda during the caliphate of Abū Bakr (r. 11–13/632–34). Thus, this Abū Miḥṣan cannot have witnessed the murder of ‘Uthmān, which took place in 35/655. See, e.g., Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, ed. ‘A. M. ‘Umar (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1421/2001), 3:86–87.

b. Saʿīd (d. 144/762).⁷² That the person meant here is in fact Mujālid finds confirmation in another *isnād* in the text in which it is indeed Mujālid, not Mujāhid, who transmitted from al-Shaʿbī.⁷³ (4) Abū Wāʿil must refer to Shaqīq b. Salama al-Asadī, who was born some years before the start of the Prophet Muḥammad’s career (traditionally dated to 610), who is remembered as transmitting to al-Shaʿbī, and who reportedly died in 82/701–2.⁷⁴ (5) Although the biographical sources do not record precise dates for ʿAlī b. Mujāhid, we can estimate them on the basis of the dates of the figures to whom he is connected. For instance, he reportedly transmitted from Abū Ishāq ʿAmr b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Sabīʿī (d. 128/745–46), the next figure named in the *isnād*, and to, e.g., Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (164–241/780–855).⁷⁵ We might presume, then, that ʿAlī b. Mujāhid lived around 120–90/738–806. In other words, he must have been a direct source for al-Madāʿinī, a second vector of transmission in the *isnād*. Combining all these biographical points provides a clearer picture of the relative chronology of this strand of CI2, which may be illustrated as in figure 1.

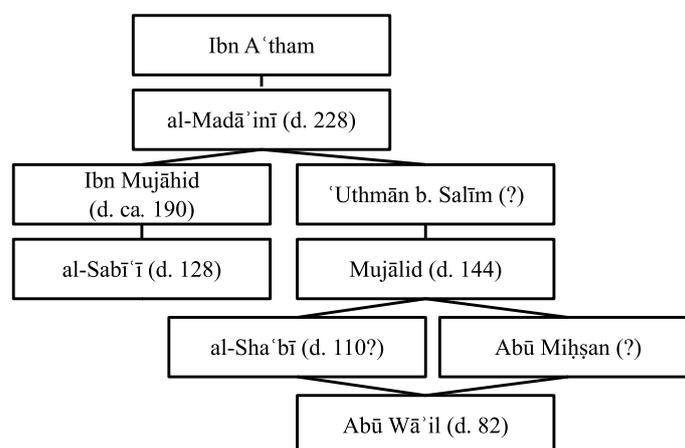


Figure 1. The Madāʿinī-Shaʿbī Strand

72. Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Taʾrīkh al-kabīr* (Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1360–84/1941–64), 4.2:9 (al-Shaʿbī, no. 1950); al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl fī asmāʾ al-rijāl*, ed. B. ʿA. Maʿrūf (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 2002), 14:33 (al-Shaʿbī) and 27:220 (Mujālid); al-Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, ed. S. al-Arnāʿūṭ et al. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1417/1996), 4:297 (al-Shaʿbī) and 6:285 (Mujālid).

73. Ibn Aʿtham, *Futūḥ*, 6:254.1 (this *isnād* will be discussed below). It is not difficult to imagine how this error occurred: the consonantal skeletons of both names are nearly the same, and the switch might have been caused by a scribal error—there is an ʿAlī b. Mujāhid mentioned in the same *isnād*.

74. Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 12:548–54 (no. 2767, mentioning that al-Shaʿbī transmitted from him). Al-Mizzī also noted (at 12:552) that al-Sabīʿī heard traditions from Abū Wāʿil, but apparently not in this case. At any rate, this is another chronological note that confirms that there are two parallel lines of transmission here—one through al-Sabīʿī and one through Mujālid.

75. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taʾrīkh Madīnat al-Salām wa-akhbār muḥaddithiyyahā wa-dhikr quṭṭānihā al-ʿulamāʾ min ghayr ahlihā wa-wāridiyyahā*, ed. B. ʿA. Maʿrūf (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1422/2002), 13:592–93; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, 21:117–120.

We can see that al-Madāʾinī represents a single meeting point for a cluster of lines of transmission stretching across approximately a century and a half. It is not difficult to see why Shaban concluded that Ibn A‘tham and al-Madāʾinī were linked: there is nothing here to suggest otherwise. But it is only by comparing this initial presentation with other *isnāds* in the text that the fuller picture begins to emerge—namely, that there are intervening links missing, casting doubt on the chronological value of CI2 as we have it.

3d. The Madāʾinī-Sha‘bī Strand: A Missing Link

There are two other *isnāds* in the text that include part of the same bundle of transmissions—what I will call the “Madāʾinī-Sha‘bī strand” (Madāʾinī < ‘Uthmān < Mujālid < Sha‘bī). One of these two is another collective *isnād* (“CI3”), which essentially reproduces CI2 for a later event (the battle at Ṣiffīn and the death of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib in 40/661).⁷⁶ But it presents an interesting problem: it is evidently corrupted, for in that *isnād*, Ibn A‘tham transmits directly from a “Salīm.” As the Hyderabad editors noted, the *isnād* is clearly meant to refer to ‘Uthmān b. Salīm, al-Madāʾinī’s source in CI2. This suggests that a line of text is missing from CI3 and that al-Madāʾinī ought to appear in it as well (see figure 2, with my emendations in dashed boxes).

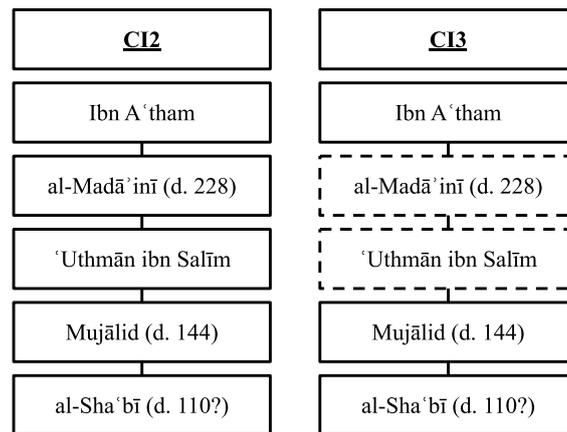


Figure 2. CI2 versus CI3

A third *isnād* (“the Muṣ‘ab *isnād*”), given for a report in which al-Sha‘bī praises Muṣ‘ab b. al-Zubayr (d. 72/692), who governed Iraq during the (anti)caliphate of his brother, ‘Abd Allāh (r. 64–73/683–92), reproduces once again the Madāʾinī-Sha‘bī strand. Crucially, however, another authority now intervenes between Ibn A‘tham and al-Madāʾinī:

He said: Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Balawī related to me [that] Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Qurashī said: ‘Uthmān b. Salīm related to me from Mujālid from al-Sha‘bī, who said . . .⁷⁷

76. Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, 2:344.10–345.9.

77. Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, 6:253.14–254.1.

Here the picture begins to change. The first named figure in the Muṣ‘ab *isnād* is Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Balawī. This is the first suggestion that there may be a problem with the Madā’inī-Sha‘bī strand as it appears in the two collective *isnāds* (CI2 and CI3). If there was an intervening figure between Ibn A‘tham and al-Madā’inī in all three of these *isnāds*, Ibn A‘tham would no longer be linked to the first decades of the third/ninth century by his connection to al-Madā’inī (see figure 3, again with dashed emendations).

CI2	CI3	Muṣ‘ab <i>isnād</i>
Ibn A‘tham	Ibn A‘tham	Ibn A‘tham
[al-Balawī]	[al-Balawī]	al-Balawī
al-Madā’inī	[al-Madā’inī]	al-Madā’inī
Ibn Salīm	Ibn Salīm	Ibn Salīm
Mujālid	Mujālid	Mujālid
al-Sha‘bī	al-Sha‘bī	al-Sha‘bī

Figure 3. Al-Balawī: The Missing Link?

This possibility is confirmed by the fact that seemingly the same al-Balawī appears in two other *isnāds* in Ibn A‘tham’s history, but not in connection with the Madā’inī-Sha‘bī strand. One of these *isnāds* (the “Raids *isnād*”) is given in a section describing the raids (*ghārāt*) undertaken by Mu‘āwiya and his allies in the aftermath of the arbitration at Ṣiffīn.⁷⁸ The *isnād* reads:

‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Balawī related to us, saying, Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-‘Alā’ al-Qurashī al-Madanī related to me, saying, Naṣr b. Khālīd al-Naḥwī and Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Hāshimī related to me from his father from Abū Mikhnaf b. Yaḥyā b. Sa‘īd al-Azdī, who said . . .⁷⁹

By comparing the Muṣ‘ab and Raids *isnāds* (see figure 4), crucial pieces begin to fall into place. The first link in the Raids *isnād* seems to be Ibn A‘tham, who is not named but implied—“al-Balawī related to us.” It seems most likely that this al-Balawī is the same as the al-Balawī in the Muṣ‘ab *isnād*, since both his name and his father’s name remain in place. Al-Balawī’s source, Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-‘Alā’ al-Qurashī al-Madanī, is easily identified:

78. For a summary of these events (and a collection of references to other histories in Arabic), see J. Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall*, trans. M. G. Weir (New York: Routledge, 2017), 99–104.

79. Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, 4:36.11–37.2.

Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 327/938) reported that his father (Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, who lived 195–277/810–90) heard reports from Ibrāhīm.⁸⁰ To this we can add al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī’s (d. 463/1072) quotation of two authorities who report that Ibrāhīm said his own father (i.e., ‘Abd Allāh b. al-‘Alā’) died in either 164 or 165 (780–82).⁸¹ Thus, Ibrāhīm must have died after 164/780. And if he lived long enough to transmit reports to Abū Ḥātim, the transmission must have taken place in the third/ninth century—Abū Ḥātim would have been five years old in 200/815, so it was probably no earlier than that.

If al-Balawī also transmitted reports from Ibrāhīm, we can estimate that al-Balawī was roughly contemporary to (or at least overlapped with) Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, meaning that he, too, would have lived between the turn of the third/ninth century and its last decades, perhaps circa 200–280/815–94.⁸² We do not get much help from the lower links: Abū Mikhnaf (d. 157/773) is a well-known historian from the first part of the second/eighth century, but I have not been able to identify the other three figures mentioned in the Raids *isnād*.⁸³ We do learn one important thing, however: the Muṣ‘ab *isnād* also seems to be slightly corrupted. The teknonym “Abū Muḥammad,” missing from the Raids *isnād* but assigned to al-Balawī in the Muṣ‘ab *isnād*, must refer instead to Ibn A‘tham, quoting *from* al-Balawī, and an intervening verb of transmission (e.g., *ḥaddathanā*, “he reported to us”) must be missing. The text ought to read “Abū Muḥammad [i.e., Ibn A‘tham] said, “‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Balawī [related to us] . . .”

It is because of this citation that Lindstedt identified this al-Balawī as the Abū Muḥammad al-Balawī who lived in Egypt and wrote about Ibn Ṭūlūn.⁸⁴ I see little reason, however, to think they are the same. For instance, al-Balawī’s name, given three times in the history, contains “Abū Muḥammad” only once; if we interpret the name in this instance as referring to Ibn A‘tham, the coincidence of teknonyms between this al-Balawī and the *Sīrat Ibn Ṭūlūn*’s al-Balawī disappears. Moreover, the tentative dates established by his link to Ibrāhīm Ibn al-‘Alā’ make it decidedly unlikely that the *Futūḥ*’s al-Balawī could have lived late in the fourth/tenth century.

80. Al-Bukhārī, *Ta’rīkh*, 1.1:304 (no. 962, Ibrāhīm) and 3.1:162 (no. 509, his father); Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa-l-ta’dīl* (Hyderabad: Dā’irat al-Ma‘ārif al-‘Uthmaniyya, 1360–72/1941–53), 2:109 (no. 319, Ibrāhīm) and 5:128–29 (no. 592, his father).

