

## Abū al-Faraj ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Isfahānī, the Author of [the Kitāb al-Aqhānī](#)

Abū al-Faraj ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. al-Haytham al-Umawī al-Isfahānī (died after 356/967<sup>1</sup>) was a litterateur, genealogist, poet, musicologist, scribe, and boon-companion in the tenth-century, mainly based in Baghdad. He is best known as the author of [the Kitāb al-Aqhānī](#) (“The Book of Songs”), a unique work which includes abundant information about Arabic [classical](#) music and the lives of poets and musicians from the pre-Islamic period to al-Isfahānī’s time. **Given his contribution to the documentation of the history of Arabic music, al-Isfahānī is characterised by Sawa “a true prophet of modern ethnomusicology.”<sup>2</sup>**

**This present article covers the following aspects about al-Isfahānī:**

**Dates**

**Family**

**Education and Career**

**Personality, Preferences and Belief**

**Legacy**

**Dates**

The commonly accepted dates of al-Isfahānī’s birth and death are 284/897–8 and 356/967.<sup>3</sup> However, the credibility of these dates is to be treated with discretion. The dates are given by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (392–463/1002–1071), who bases his information on al-Isfahānī’s

<sup>1</sup> See below, the section on Dates.

<sup>2</sup> George Dimitri Sawa, *Music Performance Practice in the Early ‘Abbāsīd Era 132-320 AH/750-932 AD* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1989), 29.

<sup>3</sup> Other dates of death are 360s/970s and 357/967–68, suggested respectively by Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 385/995 or 388/998) and Abū Nu‘aym al-Isfahānī (430/948–1038); see: Abū Nu‘aym al-Isfahānī, *Akhbār Aṣḥāhān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, n.d.), vl.2, 22; Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, ed. Riḍā Tajaddud (Tehran: Dār al-Masīra, 1988), 128.

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student, Muḥammad b. Abī al-Fawāris (338–412/950–1022).<sup>4</sup> The **death date given by al-Khaṭīb** is irreconcilable with a reference in the *Kitāb Adab al-ghurabā'* ("The Book of the Etiquettes of Strangers"), attributed to al-Iṣfahānī, to his being in prime youth (*fī ayyām al-shabība wa-l-ṣibā*) in 356/967.<sup>5</sup> If we accept al-Iṣfahānī's authorship of *Adab al-ghurabā'* and the authenticity of all the accounts in it, none of the above dates makes sense.<sup>6</sup> However, it is possible to calculate the approximate dates of his birth and death through the lifespans of his students and his direct informants. Muḥammad b. Abī al-Fawāris — the youngest to have transmitted from him — was born in 338/950.<sup>7</sup> If we assume that Muḥammad started to attend al-Iṣfahānī's lectures at the age of ten, then we may suggest that al-Iṣfahānī **was still active in 348/960 onwards or a little later. Among his direct informants, the one who died earliest** is Yaḥyā b. 'Alī b. Yaḥyā al-Munajjim, who lived from 241/855 to 300/912.<sup>8</sup> Again, if we postulate that al-Iṣfahānī transmitted from Yaḥyā when he was at least ten years old, we can infer that he was born before 290/902. Therefore, al-Iṣfahānī's intellectual activity took place in the first six decades of the tenth century, from about 290/902 to 348/960.

## Family

<sup>4</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām*, ed. Bashshār 'A. Ma'rūf (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2001), vl.13, 338. On Ibn Abī al-Fawāris; see: Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.2, 213.

<sup>5</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, ed. Aḥmad F. Rifā'ī (Cairo: Maṭbū'āt al-Ma'mūn, 1922), vl.13, 95–97; al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb Adab al-ghurabā'*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd, 1972), 83–86.

<sup>6</sup> The attribution of *Adab al-ghurabā'* to al-Iṣfahānī is much disputed in current scholarship. The scholars who affirm al-Iṣfahānī as the author of *Adab al-ghurabā'* include: Azartash Azarnoosh, *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, s.v. "Abū al-Faraj," ed. Wilferd Madelung and Farhad Daftary (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 733; Sebastian Günther, *EP*, s.v. "Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī," accessed July 24 2018, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_ei3\\_COM\\_0105](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_0105); Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, *Muqaddima of Kitāb adab al-ghurabā'*, by Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd, 1972), 10–16; Hilary Kilpatrick, "On the difficulty of knowing mediaeval Arabic authors: The case of Abū l-Faraj and pseudo-Iṣfahānī" in *Islamic reflections, Arabic musings. Studies in honour of Professor Alan Jones from his students*, edited by Robert G. Hoyland et al. (Oxford: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2004), 230–242; Hilary Kilpatrick, "The *Kitāb adab al-ghurabā'* of Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī" in *La signification du bas Moyen Age dans l'histoire et la culture du monde musulman. Actes du 8me Congrès de l'Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants Aix-en-Provence 1976* (Aix-en-Provence: Édisud, 1978), 127–135. On the opposite side are: Robert G. Hoyland, "History, Fiction and Authorship in the First Centuries of Islam" in *Writing and Representation in Medieval Islam: Muslim Horizons*, ed. Julia Bray (London: Routledge, 2006), 36–39; Patricia Crone and Shmuel Moreh, The Authorship of the *Ghurabā'* in *The Book of Stranger: Medieval Arabic Graffiti on the Theme of Nostalgia*, by al-Iṣfahānī, trans. Patricia Crone and Shmuel Moreh (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2000), 128–143.