81. Al-Khaṭīb, *Ta’rīkh*, 11:188–89 (no. 5086). The two reports disagree—one says 164, the other 165.

82. If this is true, Muranyi’s suggestion that Ibn A‘tham heard reports from Ibrāhīm (“Ein neuer Bericht,” 236) cannot be correct (especially because Muranyi does not question the 314/926–127 date). Cf. al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wa-ma‘ādin al-jawhar*, ed. C. Barbier de Meynard and A. Pavet de Courteille, rev. C. Pellat (Beirut: al-Jāmi‘a al-Lubnāniyya, 1965–79), 1:13.15–16 (§8), mentioning among previous historians “‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Maḥfūz al-Balawī al-Anṣārī, companion of Abū Yazīd ‘Umāra b. Yazīd al-Madīnī.” I have not been able to identify the latter, but he appears to be mentioned in other *isnāds*. See below.

83. H. A. R. Gibb, “Abū Mikhnaf,” in *EI2*, and U. Sezgin, *Abū Miḥnaf: Ein Beitrag zur Historiographie des umayyadischen Zeit* (Leiden: Brill, 1971).

84. Lindstedt, “Madā’inī’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*,” 122 and n. 128. For the author of the *Sīrat Ibn Ṭūlūn*, see Shayyal, “Al-Balawī.”

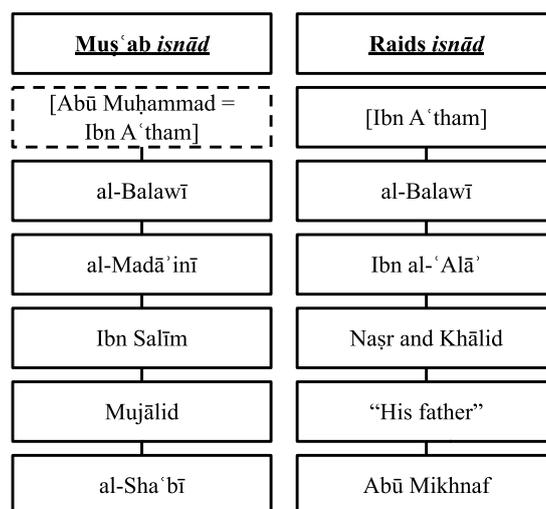


Figure 4. The Muṣ'ab and Raids *Isnāds* Compared

This supposition is strengthened by a final corroborating *isnād* (the “Shāfi‘ī *isnād*”), which appears in a report about Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 204/820) that is included in Ibn A'tham's account of Hārūn al-Rashīd's reign (r. 170–93/786–809) in the *Ta'rikh*. It reads:

Abū Muḥammad related to us, saying that ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Balawī reported to us that ‘Ammār b. Yazīd al-Madanī said: Aḥmad b. ‘Ubayd al-Ḥayrī, who was among the greatest of the people of knowledge, said ...⁸⁵

Here, there *is* a verb of transmission that separates Ibn A'tham (i.e., Abū Muḥammad) and al-Balawī. Moreover, the correctness of the basic structure of this *isnād* (specifically, the link between al-Balawī and ‘Ammār) is further attested because it is repeated in nearly the same form in a different text, Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī's (d. 458/1066) *Manāqib al-Shāfi‘ī*.⁸⁶ Although I have been unable to identify this *isnād*'s figures precisely in the biographical sources, it fits well with the broader picture being worked out here: Ibn A'tham clearly stands at two removes from an event that transpired in the late second/early ninth century at the court of al-Rashīd.⁸⁷

85. Ibn A'tham, *Futūḥ*, 8:245.2–4.

86. Al-Bayhaqī, *Manāqib al-Shāfi‘ī*, ed. A. Ṣaqr (Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-Turāth, 1390/1970), 1:130.6–12, especially the last two lines. The names are slightly different: Al-Bayhaqī cites ‘Umāra b. Zayd (perhaps the same companion of al-Balawī mentioned by al-Mas‘ūdī?) but does not mention Ibn A'tham's ultimate source, Aḥmad b. ‘Ubayd. For the figure to whom al-Balawī related in al-Bayhaqī's *isnād* (Muḥammad b. Abī Ya‘qūb al-Dīnawarī), see al-Khatīb, *Ta'rikh*, 4:616–17. Al-Khatīb notes no death date for Ibn Abī Ya‘qūb, but he connects him to other figures whose dates are known. For instance, Ibn Abī Ya‘qūb related reports to Muḥammad b. Yahyā b. Ṣā‘id (al-Khatīb, *Ta'rikh*, 16:341–45), who reportedly died in Dhū al-Qa‘da 318/December 930. This might make Ibn Abī Ya‘qūb a contemporary of Ibn A'tham.

87. It is usually reported that al-Shāfi‘ī went to Egypt circa 200/815–16; at any rate, he died in 204/820.

To recap: Shaban asserted, following the text of CI2 in the *Futūh*, that Ibn A‘tham was linked directly with al-Madā’īnī. This connection to al-Madā’īnī appears in one of the CIs in the work; a second, nearly identical CI, however, is missing two links. In fact, there must be an intermediary missing from both CIs because in a third *isnād* (the Muṣ‘ab *isnād*), Ibn A‘tham is connected to al-Madā’īnī through a certain al-Balawī. In a fourth *isnād* (the Raids *isnād*), this same al-Balawī is cited as transmitting a report from a figure, Ibrāhīm Ibn al-‘Alā’, who must have lived into the beginning of the third/ninth century. Thus, al-Balawī, who, I estimate, lived circa 200–280/815–94, or roughly at the same time as Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (195–277/810–90), may very well have overlapped with al-Madā’īnī, who lived roughly 135–228/752–843.⁸⁸ By this estimate, al-Balawī’s lifetime could easily have bridged the distance between al-Madā’īnī in the first decades of the third/ninth century and Ibn A‘tham at its end. Moreover, he certainly cannot be identified with the al-Balawī who wrote the *Sīrat Ibn Ṭulūn*.

CI2	CI3	Muṣ‘ab <i>isnād</i>	Raids <i>isnād</i>	Shāfi‘ī <i>isnād</i>
Ibn A‘tham	Ibn A‘tham	[Abū Muḥammad = Ibn A‘tham]	[Ibn A‘tham]	Ibn A‘tham
al-Balawī	al-Balawī	al-Balawī	al-Balawī	al-Balawī
al-Madā’īnī	al-Madā’īnī	Madā’īnī	Ibn al-‘Alā’	‘Ammār b. Yazīd
Ibn Salīm	Ibn Salīm	Ibn Salīm	Naṣr / Khālīd	Aḥmad b. ‘Ubayd
Mujālid	Mujālid	Mujālid	“His father”	
al-Sha‘bī	al-Sha‘bī	al-Sha‘bī	Abū Mikhnaf	

Figure 5. The Overall Picture

The overall picture, with emendations, is illustrated in figure 5. Alas, this argument must remain tentative, as it depends on inserting names that are missing, and the biographies of certain relevant figures are lost. But even if none of these *isnāds* alone solves the problem, comparing all five reveals a consistent picture—to wit, Ibn A‘tham must stand at one remove from al-Madā’īnī, joined to him by the intervening al-Balawī.

There is one further point to make here. I mentioned previously that Ibn A‘tham treated citations of al-Madā’īnī in two different ways. In some cases, Ibn A‘tham cited him via an intermediary; in others, he cited al-Madā’īnī directly. The difference might be explained as reflecting Ibn A‘tham’s place in the transmission history of al-Madā’īnī’s knowledge. When he had a direct link to authorize his transmission (i.e., when he could say that he got the knowledge from somebody who got it from al-Madā’īnī), he mentioned his source. When he did not name the source, as Conrad and Lindstedt have suggested, he must have

88. For al-Madā’īnī’s dates, which are somewhat troublesome, see U. Sezgin, “Al-Madā’īnī,” in *EI2*.

drawn on a copy of one of al-Madāʿinī’s texts.⁸⁹ This basic distinction fits well with how Ibn Aʿtham treats other prominent historians who were roughly contemporary to al-Madāʿinī, including Hishām b. al-Kalbī (d. 204/819), al-Wāqidī (d. 207/822), and al-Haytham b. ʿAdī (d. 207/822?). Ibn al-Kalbī, who appears in two of the CIs and in one other *isnād*, is always cited through an intermediary, a certain Abū Yaʿqūb Ishāq b. Yūsuf al-Fazārī.⁹⁰ Al-Wāqidī is also cited in the CIs—in one place with two intermediaries (Abū Jaʿfar ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. al-Mubārak < Nuʿaym b. Muzāhim al-Minqarī), in two other places with just the latter intermediary, and in a fourth place with two intermediaries again (this time Abū Ḥātim Sahl b. Muḥammad al-Ṣāniʿ < Nuʿaym al-Minqarī).⁹¹ Al-Haytham b. ʿAdī appears in the fourth CI, ensconced among transmitters, but when he is mentioned five times in the seventh volume, no intermediary is cited.⁹² Unfortunately, these links are harder to assess—Ibn Aʿtham appears to have heard their reports via otherwise unknown intermediaries.⁹³ We see, however, that in the broader picture, the claim in the *isnād* that Ibn Aʿtham transmitted directly from al-Madāʿinī is exceptional, providing a further reason to think that the work of emending his *isnāds* is worthwhile.

4. Ibn Aʿtham’s Biographical Connections

With these conclusions in mind, we can now return to examining the biobibliographical data on Ibn Aʿtham. Unfortunately for our purposes, there is essentially no decisive biographical information about Ibn Aʿtham. The few biographies we have for him are rather vague.⁹⁴ We can, however, build something of a circumstantial case for Ibn Aʿtham’s floruit and thus the time of composition of his history from a range of evidence both internal and external to the text. Lindstedt has already started to do so, drawing primarily on a few bits

89. There may have been a written text involved in both cases. In the first case, however, Ibn Aʿtham’s transmission would have been “authorized” if he had read part or all of al-Madāʿinī’s text with someone who had studied it with al-Madāʿinī himself. In the second case, Ibn Aʿtham may simply have purchased the text without having studied it with an acknowledged Madāʿinī tradent. On this distinction, see J. Pedersen, *The Arabic Book*, trans. G. French, ed. R. Hillenbrand (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 24–36 (Pedersen’s interpretations are probably too typicalizing), and G. Schoeler, *The Genesis of Literature in Islam: From the Aural to the Read*, rev. with and trans. S. M. Toorawa (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), chapter 8 (“Listening to Books, or Reading Them?”), which discusses works in a variety of genres.

90. Ibn Aʿtham, *Futūḥ*, 2:148.2–3 (CI2), 342.4–5, 344.14–345.1 (CI3).

91. Al-Wāqidī, *Ridda*, 19.5–6 (both intermediaries); Ibn Aʿtham, *Futūḥ*, 2:147.6 (only Nuʿaym), 344.12–13 (only Nuʿaym), and 4:209.7–8 (both intermediaries). Perhaps this should be taken as evidence that an intermediary between Ibn Aʿtham and Nuʿaym is missing in the second and third instances.

92. Ibn Aʿtham, *Futūḥ*, 4:210.9–10 (CI3) and 7:52.8, 124.2 (mentioning al-Haytham’s sources), 131.13, 138.13–15, 145.10–11. The manuscript (Ahmet III 2956, 1:171b) contains obviously erroneous readings—e.g., in line 4, “Muḥammad b. ʿAwāna b. al-Ḥakam b. al-Haytham b. ʿAdī,” which must refer to separate people, Ibn al-Ḥakam and al-Haytham.

93. There is, of course, *Naṣr* b. Muzāhim al-Minqarī (d. 212/827), known for his account of the Battle of Ṣiffin. Muranyi (“Eine neuer Bericht,” 237) thought that the Nuʿaym mentioned in the *Futūḥ* was simply a mistake for Naṣr, but Conrad (“Ibn Aʿtham and His History,” 115 and n. 146) argued they must be different people since Naṣr is cited elsewhere in the text (at Ibn Aʿtham, *Futūḥ*, 2:344.12 and 345.6).

94. For a survey of the biographical references, see Lindstedt, “Sources for the Biography.”

of biobibliographical information and a cursory treatment of *isnāds* in Ibn A‘tham’s history, and he has concluded that Ibn A‘tham must have died sometime “in the first half of the fourth/tenth century.”⁹⁵ A more thorough examination of the evidence allows us to narrow the likely range of Ibn A‘tham’s floruit and his writing.

4a. Once in Jurjān: When Did Ibn ‘Adī Meet Ibn A‘tham?

Let us begin with Ḥamza al-Sahmī’s *Ta’rīkh Jurjān*, a biographical work on hadith transmitters who lived in or visited Jurjān.⁹⁶ The work includes a notice on Ibn A‘tham that is based on a report the latter transmitted to al-Sahmī’s teacher, the famous Jurjānī scholar of hadith, Abū Aḥmad ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Adī (d. 365/976), best known as the author of a collection on weak hadith transmitters, *al-Kāmil fī ḍu‘afā’ al-rijāl*. According to the report’s *isnād*, Ibn A‘tham transmitted the report from Abū ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Muḥammad al-Imām al-Ḥarrānī (d. 266/880) to Ibn ‘Adī. Thus, as Lindstedt concluded, “because Ibn ‘Adī ... died ca. 365/976 and ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Muḥammad in 266/880, this information preserved in the *isnād* places, with high probability, Ibn A‘tham’s death date to the first half of the fourth/tenth century.”⁹⁷ Lindstedt assumed that Ibn A‘tham’s death must have fallen roughly halfway between the death dates of the two other figures. But this broad range leaves many questions unanswered, and reconsideration of both this evidence and other reports in the *Ta’rīkh Jurjān* can add further detail and precision.

The report does not state when Ibn A‘tham met al-Ḥarrānī or how old Ibn A‘tham was at the time, but the *isnād* implies that Ibn A‘tham was born before al-Ḥarrānī died in 266/880. In addition, Ibn ‘Adī specified in the *isnād* that he met Ibn A‘tham in Jurjān.⁹⁸ The first possible approach to estimating how old al-Imām al-Ḥarrānī, Ibn A‘tham, and Ibn ‘Adī were when they met one another is to examine this particular *isnād* against the broader backdrop of aural transmission in this period. The second approach is to comb through the biography of Ibn ‘Adī and the texts attributed to him in search of chronological clues about his career that might suggest when he met Ibn A‘tham.

95. See Lindstedt, “Madā’ini’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*,” 118–23.

96. By Jurjān, al-Sahmī meant the whole region around the old city of Jurjān, including nearby towns. See his *Ta’rīkh Jurjān*, 594.1–5, where he contrasted his catchment area with that applied in Abū Sa‘d al-Idrīsī’s (seemingly lost) *Ta’rīkh Istrābādh*, which apparently focused only on that city. The old city of Jurjān (or Gurgān) seems not to have recovered after the Mongol conquests in the seventh/thirteenth century. The modern city of Gurgān is a post-Mongol city founded at the site of old Istrābādh (or Astarābād); old Jurjān is now called Gunbad-i Qāwūs (“The Tower of Qāwūs”), a reference to the tomb of the Ziyārid Qābūs b. Washmgīr, who ruled Jurjān in the late fourth and early fifth/late tenth and early eleventh centuries. See C. E. Bosworth, “Gorgān, vi. History from the Rise of Islam to the Beginning of the Safavid Period,” in *Elr*, and C. E. Bosworth, “Ziyarids,” in *Elr*.

97. Lindstedt, “Madā’ini’s *Kitāb al-Dawla*,” 120.

98. What is more, Ibn ‘Adī (cited by al-Sahmī) recorded Ibn A‘tham’s genealogy through several generations (i.e., his *nasab*). This information is notable because it is not attested in any witness to Ibn A‘tham’s own text, in which Ibn A‘tham is usually called simply Abū Muḥammad Aḥmad b. A‘tham al-Kūfī (if he is named at all). The inclusion of this information in al-Sahmī’s work seems to suggest that Ibn A‘tham himself gave his *nasab* to Ibn ‘Adī, from whom al-Sahmī received it later, rather than either of the latter finding it, e.g., in a copy of the history.

Let us begin with the first approach. Richard Bulliet has suggested, on the basis of a quantitative study of the information recorded in Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Ghāfir al-Fārisī’s (d. 529/1135) biographical dictionary of hadith scholars in Nishapur in 317–514/929–1120, that most scholars began learning hadith between the ages of five and twenty and then left educational contexts, eventually returning in their fifties to teach hadith and continuing to do so until they died, sometimes as long as twenty years.⁹⁹ The results of Bulliet’s quantitative investigation reflect a period of transition in the ideals of hadith transmission. After the “canonization” of major hadith texts in the fourth/tenth century, the standard of transmitting shifted from strict dependence on sound aural transmission to an emphasis on the *performance* of aural transmission undergirded by written texts.¹⁰⁰ That is, the transmitter’s memory of the audited material mattered less than did the simple presence of a teacher to oversee the audition of a text previously verified as accurate. This development led to a shift in the age structure of transmission. Whereas earlier authorities, taking aurality as their standard, had argued that sound transmission depended on the recipient’s having reached maturity (at least fifteen years of age, according to certain *madhhabs*), later authorities argued that children, supported by texts, could serve as authoritative transmitters later in life.¹⁰¹ The corresponding benefit was a shortening of *isnāds*, a closing down of the temporal distances between transmitters. Instead of waiting for each generation of transmitters to reach maturity, transmissions could “skip” generations as elderly authorities taught young children. Of course, this shift in the age structure was supported, at least in part, by reference to exceptional precedents: later authorities combed the archive of hadith for cases such as those of people who were credited with

99. See R. Bulliet, “The Age Structure of Medieval Islamic Education,” *Studia Islamica* 57 (1983): 105–17, esp. 107–12 (cited in Conrad, “Ibn A‘tham and His History,” 113). The work in question is ‘Abd al-Ghāfir al-Fārisī’s *Muntakhab Siyāq Ta’rīkh Naysābūr*. On al-Fārisī and his family, see R. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur: A Study in Medieval Islamic Social History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 165–68. There are, of course, reasons to doubt the applicability of Bulliet’s model to our case. Ibn A‘tham is not, strictly speaking, remembered as a transmitter of hadith of the caliber of Ibn ‘Adī, so it is possible that his investment in a typical hadith education was limited. Yāqūt (in *Irshād*, ed. Margoliouth, 1:379.2 = ed. ‘Abbās, 1:202.2–3) claimed Ibn A‘tham was regarded as a “weak” transmitter by scholars of hadith. But he gave no source for this judgment, and, notably, Ibn ‘Adī did not mention Ibn A‘tham in his own work on weak hadith transmitters. One wonders whether Yāqūt made the judgment himself, perhaps on the basis of his examination of Ibn A‘tham’s use of *isnāds* in the history, particularly the use of collective *isnāds*. Still, there are certain structural parallels between his model and our case: Jurjān and Nishapur are both in the Islamic East, and Ibn ‘Adī was certainly alive in the period covered by al-Fārisī’s dictionary.

100. On these and related developments, see J. Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunnī Ḥadīth Canon* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), esp. chapter 5; P. Heck, “The Epistemological Problem of Writing in Islamic Civilization: Al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baghdādī’s (d. 463/1071) *Taqyīd al-‘Ilm*,” *Studia Islamica* 94 (2002), 85–114; and G. A. Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition: A Social and Intellectual History of Hadith Transmission across a Thousand Years* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), esp. chapter 1 (locating oral/aural transmission in the period after “canonization,” especially its persistence next to a certain acceptance of written transmissions of, e.g., the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*).

101. Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition*, 67 and 70 (citing al-Rāmhurmūzī, whose views are transitional, and al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, who takes text-as-guarantor for granted).

reporting about the Prophet even though they were only children at the time of his death.¹⁰² But Bulliet’s quantitative analysis and the biographical examples cited by Asma Sayeed and Garrett Davidson show that the shift was not merely one of ideals.¹⁰³ Given this ongoing transition, we might expect, then, that Ibn ‘Adī collected hadith primarily in the early part of his life, when he met an older Ibn A‘tham, before turning to teach later on in his life.

We may now turn to the second approach: what evidence is there of Ibn ‘Adī’s activities? In the *Ta’rīkh Jurjān*, al-Sahmī provided a summary biography of Ibn ‘Adī, including an autobiographical statement. Al-Sahmī wrote:

I heard Ibn ‘Adī say, “My father, ‘Adī b. ‘Abd Allāh, said that I was born on Saturday, the first day of Dhū al-Qa‘da in the year 277 [14 February 891], the year in which Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī died.” Ibn ‘Adī himself died on ... the first day of Jumādā al-Ākhira in the year 365 [5 February 976] and was buried beside the mosque of Kurz b. Wabara,¹⁰⁴ to the right of the direction of prayer (*al-qibla*) in a spot adjoining the courtyard of the mosque. Ibn ‘Adī was copying hadith in Jurjān in the year 290 [902–3] and then traveled to Iraq, Syria, and Egypt in the year 297 [909–10].¹⁰⁵

According to this passage, then, Ibn A‘tham must have been in Jurjān no earlier than 290/902–3. We do not, however, have to take al-Sahmī’s word for it. Because his work is focused on *muḥaddithūn*, al-Sahmī structured his prosopography around citing particular hadith transmitted by the subjects of his work.¹⁰⁶ One of his primary sources was hadith gathered by Ibn ‘Adī, probably, as Lindstedt noted, drawn from Ibn ‘Adī’s *Mu‘jam asāmī al-mashāyikh*, which al-Sahmī cited three times.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, al-Sahmī included in his *Ta’rīkh* ninety-seven *isnāds* in which Ibn ‘Adī mentioned hearing a report from a certain authority in a certain place; of these instances of transmission, seventy-three took place in

102. Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition*, 70–71.

103. A. Sayeed, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 168–69, 175–77 (citing specific examples of the ages of female transmitters of hadith), and Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition*, 66–75 (esp. n. 91).

104. Kurz was a part of the army of Yazīd b. al-Muhallab, who conquered the area and founded the city of Jurjān in the year 98/716–17. According to al-Sahmī, Kurz settled in Jurjān and built there a mosque that still existed in al-Sahmī’s own day. See *Ta’rīkh Jurjān*, 375.12–14.

105. Al-Sahmī, *Ta’rīkh Jurjān*, 287.11–288.4. Cf. al-Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, 16:154, paraphrasing al-Sahmī; al-Sam‘ānī, *Ansāb*, 3:238; and al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘iyya al-kubrā*, ed. M. M. al-Ṭanāhī and ‘A. F. M. al-Ḥilw (Cairo: ‘Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1383/1964), 3:315.

106. Thus, the entries in the *Ta’rīkh*, which is organized alphabetically, begin with the name of the entry’s subject, followed by typically sparse (if any) biographical details, followed (usually but not always) by one or more hadith transmitted on the authority of the subject.

107. Al-Sahmī, *Ta’rīkh Jurjān*, 633.10–11, 635.4–5, 636.4–5. Although al-Sahmī did not say explicitly how much information he obtained from Ibn ‘Adī’s *mashāyikh*, there are implicit indications that he drew on the work. Works described as *mu‘jam* tended to be organized alphabetically, as was al-Sahmī’s *Ta’rīkh*. Thus, the *Ta’rīkh* often contains partial alphabetical sequences citing Ibn ‘Adī for a certain hadith, interspersed with biographies citing other authorities from whom Ibn ‘Adī could not have transmitted. See *Ta’rīkh Jurjān*, nos. 26–28, 134–36, 434–37 (except no. 435), 544–48 (except no. 546), 688–92 (except no. 690).

Jurjān (including his encounter with Ibn A‘tham) and twenty-four occurred elsewhere.¹⁰⁸ Paying attention to Ibn ‘Adī’s *isnāds* is useful for two reasons. First, in a few cases, they offer additional information, such as the year in which Ibn ‘Adī heard the report in question. They thus give us further biographical information on Ibn ‘Adī’s activities as a *muḥaddith*. Second, examining Ibn ‘Adī’s sources provides us indirect prosopographical evidence on Ibn A‘tham’s life. Although the relations between generations of *muḥaddithūn* are not governed by strict demographic laws, so to speak, if we assume that Ibn A‘tham was similar in age to Ibn ‘Adī’s other *mashāyikh* (a generic term that implies a certain age relationship between “old” authorities and younger students), any biographical data we can turn up on those other sources should provide us a clearer idea of when Ibn A‘tham lived.

What information do Ibn ‘Adī’s *isnāds* add to al-Sahmī’s brief biography? We may first note an important deviation from al-Sahmī’s information: Ibn ‘Adī mentioned in one *isnād* that he heard a report in Jurjān in 288/901, two years before al-Sahmī said he began collecting hadith.¹⁰⁹ Thus, Ibn A‘tham cannot have been in Jurjān earlier than that year. Other *isnāds* included by al-Sahmī (and also found in Ibn ‘Adī’s *Kāmil*) indicate that Ibn ‘Adī was active in hadith transmission in the region of Jurjān through the 290s/900s and that he heard reports in both Jurjān and Astarābād in 295/907–8.¹¹⁰ Still other *isnāds* in the *Ta’riḫ Jurjān* attest to Ibn ‘Adī’s travels, including mentions of (from east to west) Bukhārā, Astarābād, Dāmghān, Āmul, Baghdad, Aleppo, Tyre, and Mecca.¹¹¹ Although al-Sahmī included no dated reports on Ibn ‘Adī’s activities elsewhere, additional chronological information can be found in Ibn ‘Adī’s *Kāmil*. There he mentioned being in Iraq in 297–98/909–11, seeing a certain Baghdadi authority in 297/909–10, and hearing a report in Kufa in 298/910–11.¹¹² In another place,

108. For *isnāds* mentioning Jurjān, see al-Sahmī, *Ta’riḫ Jurjān*, 42.9–10, 46.12, 47.9–11, 50.8, 53.ult, 57.6–7, 61.5–6, 63.3–4, 67.12, 68.5–6, 85.10–11, 112.2–3, 112.10–11, 113.5–6, 115.9–10, 117.6–7, 149.5–6, 150.7–8, 154.12–13, 155.14–15, 159.2–3, 162.11–12, 169.10–11, 206.14–15, 209.3–4, 219.8–9, 293.ult, 259.10–11, 273.ult, 435.11–12, 276.ult, 284.11–12, 285.ult, 286.9–10, 325.1–3, 334.4–5, 340.9–10, 345.3–5, 345.11–12, 346.8–9, 346.12–13, 347.5–6, 347.13, 348.3–4, 362.10–11, 367.11–12, 368.ult, 445.15–16, 446.4, 449.6–7, 451.1–2, 453.9–10, 454.10–11, 455.7–9, 457.9–10, 458.14–15, 460.ult, 461.11–12, 461.16–17, 462.11–12, 463.1–2, 470.ult, 473.5–6, 480.6–7, 534.ult, 540.3–4, 540.11–12, 543.7–9, 544.1–2, 548.ult, 565.4–5, 567.12–13, 578.ult. For *isnāds* mentioning other cities, see the following notes and Z. ‘U. ‘A. Nūr, *Ibn ‘Adī wa-manhajuhu fī Kitāb al-Kāmil fī ḍu‘afā’ al-rijāl* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1418/1997), 1:95–103, giving an alphabetical list of eighty-five places Ibn ‘Adī reportedly visited (based largely on *isnāds* in the *Kāmil*), but without any chronological information.

109. Al-Sahmī, *Ta’riḫ Jurjān*, 458.14–15. Cf. Ibn ‘Adī, *al-Kāmil fī ḍu‘afā’ al-rijāl*, ed. ‘A. A. ‘Abd al-Mawjūd et al. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1418/1997), 8:140, 9:145.

110. Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 7:549 (292/904–5), 7:558 (295/907–8), 8:112 (291/903–4), 8:131 (ditto), 8:140 (288/900–901), 9:145 (ditto); al-Sahmī, *Ta’riḫ Jurjān*, 38.12 (291/903–4), 62.3–4 (295/907–8, in Astarābād), 264.13–14 (291/903–4), 320.4 (292/904–5), 406.8–9 (291/903–4).

111. Aleppo: al-Sahmī, *Ta’riḫ Jurjān*, 330.8–9; Āmul: 56.11–12, 547.10–11; Astarābād: 52.9–10, 62.3–4, 133.7–8, 185.12–13, 213.6–8, 633.10–11, 635.4–5, 636.4–5; Baghdad: 191.5–6, 252.6–7, 255.1–2, 301.10–11, 444.5–6; Bukhārā: 400.6–7, 400.ult–401.1; Dāmghān: 321.3–4; Mecca: 30.1–2, 144.7–8, 263.7–8; Tyre: 56.3–4. Absent from this list is Egypt, which al-Sahmī mentioned in his biography of Ibn ‘Adī; he must have known of the *isnāds* in the *Kāmil* that attest to this trip (or he may have heard about them from Ibn ‘Adī himself).

112. Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 5:437 (Iraq); 1:327 (Baghdad); 6:442 (Kufa).

Ibn ‘Adī reported copying down hadith from a certain authority in Egypt and mentioned two trips there, one in 299/311–12 and the other in 304–5/916–18.¹¹³

To these details, we may add one other line of consideration. There are a number of *isnāds* in which Ibn ‘Adī reported hearing hadith in towns to the east of Jurjān, including Nishapur, Sarakhs, Marw, and Bukhārā.¹¹⁴ Given that he would have passed by none of these towns on his two trips to the west, it may be that Ibn ‘Adī made a third trip, this time to the east, to gather hadith in the cities of Khorasan and Transoxiana.¹¹⁵ Further, there is a hint that such a trip may have taken place after his second trip to the west. Thus, in one *isnād* in the *Kāmil*, Ibn ‘Adī mentioned hearing a certain report twice, once in Jurjān in 291/903–4 and then again in “Banūjird” in 316/928–29. I have found no city by that name in any of the geographical texts, and I think it is a corruption of the phrase *bi-Yanūjird*, i.e., “in Yanūjird” (also called Janūjird), a noted stop for caravans five *farsakhs* (roughly 30 kilometers) south of Marw on the road to Sarakhs.¹¹⁶ Given that the *isnād* in question has Ibn ‘Adī relating a report from a certain Sinān b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sarakhsī, the correction makes geographical sense.¹¹⁷ Of course, the relative distances are much shorter: Ibn ‘Adī would likely not have spent two or more years on the road, as he had in the west. Still, if we suppose that Ibn ‘Adī was absent from Jurjān for some months in 316/928–29, this is another time when he could not have met Ibn A‘tham.

Therefore, if Ibn A‘tham related a report to Ibn ‘Adī in Jurjān, he must have done so in one of the following periods: (a) after Ibn ‘Adī started recording hadith but before he left Jurjān on his broader travels, i.e., 288–297/901–909; (b) between Ibn ‘Adī’s two major trips, when he might have returned to Jurjān, i.e., 299–304/911–916; or (c) after Ibn ‘Adī returned to Jurjān from his second trip west and before his death, circa 304–365/916–976, excluding some amount of time in/around the year 316/928–929, when he may have traveled east.¹¹⁸ Do we have any reason to think that Ibn A‘tham was in Jurjān in any one of these periods?

113. Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 2:400. Cf. 3:114 (mentioning being in Damietta in 299/911–12); 4:63 (mentioning being in Egypt in Rajab 299/February–March 912); and 7:123 (mentioning hearing a report in Egypt first in 299/911–12 and again in 305/917–18).

114. Nishapur: Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 5:420, 7:169; Sarakhs: 1:371; Marw: 1:339, 7:559, 8:401; Bukhārā: 1:124, 1:190, 1:227, 1:253, 1:367, 1:423, 1:492, 1:511, 2:9, 2:141, 3:294, 3:449, 4:223, 5:109, 5:273, 5:238, 5:355, 6:48, 6:134, 6:214, 7:284, 7:341, 7:356–58, 8:87, 8:130, 8:174, 8:281, 8:358, 8:408.

115. It is, of course, also possible that Ibn ‘Adī made multiple trips—but given that these cities were all more less linked by a single route, it would have been most efficient to visit them all at once.

116. Ibn Khurdādhbih, *Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1889), 24.10 (describing the route from Sarakhs to Marw), 202.6 (describing the route from Nishapur to Marw); al-Maqdisī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī ma‘rifat al-aqālīm*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1877), 348.2 (referring incorrectly to “Jarūjird”); Yāqūt, *Muḥjam al-buldān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1397/1977), 2:172 (s.v. “Janūjird”). For a general description of the road, see G. Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate: Mesopotamia, Persia, and Central Asia from the Moslem Conquest to the Time of Timur* (Cambridge: University Press, 1905), 430–32.

117. Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, 8:112.13.

118. Elsewhere (*Kāmil*, 3:535), Ibn ‘Adī reported recording a hadith (albeit from a text) as late as Muḥarram 360/November–December 970. Somewhat relatedly, al-Sahmī mentioned (*Ta’rīkh Jurjān*, 102.11–14) that a certain scholar came to read the *Kāmil* and other works with Ibn ‘Adī in Jurjān in 364/974–75.

It is worth recalling at this point that the emended Madā'inī cluster of *isnāds* showed that Ibn A'tham's immediate sources were reaching the ends of their lives in the 260s and 270s/880s and 890s—corresponding well with his audition from al-Imām al-Ḥarrānī (d. 266/880). But knowing when someone was active does not necessarily tell us how old that person was at the time, nor does it allow us to pinpoint the time of the person's death. However, there are a few suggestive hints about Ibn 'Adī's teachers, who must have been more or less Ibn A'tham's contemporaries. First, although the earlier one looks in the biographical literature, the rarer birth dates are, we can nonetheless find two suggestions of age relations. One of the scholars Ibn 'Adī met in Jurjān, a certain Abū Ḥāmid Aḥmad b. Ḥamdūn al-Naysābūrī, was reportedly about ninety years old when he died in Rabī' al-Awwal 321/March 933.¹¹⁹ This implies he was born around 231/845–46 and would have been in his late fifties when Ibn 'Adī began collecting hadith in 288/901–2. Further, one of the scholars Ibn 'Adī met in Baghdad, Aḥmad b. Nasr al-Baghdādī, was reportedly in his seventies when he died in Ramaḍān or Shawwāl 320/September–November 932.¹²⁰ This suggests he was born before 250/864–65 and would also have been in his late forties or early fifties when Ibn 'Adī met him in Baghdad. Although it would be reckless to generalize about all these scholars on the basis of two examples, there is at least a suggestion here that Ibn 'Adī's teachers were, as Bulliet's model of the age structure might lead us to expect, men in their fifties or older—and thus that Ibn A'tham himself may have been born sometime between 230 and 250/844 and 865, corresponding reasonably well to his hearing hadith from al-Imām al-Ḥarrānī before 266/880.

Next, we may look to the handful of *isnāds*—some in his own *Kāmil*, some in al-Sahmī's *Ta'riḥ*—in which Ibn 'Adī mentioned the year in which he heard a given report in Jurjān.¹²¹ Between the *Kāmil* and the *Ta'riḥ Jurjān*, I found eight *isnāds* in which Ibn 'Adī specified the time, seven pertaining to Jurjān (the old city) and one to Astarābād. Each of the *isnāds* is connected to a different report, but they feature only five different authorities and four different years (288/900–901, 291/903–4, 292/904–5, 295/907–8). Three of the *isnāds* refer to the same authority and the same year (288) and thus probably stem from a single meeting. Ibn 'Adī met two other authorities in 291, one of these again in the next year (292), and two others in 295. Still, the overall range of dates provided is decidedly narrow: all belong to the period 288–95/900–908. Tentatively, then, we might see these *isnāds* as suggesting that Ibn 'Adī was most active in gathering hadith in the region of Jurjān in the first period mentioned above, 288–97/901–9, before he traveled elsewhere to collect further hadith. Certainly, this pattern would conform to the ideal propounded by some authorities—namely, that young scholars should master local hadith first before traveling to other regions.¹²² If Ibn A'tham

119. Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 14:553–54.

120. Al-Khaṭīb, *Ta'riḥ*, 6:409 (Ramaḍān or Shawwāl); Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'riḥ madīnat Dimashq*, 6:51–53 (ditto); al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 15:68 (Ramaḍān).

121. For a list of these *isnāds* (with citations), see Appendix 1.

122. See, for instance, the comment ascribed to Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī: “It behooves the seeker of hadith and he who concerns himself with [such seeking] that he begin by recording the hadith of his country and the knowledge of its people, comprehending it and mastering it until he knows its healthful from its ailing (*ṣaḥīḥahu wa-saqīmahu*) and knows its transmitters and their affairs in a complete

was born in 230–50/844–65, he would have been at least in his late thirties and perhaps even in his sixties at the height of Ibn ‘Adī’s activity in Jurjān, which would make him the right age to be Ibn ‘Adī’s teacher.

Still, the evidence is limited: Ibn ‘Adī specified the date on which he heard a report in Jurjān in only eight instances within a much larger list. But the evidence is not yet exhausted. More chronological information may be gleaned from examining the death dates of Ibn ‘Adī’s authorities, which constitute the latest possible times at which Ibn ‘Adī could have heard the relevant reports. Among all the *isnāds* cited in the *Ta’rīkh Jurjān* that mention Ibn ‘Adī hearing hadith from an authority in a specific place, I found death dates for twenty-nine of the cited authorities, some in the *Ta’rīkh Jurjān* and some in other prosopographical sources.¹²³ These authorities all died between 292 and 337/904 and 949.¹²⁴

Of course, these death dates are not necessarily proximate to the meetings in question, as the authorities might have died years after meeting Ibn ‘Adī, as was the case for at least three authorities. Three of the *isnāds* (from Aleppo, Baghdad, and Damghān, respectively) seem to refer to authorities he met on his travels west, so no later than 305/917–18. All three, however died after 310/922–23, one of them as late as 331/945. In other words, Ibn ‘Adī must have met these authorities five to twenty-five (or -six) years before their deaths. Consequently, although twenty of Ibn ‘Adī’s authorities—more than two-thirds of them—reportedly died after he returned from his second trip (i.e., in or after 307/920), it is possible that Ibn ‘Adī heard them much earlier. At any rate, at least some of these *isnāds* can be located definitively in time. To the eight *isnāds* dating from the first period (288–97/901–9) we may add six more meetings in Jurjān, for six of Ibn ‘Adī’s authorities died before 296/908–9. This means that fourteen *isnāds* in total attest to his collecting activities before he ever left Jurjān. Three other authorities died within the next decade, which included four or more years that Ibn ‘Adī spent outside of Jurjān; he may thus have met those authorities, too, before traveling.

Let us now draw the various threads together. We know that Ibn A‘tham was alive before the death of al-Imām al-Ḥarrānī in 266/880, although it is unclear for how long. If we assume that Ibn A‘tham was roughly contemporary to Ibn ‘Adī’s teachers (at the least the ones on whom we have any information), we might estimate that he was born between 230 and 250/844 and 865 and died sometime in 292–337/904–49. Given the general age structure in hadith transmission, it seems more likely to me that Ibn A‘tham was born and died toward the end of these ranges, meeting al-Imām al-Ḥarrānī when he was in his teens or twenties. If we assume, for instance, that Ibn A‘tham was born in 245/859–60, he would have been

fashion (*ya‘raf ... ma‘rifatan tāmmatan*), whatever there has been in his country of knowledge and scholars, ancient and recent. Then he may occupy himself with the hadith of [other] countries and traveling to them.” See al-Khaṭīb, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:6.7–12. Quoted and translated (with slight differences) in F. Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 166.

123. Given how many places are mentioned in the *Kāmil*, I have not tried to find death dates for all the authorities listed there; it seems to me the *isnāds* included in the *Ta’rīkh Jurjān* (some of which are also found in the *Kāmil*) are roughly representative. A more detailed study of Ibn ‘Adī’s career, however, would certainly require such analysis.

124. For a list of these authorities and the sources for their death dates, see Appendix 2.

over fifty by the time Ibn ‘Adī was setting out on his first journey to the west in 297/909–10. And if we posit that Ibn ‘Adī was most active in gathering hadith in Jurjān in the first decade of his career, we might posit that he met Ibn A‘tham there when the latter was in his forties or early fifties. Of course, Ibn ‘Adī was something of an exceptional scholar of hadith: as the Yanūjird *isnād* attests, he continued to gather reports as late as 316/928–29, when he was already in his late thirties, slightly extending the range in which he might have met Ibn A‘tham. What is perhaps more important, however, is that this estimate seems to correspond relatively well to the claim made by Yāqūt—namely, that Ibn A‘tham’s history concluded around the year 320/932. If Ibn A‘tham was born in 245/859–60 and survived to an advanced age, he certainly could have lived long enough to write such a work.

4b. Apologies: When Did al-Sallāmī Meet Ibn A‘tham?

Let us now reconsider Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī’s mention in his *Irshād al-arīb* that a certain Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad al-Sallāmī reported meeting Ibn A‘tham at some point.¹²⁵ According to this al-Sallāmī, Ibn A‘tham recited the following lines of poetry to him:

If a friend one day to you apologizes, / as would a true brother for some one of his sins,
forgo your harshness and be satisfied, / for the noble man ignores offense.¹²⁶

Conrad deemed the identity of al-Sallāmī ambiguous, noting that several men were known by this or a similar name, but Lindstedt assumed al-Sallāmī to be the author of a famous, lost Arabic history of the rulers of Khorasan.¹²⁷ We now know that Lindstedt was correct. In a more recent edition of the *Irshād*, Iḥsān ‘Abbās added several biographies that are missing from older editions of the *Irshād* but appear in a later abridgment of the text. These added biographies include one for “al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Sallāmī Abū ‘Alī al-Bayhaqī [al-Khwārī¹²⁸], the learned man, the chronographer (*al-adīb al-mu‘arrikh*). He died in the year 300 [912–13]. He was among the students of Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Bayhaqī, and Abū Bakr al-Khwārazmī was among his students.”¹²⁹ If al-Sallāmī lived until

125. Yāqūt, *Irshād*, ed. ‘Abbās, 1:202.4–7.

126. *Idhā’i ‘tadhara al-saḍīqu ilayka yawman / min al-taqṣīri ‘udhrata akhīn muqirrin // fa-ṣunhu ‘an jafā’ika wa-rḍa ‘anhu / fa-inna l-ṣafḥa shaymatu kullī ḥurrin*. Al-Sallāmī is quoted as saying that Ibn A‘tham “recited to me” (*anshadani*), which seems to suggest immediate contact rather than, for instance, having read Ibn A‘tham’s lines in a book.

127. Conrad, “Ibn A‘tham and His History,” 94; Lindstedt, “Sources for the Biography,” 304. On the historian al-Sallāmī, see W. Barthold, “Zur Geschichte der Ṣaffāriden,” in *Orientalische Studien: Theodor Nöldeke zum siebzigsten Geburtstag* (2. März 1906), ed. C. Bezold, 1:171–96 (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1906), 173–75; cf. W. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, trans. T. Minorsky, ed. C. E. Bosworth, 3rd ed. (1968; repr. New Delhi: Munshiram Mahorlal, 1992), 10–11 and 20–21.

128. In *Irshād*, ed. ‘Abbās, 3:1029.4, Yāqūt gives his *nisba* as “al-Ḥawārī,” but Ibn Funduq, in *Tārīkh-i Bayhaq*, ed. A. Bahmanyār, 2nd ed. (Tehran: Kitābforūshī-yi Furūghī dar Chāpkhāna-yi Islāmiyya, 1965), 154.15–17, has “al-Khwārī,” which is more likely correct. The latter refers to a village near Bayhaq—thus *ibid.*, 34.4, and more generally, ‘A-Ak. Dīkhudā, *Lughatnāma*, ed. M. Mu‘īn et al. (Tehran: Intishārāt wa-Chāp-i Dānishgāh-i Tīhrān, 1998), 7:10,020b (s.v. “Khwār”).

129. Yāqūt, *Irshād*, ed. ‘Abbās, 3:1029–30. ‘Abbās added this biography on the basis of a manuscript of al-Takrītī’s abridgment of the *Irshād*, entitled *Bughyat al-alibbā’ min Mu‘jam al-udabā’*; see ‘Abbās’s introduction

300/912–13 and met Ibn A‘tham, Ibn A‘tham would be linked again (albeit indirectly) to the turn of the fourth/tenth century.

There remains, however, a significant problem, one not broached by Lindstedt. Yāqūt claimed (as did Ibn Funduq al-Bayhaqī) that al-Sallāmī died in 300/912–13, but Vasily Bartol’d argued that this date must be judged incorrect.¹³⁰ Ibn Funduq and Yāqūt both claimed that al-Sallāmī was taught by Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Bayhaqī, a companion (and thus contemporary) of the Abbasid poet-prince Ibn al-Mu‘tazz (247–96/861–908) and that he taught Abū Bakr al-Khwārazmī (323–83/934–93).¹³¹ Had al-Sallāmī died in 300/912–13, he would have been roughly contemporary with his own teacher and deceased before one of his students was even born. Bartol’d proposed that the apparent problem could be explained as a transmissional mishap: perhaps Yāqūt and Ibn Funduq both drew on a source that originally gave al-Sallāmī’s death date as “three hundred and *something*,” but the decade and year were lost in transmission.

Speculating on the missing part of the date, Bartol’d suggested that the accounts of certain events in al-Gardīzī’s (d. after 423/1032?) Persian history, the *Zayn al-akhbār*, and Ibn al-Athīr’s (d. 630/1233) Arabic chronicle, the *Kāmil fī al-ta’rīkh*, so closely resemble one another that they must rely on the same source, which he surmised to be al-Sallāmī’s history of Khorasan, which is quoted by both authors. The accounts in question include detailed information about the fate and death (in 344/955) of Abū ‘Alī al-Chaghānī, a powerful governor of Khorasan under the Samanids with whom al-Sallāmī was reportedly affiliated.¹³² Bartol’d reasoned that because this bit of information is the last shared by Gardīzī and Ibn al-Athīr, al-Sallāmī must have lived long enough to include his patron’s death in his history—that is, he must have been writing until sometime after the mid-fourth/tenth century, and certainly beyond 300/912–13.¹³³ Of course, there are other possibilities—al-Sallāmī’s work might have been finished by somebody else in the orbit of the Chaghāniyyān, for example—but in light of the former point about the lifetimes of al-Sallāmī’s teacher and student, it is certainly plausible he himself continued writing.

Conrad also argued that the al-Sallāmī in question must have died in the mid-fourth/tenth century. As he noted, the Khurāsānī anthologist Abū Maṣṣūr ‘Abd al-Malik al-Tha‘ālibī

(*Irshād*, from p. *jīm*).

130. Ibn Funduq, *Tārīkh-i Bayhaq*, 154.9–17. Cf. Barthold, “Zur Geschichte der Šaffāriden,” 175, n. 2, which gives the passage from a manuscript. It is possible that Yāqūt took this date from Ibn Funduq, as he was rather familiar with the latter’s works, including the *Tārīkh-i Bayhaq*. See Yāqūt, *Irshād*, ed. ‘Abbās, 4:1762.9–1763.20.

131. Ibn Funduq (*Tārīkh-i Bayhaq*, 154.15–17) described both relationships with the word *shāgird*, “pupil” or “disciple.” For the two men, see C. Brockelmann, “Al-Bayhaqī,” in *EI2*, and C. Pellat, “Al-Khwārazmī,” in *EI2*. For Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’s dates, see al-Khaṭīb, *Ta’rīkh*, 11:302.8–10 and 307–8.

132. Al-Tha‘ālibī, in *Yatīmat al-dahr* (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Šawī, 1352/1934), 4:29, wrote that al-Sallāmī was “an affiliate (*munḥariṭ fī silk*) of Abū Bakr Ibn Muḥtāj and his son, Abū ‘Alī.” For the latter two figures, see C. E. Bosworth, “The Rulers of Chaghāniyyān in Early Islamic Times,” *Iran* 19 (1981): 1–20, at 4–9, and, more briefly, C. E. Bosworth, “Āl-e Moḥtāj,” in *EIr*.

133. Barthold, “Zur Geschichte der Šaffāriden,” 174–75: “When Abū ‘Alī died in Rajab 344 (mid-November 955), his body was taken back to Chaghāniyyān; this is the last event reported concordantly by Gardīzī and Ibn al-Athīr, so it was probably the conclusion of al-Sallāmī’s work” (cf. Barthold, *Turkestan*, 21).

(d. 429/1038), in reporting some lines of poetry attributed to al-Sallāmī, said, “I did not hear these two lines from him; rather, I found them in his work.”¹³⁴ Conrad argued:

The implication of this statement is clearly that al-Tha‘ālibī anticipated that his audience would suppose that he had heard the verses from the author himself; this in turn suggests that he could have done so—i.e. that al-Sallāmī was his older contemporary. As al-Tha‘ālibī was born in 350/961 ... it is unlikely that he would have been hearing poetry from al-Sallāmī before about 365/975. This year can thus be taken as approximating the earliest possible death date for this al-Sallāmī.¹³⁵

Conrad’s reasoning about al-Sallāmī’s likely date of death is roughly in line with that of Bartol’d: if al-Sallāmī died in 365/975, he certainly could have reported on Abū ‘Alī Chāghānī’s death in 344/955.¹³⁶ The guess is imprecise, for who can say when al-Tha‘ālibī would notionally have found the lines and noted them down? At any rate, if he did in fact meet al-Sallāmī at some point, it must have been sometime after al-Tha‘ālibī’s birth in 350/961, meaning that al-Sallāmī cannot have died in 300/912–13.¹³⁷ If al-Sallāmī lived that far into the fourth/tenth century, and he knew Ibn A‘tham, he must have met Ibn A‘tham in that century as well.

When it comes to al-Sallāmī’s hearing poetry from Ibn A‘tham, however, it is more important for us to know when al-Sallāmī might have been born, which we can perhaps estimate on the basis of the death of his teacher, Ibrāhīm al-Bayhaqī. Two pieces of evidence point to the time of Ibrāhīm al-Bayhaqī’s death. One was already mentioned—he is described as having been a companion of Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, who died in 296/908. The second comes from a surviving text ascribed to Ibrāhīm al-Bayhaqī called *Kitāb al-Maḥāsīn wa-l-masāwī*. Friedrich Schwally, who edited the text, argued that al-Bayhaqī must have lived into the reign of al-Muqtadir (r. 295–320/908–32) because a story in the *Maḥāsīn* mentions that a signet ring taken from a “Chinese general” after a battle at Samarqand had been passed down in the Abbasid family “and is now with the caliph al-Muqtadir.”¹³⁸ Because al-Bayhaqī referred to the present day and mentioned no figures later than al-Muqtadir, Schwally concluded that al-Bayhaqī died during or shortly after al-Muqtadir’s reign.¹³⁹ For our purposes, then, we can take the dates of al-Muqtadir’s reign as a rough estimate of the period of al-Bayhaqī’s death. If we assume that al-Sallāmī was a child or even a young man (say, no older than twenty-five) when his teacher, Ibrāhīm al-Bayhaqī, died, al-Sallāmī

134. Al-Tha‘ālibī, *Yatīmat al-dahr*, 4:90.8: *al-baytān lam asma‘humā minhu wa-innamā wajadtuhumā fi nuskhathihi*.

135. Conrad, “Ibn A‘tham and His History,” 94–95, n. 47.

136. Of course, for Conrad this conclusion meant that al-Sallāmī the Khurāsānī historian could not have been the one who heard Ibn A‘tham, given his acceptance of the 204/819–20 date for the *Futūḥ*.

137. F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 1:352, gave 350/961 as al-Sallāmī’s approximate death date, apparently using al-Tha‘ālibī’s birth date. Cf. W. L. Treadwell, “The Political History of the Sāmānid State” (PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 1991), 7–9.

138. Al-Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-Maḥāsīn wa-l-masāwī*, ed. F. Schwally (Giessen: J. Ricker, 1902), 504.8.

139. Al-Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-Maḥāsīn*, viii.

would have been born in the last decades of the third/ninth or the first decades of the fourth/tenth century (circa 270–315/883–928).

Unfortunately, the age relationship between Ibn A‘tham and al-Sallāmī is ambiguous: Were they peers? Or student and teacher? We can try both ideas on for size. If Ibn A‘tham was born in the 230s or 240s/850s or 860s, as implied by his link to al-Imām al-Ḥarrānī, he would have been more than one hundred years old by the time al-Tha‘ālibī was born. And if Ibn A‘tham and al-Sallāmī were roughly contemporary to one another, we would expect al-Sallāmī to have been born not long after Ibn A‘tham—meaning that he, too, would have been of an advanced age by the time al-Tha‘ālibī was born. It thus seems more likely that Ibn A‘tham was somewhat older than al-Sallāmī and that the latter was born closer to the end of the third/ninth century and thus died a few decades after Ibn A‘tham, sometime after 350/961.

4c. Summary: Biographical Connections

Ultimately, what we discover in the biographical literature is a broad network of connections to Ibn A‘tham, both direct and indirect. Although we stand in the realm of speculation in several places, we can identify a handful of scholars who we have strong reason to think belong either to the generation preceding Ibn A‘tham, to his own generation, or to the generation after. The following table brings these connections together.

Table 1. Ibn A‘tham’s Biographical Connections

Figure	Born	Died	Relative to Ibn A‘tham
al-Imām al-Ḥarrānī	?	266/880	older
‘Abd Allāh al-Balawī	ca. 200/815?	ca. 280/894?	older
Abū Ḥāmid al-Naysābūrī	ca. 231/845–46	321/933	contemporary
Ibn al-Mu‘tazz	247/861	296/908	contemporary
Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Baghdādī	before 250/864–65	320/932	contemporary
Ibrāhīm al-Bayhaqī	?	before 320/932?	contemporary
Ibn ‘Adī	277/891	365/976	younger
al-Sallāmī	?	after 350/961?	younger
Abū Bakr al-Khwārazmī	323/934	383/993	younger
al-Tha‘ālibī	350/961	429/1038	younger

To summarize the evidence for Ibn A‘tham’s floruit, we can begin with a figure we know to be older than Ibn A‘tham, al-Imām al-Ḥarrānī. If Ibn A‘tham heard a report from al-Ḥarrānī, he must have been born before the latter died in 266/880; indeed, if the usual age structure of hadith transmission applies, he may well have been born perhaps five to twenty years earlier, around 246–261/860–875. This range fits with the admittedly scant information we have about Ibn ‘Adī’s teachers, who, we can assume, were roughly contemporary with Ibn A‘tham. Of the two authorities cited by Ibn A‘tham whose birth dates are known, an extremely old one (Abū Ḥāmid al-Naysābūrī) was born circa 231/845 and a younger one (Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Baghdādī) circa 250/865. A final hint lies in Ibn A‘tham’s relationship with one of his sources for the history, ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Balawī, an apparent contemporary of Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (195–277/810–90). Al-Balawī, like Abū Ḥātim, would likely have been in his forties or fifties around the middle of the third/ninth century, when I suspect Ibn A‘tham was born, and their relative ages once again conform to the common pattern in hadith transmission. For the sake of clarity, I will tentatively suggest that Ibn A‘tham was born around 250/865.

Let us now work backward, from someone we suspect was younger than Ibn A‘tham, namely al-Sallāmī. Bartol’d’s hypothesis about al-Sallāmī’s outliving Abū ‘Alī al-Chaghānī (d. 344/955) and Conrad’s hypothesis about his meeting al-Tha‘ālibī (b. 350/961) together suggest that al-Sallāmī died some years after 350/961. According to Ibn Funduq, al-Sallāmī was a pupil (*shāgird*) of Ibrāhīm al-Bayhaqī and the teacher of Abū Bakr al-Khwārazmī (323–83/934–93). Al-Bayhaqī’s dates are not directly attested, but Schwally hypothesized on the basis of textual evidence that he died during the reign of al-Muqtadir (i.e., before 320/932). Furthermore, al-Bayhaqī seems to have been a companion of Ibn al-Mu‘tazz (247–96/861–908). But there is reason to think he outlived Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, who died an unnatural death, executed for his involvement in a plot to remove the newly inaugurated al-Muqtadir. At any rate, if al-Sallāmī learned from both al-Bayhaqī and Ibn A‘tham, we may assume that the latter two were contemporaries—which implies that Ibn A‘tham would have been contemporary to Ibn al-Mu‘tazz as well.

It would be most helpful if we knew the date of al-Sallāmī’s birth, which would give us a *terminus post quem* for his meeting with Ibn A‘tham. Unfortunately, we can only guess. If his teacher al-Bayhaqī died as late as 320/932, al-Sallāmī must have been born some time before this. If we imagine that al-Bayhaqī tutored him as a small child (a relationship often depicted in chronicles), he might have been born around 310–15/922–27 at the latest. In that case, al-Sallāmī would have been in his late twenties or thirties in 344/955, when Bartol’d thought he was still in the service of the Chaghāniyyān. Further, it would certainly be reasonable to think that he lived beyond 350/961, as he would have been only in his forties at that time. But if so, he would have been no more than a decade older than Abū Bakr al-Khwārazmī, who was reportedly born in 323/934—a possibility that fits uneasily with Ibn Funduq’s calling al-Khwārazmī the *shāgird* of al-Sallāmī.

If al-Sallāmī and Ibn ‘Adī were roughly the same age, many of these points would be clearer. If al-Sallāmī was born circa 277/891 and lived until 365/976, as Ibn ‘Adī was and did, he easily could have studied with al-Bayhaqī circa 300/912, served as a senior counselor

to the Chaghāniyyān in the 330s and 340s/940s and 950s, and met a young al-Tha‘ālibī after 350/961. But this timeline would require him to be nearly ninety years of age at his death, as Ibn ‘Adī was, which is even now an above-average lifespan. By contrast, had he been born in 290/902–3, he could have done all these things around the same times, but as a slightly younger man.

Let us return, finally, to Yāqūt’s report that Ibn A‘tham’s *Ta’rīkh* concluded near the end of the reign of al-Muqtadir. In light of all the foregoing, it is decidedly reasonable to think that Ibn A‘tham died circa 320/932, as has often been claimed (if never demonstrated). Even if we exclude the text-internal evidence, it is plausible that Ibn A‘tham died in 320/932. If he was born in 250/865, for instance, he would have been nearly thirty years old when Ibn ‘Adī was born in 277/891, in his late forties by the time Ibn ‘Adī was preparing for his first study trip in 297/909, in his late fifties when Ibn ‘Adī returned to Jurjān after the second trip around 306/918–19, and only sixty-seven years old in 320/932. Similarly, if he was born in 250/865 and died in 320/932, he would have been only a little younger than Ibn al-Mu‘tazz and certainly could have been active during the reign of al-Muqtadir, as Ibrāhīm al-Bayhaqī seems to have been. Of course, it is also possible that Ibn A‘tham finished (or gave up) writing his history around the end of al-Muqtadir’s reign but lived for a few years more.¹⁴⁰ But at a minimum, we may say that Ibn A‘tham almost certainly died circa 320/932. Going further, I might propose an approximate range: estimating generously from his various biographical connections, Ibn A‘tham likely lived from about 250 to about 325/865–937.

5. Conclusion: Ibn A‘tham, Islamicate Historiography, and Written Culture

Ultimately, evidence both internal and external to Ibn A‘tham’s history indicates that he must have lived and written through the first decades of the fourth/tenth century, as suggested long ago by Frāhn and recently affirmed by Lindstedt. In this article, I have attempted to settle the debate conclusively. Three points are particularly important. First, the alternate date of composition, 204/819–20, offered in the later Persian translation, the keystone of Conrad’s argument, is not attested in any source other than the modern Bombay lithographs of the Persian translation (or perhaps the late branch of the manuscript tradition they represent). Thus, there is little reason to take it as credible evidence for the composition of Ibn A‘tham’s history. Second, although reading the *isnāds* in Ibn A‘tham’s history is hampered by errors more or less commonly found in manuscript transmission, I showed that comparing a series of related *isnāds* in the text—and making certain corresponding emendations—reveals them to be largely consistent with the later dating, as they connect Ibn A‘tham to figures working in the last decades of the third/ninth century

140. Thus, as mentioned above, Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ’s *Ta’rīkh* concludes in 232/847, but he died several years later in 240/854. Similarly, Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭabarī died in 310/923, but the version of his *Ta’rīkh* we have only goes down to Dhū al-Ḥijja 302/July 915 (as noted in C. Gilliot, “Al-Ṭabarī,” in *EI2*). But cf. Ibn al-Qiftī’s claim that al-Ṭabarī’s history continued to 309/921–22. See al-Zawzani’s abridgement: *al-Muntakhabāt al-mulṭaqaṭāt min Kitāb Ikhbār al-‘ulamā’ bi-akhbār al-ḥukamā’ li-Ibn al-Qiftī*, ed. J. Lippert with A. Müller (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1320/1903), 110.8–9, cited in Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*, 81.

and the first decades of the fourth/tenth century (especially al-Balawī). Third, and finally, further examination of the biographical evidence adduced by Lindstedt demonstrates that the relative dates established by Ibn A‘tham’s various connections to at least seven other, better-known historical figures (al-Imām al-Ḥarrānī, Ibn ‘Adī, and al-Sallāmī, plus Ibrāhīm al-Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr al-Khwārazmī, Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, and al-Tha‘ālibī) place his activities securely in the closing decades of the third/ninth century and the first decades of the next one. All in all, I argued, the broader picture of Ibn A‘tham’s biographical connections shows that Yāqūt’s report that Ibn A‘tham’s *Ta’rīkh* concluded with the reign of al-Muqtadir is not only plausible but a fairly good indication of when Ibn A‘tham died, sometime around 320/932.

There are two conclusions we may draw from this examination of Ibn A‘tham’s history, a conventional one and a slightly more unconventional one. The conventional conclusion has to do with locating Ibn A‘tham in the development of Islamicate historiography. It is not difficult, of course, to imagine why Shaban, Conrad, and others were interested in the possibility that Ibn A‘tham’s text was written early in the third/ninth century. If the *Futūḥ* had been written then, it would provide early attestation for particular ways of framing the history of Islamic politics and society.¹⁴¹ It must be admitted, however, that the later dating accords much better with the generally accepted model of the emergence of Arabic historiography. Like other historians of the fourth/tenth century, Ibn A‘tham joined themes that in the previous century might have been treated separately in more narrowly focused “monographs.” Disparate accounts of caliphal politics, the conquest of particular places or regions, and rebellions (especially of the *maqtal* sort) were synthesized into a single chronological stream.¹⁴² Here, then, is an important methodological point for future studies in A‘thamology: if we are to interpret the contents of Ibn A‘tham’s history with an eye to the context in which it was produced, we must look to developments in the early fourth/tenth century. In particular, my study of the *isnāds* suggests that we must think of Ibn A‘tham as a receptor of the earlier “monographic” narratives, perhaps even especially as a *reader* (rather than an auditor) of those narratives. This position will have important implications both for studying the particularities of Ibn A‘tham’s narratives and for establishing how the methodological assumptions underpinning his history relate to the approaches of his contemporaries, such as al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892?), al-Ya‘qūbī

141. As Shaban contended—see his “Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī” and cf. Lindstedt, “Sources for the Biography,” 300.

142. I regard as the standard account of that development Robinson’s treatment in *Islamic Historiography*, 20–38, but it was preceded by a number of important studies. See H. A. R. Gibb, “Tarikh” in *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, ed. S. J. Shaw and W. R. Polk (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), 108–37 (a reprint of a lemma from the first *Encyclopaedia of Islam*); Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography* (esp. part 1, chapter 3); A. Noth, “Der Charakter der ersten großen Sammlungen von Nachrichten zur frühen Kalifenzeit,” *Der Islam* 47 (1971): 168–99; A. Noth with L. Conrad, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source-Critical Study*, trans. M. Bonner (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1994); and Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins*. Khalidī (in his *Arabic Historical Thought*) took a contrasting perspective, proceeding by epistemology rather than source structure and pointing out a certain diversity in the use of shared textual forms.

(d. after 292/905), and al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/922).¹⁴³ Future work focused on Ibn A‘tham’s history will have to begin from the fourth/tenth-century dating, not the third/ninth-century one.

Still, it is decidedly ironic—if it is not purely coincidental—that the author of a lengthy and relatively early work of Islamicate historiography should be so obscure. Those who knew something specific about the historian (e.g., al-Sahmī) apparently knew nothing of the history; and those who knew of the history (e.g., Yāqūt) knew almost nothing about the historian.¹⁴⁴ The surviving biographical traces are faint and indirect, fleeting impressions of personal encounters in the realms of poetry and hadith, not in that of historiography. And yet Ibn A‘tham’s history was copied on and off for some time: the dates of the witnesses we have range from the seventh to the thirteenth (thirteenth to nineteenth) centuries. Whatever later readers found interesting about the history, however, they seem not to have connected it to the person of Ibn A‘tham.

This irony points to the more unconventional conclusion to be drawn from the history of Ibn A‘tham’s history. The difficulty of dating Ibn A‘tham points toward a need to reconceptualize our developmental model of the history of Islamicate history writing, or at least to question some of the assumptions underlying it. In particular, the case of locating Ibn A‘tham and his history in time provides a direct challenge to what we might think of as “the library assumption.” Once a physical text, almost always in the form of a modern print edition, is caught in the bibliographical net of a library catalog, we assume a correspondence between the work and its author.¹⁴⁵ This assumed correspondence parallels (or perhaps even generates) a hermeneutical assumption that the contents of the work—for which the author serves as a chronological marker—function to *document* a moment in intellectual history.¹⁴⁶

143. For al-Balādhurī’s use of sources, see especially K. Athamina, “The Sources of al-Balādhurī’s *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 5 (1984): 237–62, in which Athamina argued that al-Balādhurī distinguished between sources he had heard and those he had read in his style of citation. Much as Ibn A‘tham seems to have done, in the former case al-Balādhurī cited full *isnāds*, whereas in the latter case he opted for brief references. Athamina’s conclusions have recently been extended by R. Lynch in the third chapter of his *Arab Conquests and Early Islamic Historiography: The “Futuh al-Buldān” of al-Baladhuri* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2020), in which he argued that similar citational patterns are present in al-Balādhurī’s *Kitāb Futūḥ al-buldān*. As noted above, I made an attempt at outlining (and distinguishing) certain methodological presumptions in the works of Ibn A‘tham, al-Ya‘qūbī, and al-Ṭabarī in the third chapter of my dissertation—“Ibn A‘tham’s History,” 128–86.

144. The one exception, perhaps, is the hadith scholar Ibn Mākūlā (d. 475/1082), who, in his text on commonly mistaken names, both recorded Ibn A‘tham’s *nasab* (from al-Sahmī?) and mentioned his history. See Lindstedt, “Sources for the Biography,” 303.

145. For a discussion of similar assumptions in European book history, see D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), esp. 1–21. Cf. R. Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. L. G. Cochrane (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 25–60, tracing the conceptual emergence of authorship and literary property in Europe as a function of the production and sale of printed books.

146. See, e.g., H. Motzki, “The Author and His Work in the Islamic Literature of the First Centuries: The Case of ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s *Muṣannaf*,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 28 (2003): 171–201, at 171: “The author ... plays a crucial role in dating a work. The author’s birth or death dates often supply the only indication of the work’s place in time and space. This information can be used to reconstruct the development of thinking and writing in different branches of knowledge and literature. Without being able to identify the authors it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to compose a history of literature.” Having said that, however, Motzki went

The library's shelves offer us a series of data points, which, when arranged chronologically, offer a picture of linear development. In other words, if we can locate Ibn A'tham's history in time, we can get on to the project of interpreting the work and translating its particular form and contents into one instantiation (among many) of the broader, singular intellectual phenomenon we think of as Islamic historiography.

The problem with this assumption, however, is apparent even in the history: whatever Ibn A'tham thought about historiography in his own time is nearly entirely implicit in his text. As far as we know, Ibn A'tham never mentioned anything like an *ʿilm al-taʾrīkh*, let alone anything about how his own work or understanding of the past related to it. It was only a few centuries later that such an idea would emerge among Islamicate historians. Therefore, figuring out the most likely date on which Ibn A'tham's history was composed on the way to figuring out its significance in documenting the rise of Islamic historiography represents a chronological operation that has more to do with the pursuit of a modern academic goal—namely, the attempt to develop an encompassing historical model of the development of an intellectual tradition with, it is assumed, some underlying unity—than it does with tracking the discourse of any given historian of Ibn A'tham's time.¹⁴⁷

But it is precisely the nature of the evidence for dating, the difficulty of the operation, that shows that Ibn A'tham's history cannot be reduced to an instantiation of a particular intellectual project at a particular time. Rather, Ibn A'tham's history as we know it, as a material object existing in a diversity of unique copies, reflects textual practices in a variety of social contexts. It serves to document not a single point in the development of an Islamic historiography but rather a web of transmissive and intertextual relationships across time and space—and across language boundaries, for that matter.

Furthermore, these later appearances have already had important implications for the interpretation of the history. Conrad's reading of the text and his ideas about not only the date of its composition but also the sociohistorical motivations behind its composition were based in large part on information gleaned from a thoroughly modern version of the text, the Bombay lithographs. In this case, the modern reception of Ibn A'tham's history has been (so far) *more* decisive for our interpretations than the original—so much so that a modern datum overpowered an apparent conclusion: as already noted, Ibn A'tham's

on to argue in the rest of this article that certain of our assumptions about authors and books are incongruous with Islamicate texts.

147. On the slow development of the concept of history as a separate “discipline” of knowledge, see Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*, 30–42. Notably, the idea seems to have emerged earliest in Persian histories; to Rosenthal's citations of Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī's (d. 606/1209) *Ḥadāʾiq al-anwār* we may add the slightly earlier invocations of the Persian phrase *ʿilm-i tārikh* (in a few forms) in the introduction to Ibn Funduq's (d. 565/1169–70) *Tārikh-i Bayhaq*, 4.16 (*ʿilm-i tārikh*), 7.16 (*ʿilm-i tawārikh*), 8.19 (*ʿilm-i tawārikh*), 10.6 (*ḥifẓ-i in ʿilm āsān-tar ast*), 11.15 (*ʿulūm-i tawārikh*), 15.14 (*hīch kas badīn ʿilm ḥājatmandtar*). Rosenthal (*Muslim Historiography*, 35, n. 2) read an early occurrence of a similar phrase (*ʿilm al-taʾrīkhāt*) in Ibn Fārighūn's (fl. mid-fourth/tenth century) *Jawāmiʿ al-ʿulūm* as referring to the division of history into eras, rather than to a discipline. Khalidi (*Arabic Historical Thought*, 132) and Robinson (*Islamic Historiography*, 36) both noted that al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956?) stated in *Murūj al-dhahab*, 1:12, §7 that he “wished to leave for the world a blessed reminder and a prepared and organized knowledge” (*ʿilman manẓūman ʿatīdan*) in the form of his history, but the phrase does not seem to reflect a broader “disciplinary” awareness.

history is clearly more related to the later synthetic chronographies than it is to the earlier monographs. But the modern version of the text, in turn, depended for its existence on a decision taken in yet another nonoriginal context—namely, that of translating the text into Persian, a reflection of the reading practices of an *a‘yān-amīr* circle centered in southern Khorasan.¹⁴⁸

I do not mean to suggest here that dating is a pointless endeavor or that modern academic articulations necessarily misconstrue historical phenomena by not merely reproducing them in their original terms.¹⁴⁹ After all, my purpose in this article has been precisely to perform this internal chronological operation on the basis of as much as evidence as possible. Even if Ibn A‘tham’s history ought to be imagined as standing in a web of chronological relations rather than in a straightforward chronology of development, we cannot dispense entirely with locating him and his work in time. Nor do I mean to suggest that Ibn A‘tham’s history lacks any continuity with its original composition, that it was so thoroughly subjected to progressive revision that each generation of reader-historians remade the text entirely in the image of their own presuppositions about the past. Indeed, where the manuscripts of Ibn A‘tham’s history overlap, they differ primarily in terms of the traces of the inevitable *mouvance* of manuscript reproduction.¹⁵⁰ It is certainly *possible* to attempt to place our image of the original history into something like a chronological developmental sequence.

Further, reconsidering Ibn A‘tham’s history in light of its material and reception histories will certainly not solve some of the informational problems we face.

148. In his introduction to the translation, Muḥammad al-Mustawfī (*Futūḥ*, pp. *panjāh u-yak-panjāh u-panj*) recounts that the suggestion to translate Ibn A‘tham in 596/1199 was made by an unnamed grandee apparently in the orbit of the Khwārazmshāhs based in Tāybād and Zawzan. For a discussion and further references, see my “Ibn A‘tham’s History,” 250–58 and 363–65.

149. As Marshall Hodgson aptly put it in a slightly different context, “though each particular step in the formation of the Sharī‘ah had its immediate rationale, there were inevitably many potential alternatives. That the major choices prevailed as they did was surely due to their enabling Muslims to come closer to fulfilling the overall ideals of the Sharī‘ah-minded. These ideals they did not present in the abstract manner required by the historian, who measures them against the corresponding ideals of other eras. We must state in our own modern terms, and against the background of the ages that had preceded, what it was that those early Muslims were taking for granted; what it was that they were acting upon without articulating. But we may hope to come to a formulation which, while they would not have made it, they would not have repudiated once they understood it”; M. G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 1, *The Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 318.

150. With some notable exceptions: for instance, the Arabic and Persian texts differ sharply in their accounts of the circumstances of the death of al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī. Compare Ibn A‘tham, *Futūḥ*, 4:205–6 (in which al-Ḥasan dies naturally) with Mustawfī, *Futūḥ*, 789–91 (in which al-Ḥasan is poisoned in a conspiracy led by his erstwhile opponent, Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān). See also M. Schönléber’s instructive examination of the divergences between two very different witnesses to Ibn A‘tham’s account of the Ridda in “Notes on the Textual Tradition,” 432–38, noting for instance, two starkly different approaches to the inclusion of poetry. The concept of *mouvance* is from P. Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1972), 65–75, esp. 71–74, arguing that modern understandings of texts and authorship tend to exclude the variation inherent in both the performance and the reproduction of premodern texts (in his case, especially vernacular poetry). For a brief discussion of the idea’s application to Islamicate poetry, see O. M. Davidson, “The Text of Ferdowsi’s *Shāhnāma* and the Burden of the Past,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118 (1998): 63–68.

Copyists tend to be even more obscure than historians like Ibn A‘tham, and manuscripts do not always reveal the exact circumstances of their own production. But the point is precisely that no one set of circumstances, neither those of its author nor those of any given witness to the text, will ever explain what Ibn A‘tham’s history has been or is. Indeed, the whole infrastructure of our knowledge in the case of Ibn A‘tham’s history—and I see no reason to regard him as particularly atypical—is built on the interventions of people living in different places, working on different, if related, projects of knowledge production. Even if the loss or reconfiguration of works may sometimes be due to pure vagaries in transmission (mishandling, munching worms, fire, forgetting), such losses may also result structurally from the workings of a written culture that produced not only Ibn A‘tham’s histories but many other works in all manner of genres.¹⁵¹

In short, Ibn A‘tham’s history (and, I venture, other works like it) cannot be seen only as a singular document of intellectual history, bearing one set of articulations of the Islamicate past made in a particular time and place. Rather, it is an artifact of the *longue durée*, reflecting overlapping practices in a culture of writing the past that unfolded across time and in varying sets of circumstances. Even if we need not despair of successfully understanding the history of Islamicate historiography, some rethinking is certainly in order. What must be avoided is projecting historical development into a *telos* in which all later interpretive engagements reflect the trajectory of an original, context-delimited essence moving forward in time. Indeed, to my mind, the problem is suggested by the very phrase “Islamic” (or “Arabic” or “Persian” or “Abbasid”) historiography, which serves to locate the broader phenomenon in relation to a particular ideological origin. What is needed instead, I think, are fine-grained accounts of how received knowledge, contemporary interpretation, biobibliographical reception, sociopolitical circumstances, and material textual practice congealed in the particular versions of works that we have. A truly historical understanding of the practice of historiography in Islamicate society will depend not on assembling developmental sequences of ideal types but on interpreting how textual materiality reveals the interaction of intercontextual dynamics that is part and parcel of the transmission of works in Islamicate written culture.

151. It might even be argued that the vulnerability of Islamicate manuscripts to such vagaries is a function of this particular written culture, dependent as it was on the fragile medium of paper in frequently inhospitable environments.

**Appendix 1. Ibn ‘Adī’s *Isnāds* with Dates
(from Ibn ‘Adī’s *Kāmil* and al-Sahmī’s *Ta’rīkh Jurjān*)**

Date	Number in al-Sahmī/Name	Location	Source
288/ 900–901	682. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Maṣīṣī	Jurjān	<i>Kāmil</i> , 8:140
288/ 900–901	682. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Maṣīṣī	Jurjān	<i>Kāmil</i> , 9:145
288/ 900–901	682. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Maṣīṣī	Jurjān	al-Sahmī, 458.14–15
291/ 903–4	549. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Khālīdī	Jurjān	<i>Kāmil</i> , 8:112
291/ 903–4	684(?). Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Ḥakīm	Jurjān	<i>Kāmil</i> , 8:131
292/ 904–5	549. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Khālīdī	Jurjān	<i>Kāmil</i> , 7:549
295/ 907–8	Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Anṣārī al-Marwazī	Jurjān	<i>Kāmil</i> , 7:558
295/ 907–8	48. Aḥmad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Harawī	Astarābād	al-Sahmī, 62.3–4
Total: 8			

**Appendix 2. Death Dates of Authorities
in Ibn ‘Adī’s Location-Specifying *Isnāds* in al-Sahmī’s *Ta’rikh Jurjān***

Note: In all but two cases, the *isnād*-with-location given by Ibn ‘Adī appears in al-Sahmī’s biography for the figure in question. Where this is not the case, I have noted the number of the biography in which it appears in brackets. For the sake of concision, I have given only limited onomastic information, but al-Sahmī and the other prosopographers frequently include more.

Death Date	Number in al-Sahmī/Name	Location	Source
292/ 904–5	984. Ya‘qūb b. Yūsuf al-Jūbārī	Jurjān	<i>TI</i> , 6:1067–68
Rabi‘ I 293/ Jan 906	600. al-Faḍl b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Tamīmī	Jurjān	<i>SAN</i> , 13:573–74
Jumādā II 293/ Mar–Apr 906	27. Aḥmad b. Mūsā al-Jannābī	Jurjān	<i>TJ</i>
Dhū al-Qa‘da 294/ Aug–Sep 907	655. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Marwazī	Jurjān	<i>TJ</i>
Rabi‘ I 295/ Jan 908	673. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Rāzī	Jurjān	<i>TJ</i>
296/ 908–9	666. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Anṣārī	Jurjān	<i>TJ</i> ; <i>SAN</i> , 13:516 (293)
291–300/ 903–13	368. Shurayḥ b. ‘Aqīl al-Isfarā‘īnī	Jurjān	<i>TI</i> , 6:952
301/ 913–14	139. Ibrāhīm b. Hānī al-Shāfi‘ī	Jurjān	<i>SAN</i> , 14:194
305/ 917–18	29. Aḥmad b. al-‘Abbās al-Istrābādī	Astarābād	<i>TI</i> , 7:86
Ramaḍān 307/ Jan–Feb 920	21. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Wazzān	Jurjān	<i>TJ</i>
309/ 921–22	415. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Abd al-Mu‘min al-Muhallabī	Jurjān	<i>TJ</i> ; <i>TI</i> , 14:222–23
310/ 922–23	508. ‘Alī b. Aḥmad al-Jurjānī	Aleppo	<i>TJ</i> ; <i>TI</i> , 7:241 (311/923)
301–10/ 913–23	397. ‘Abd al-Mu‘min b. Aḥmad al-‘Aṭṭār	Jurjān	<i>TI</i> , 7:185

Death Date	Number in al-Sahmī/Name	Location	Source
301–10/ 913–23	1165. Muḥammad b. Ja‘far al-Istrābādī	Astarābād	<i>TI</i> , 7:193
316/ 928–29	418. ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Muḥammad al-Qurashī	Jurjān	<i>TI</i> , 7:310
Dhū al-Qa‘da 317/ Dec 929–Jan 930	549. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Khālīdī	Jurjān	<i>A</i> , 5:24
Ramaḍān 320/ Sep–Oct 932	Aḥmad b. Nasr al-Baghdādī [in no. 651]	Baghdad	<i>TB</i> , 6:409 (or Shawwāl); <i>TMD</i> , 6:51–53 (ditto); <i>SAN</i> , 15:68 (Ramaḍān)
320/ 932	434. ‘Abd Allāh b. Ja‘far al-‘Āmulī	Jurjān	<i>TJ</i>
Rabī‘ I 321/ Mar 933	31. Aḥmad b. Ḥamdūn al-Naysābūrī	Jurjān	<i>A</i> , 1:312–14; <i>SAN</i> , 14:553–54
323/ 934–35	208. Bundār b. Ibrāhīm al-Istrābādī	Jurjān	<i>TI</i> , 7:474
Ṣafar 324/ Jan 936	938. Mūsā b. al-‘Abbās al-‘Āzādhyārī	Jurjān	<i>TI</i> , 7:502
Rabī‘ I 325/ Jan–Feb 937	437. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Sarī al-Istrābādī	Jurjān	<i>TI</i> , 7:509
Muḥarram 325/ Nov–Dec 936	680. Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd al-Naysābūrī	Jurjān	<i>SAN</i> , 15:258
after 325/ 936–37	589. Al-‘Abbās b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Baghdādī	Jurjān	<i>TB</i> , 14:47–48; <i>TMD</i> , 26:266–68
326/ 937–38	169/1068. Ismā‘īl b. al-Muḥammad al-Ḥamakī	Astarābād	<i>TJ</i>
Jumādā II 331/ Feb–Mar 943	885. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Dāmghānī [in no. 492]	Dāmghān	<i>TJ</i> ; <i>TI</i> , 7:649
Rabī‘ II 333/ Dec 944	742. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Juhanī	Jurjān	<i>TJ</i>
337/ 948–49	191. Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Baḥrī	Jurjān	<i>SAN</i> , 15:471–72
337 (end)/ 949 (mid)	496. ‘Isā b. Zayd al-Fārisī	Jurjān	<i>A</i> , 9:340
Total: 29			

Death Date	Number in al-Sahmī/Name	Location	Source
<p>Abbreviations</p> <p><i>TJ</i> = al-Sahmī, <i>Ta'rikh Jurjān</i></p> <p><i>TB</i> = al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, <i>Ta'rikh Madīnat al-Salām</i></p> <p><i>A</i> = al-Sam'ānī, <i>al-Ansāb</i></p> <p><i>TMD</i> = Ibn 'Asākir, <i>Ta'rikh madīnat Dimashq</i></p> <p><i>SAN</i> = al-Dhahabī, <i>Siyar a'lam al-nubalā'</i></p> <p><i>TI</i> = al-Dhahabī, <i>Ta'rikh al-Islām</i></p>			

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