<sup>7</sup> Muḥammad 'A. al-Aṣma'ī, *Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī wa-kitābuhu al-Aghānī: dirāsa wa-taḥlīl li-azhā al-'uṣūr al-Islāmiyya* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1951), 81–85; al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.2, 213–214.

<sup>8</sup> Manfred Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen des Kitāb al-Aḡānī* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004), 68–69.

**Commented [S6]:** [K 4] Al-Khaṭīb was writing roughly a century after Abū l-Faraj. If on p. 4 Yāqūt (12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> cent) is described as a 'late' source, al-Khaṭīb hardly fits into the same category.

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The epithet, al-Isfahānī,<sup>9</sup> refers to the city, Isfahan, on the Iranian plateau. Instead of indicating al-Isfahānī's birthplace,<sup>10</sup> this epithet seems to be common to al-Isfahānī's family. Every reference al-Isfahānī makes to his paternal relatives includes the is attributive, al-Isfahānī.<sup>11</sup> According to Ibn Ḥazm (384–456/994–1064), some descendants of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān b. Muḥammad, al-Isfahānī's forefather,<sup>12</sup> settled in Isfahan.<sup>13</sup> Isfahan was the refuge of various 'Alids and their supporters in the Umayyad period.<sup>14</sup> The Umayyad branch, from which al-Isfahānī came, may have been attracted by these 'Alid groups when it settled in Isfahan. However, it has to be borne in mind that the earliest information we have regarding al-Isfahānī's family history only dates to the generation of his great-grandfather, Aḥmad b. al-Haytham, who settled in Sāmarrā' sometime between 221/835–6 and 232/847.<sup>15</sup> That is, any~~the~~ interaction between al-Isfahānī's forefathers and 'Alids back in Isfahan remains in mystery.

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[Su] Why?

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As the passage stands, you do say "may", so it reads like speculation. As long as this is kept clear, it doesn't seem to need evidence.

<sup>9</sup> Another spelling, al-Isbahānī, is also used in secondary literature. Although al-Isbahānī is found in the oldest biographical sources and manuscripts, I stick to al-Isfahānī in this article; see: Kilpatrick, *Making*, vii.

<sup>10</sup> Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām* (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li-l-Malāyīn, 2002), vl.4, 278 ; Gernot Rotter, *Und der Kalif beschenkte ihn reichlich: Auszüge aus dem Buch der Lieder* (Tübingen: Horst Erdmann Verlag, 1977), 7 ; Aḥmad Amīn, *Zuhr al-Islām* (Cairo: Sharikat Nawābigh al-Fikr, 2009), 248–249 ; Dāwūd Sallūm, *Dirāsāt Kitāb al-Aghānī wa-minhaj mu'allifihī* (Baghdad: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1969), 9. This misconception, according to Azarnoosh, was first disseminated by Ṭāshkubrīzādah (d. 968/1560) and was thereafter followed by the modern scholars; see: Azarnoosh, *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, s.v. "Abū al-Faraj," 719.

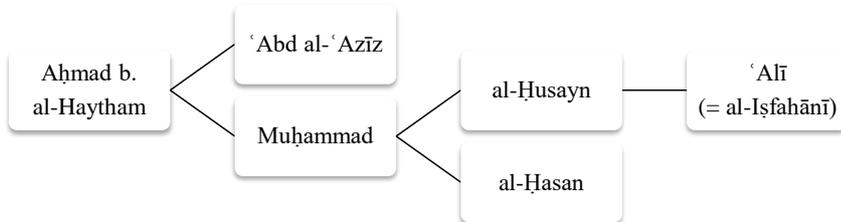
<sup>11</sup> Muḥammad A. Khalafallāh, *Ṣāhib al-Aghānī: Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī al-Rāwīya*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjalū al-Miṣriyya, 1962), 23–25; Azarnoosh, *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, s.v. "Abū al-Faraj," 720.

<sup>12</sup> While most of the sources agree that al-Isfahānī was amongst the offspring of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān b. Muḥammad (72–132/691–750), Ibn al-Nadīm alone claimed that he was a descendant of Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik (72–125/691–743): *al-Fihrist*, 127; al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.13, 337; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, ed. Ḥassān 'Abd al-Mannān (Beirut: Bayt al-Afkār al-Dawliyya, 2004), 2774; al-Qiftī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt 'alā anbāh al-nuḥāt*, ed. Muḥammad A. Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1986), vl.2, 251.

<sup>13</sup> Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat ansāb al-'arab*, ed. Muḥammad 'A. Hārūn, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, n.d.), 107.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew Newman, *Twelver Shiism: Unity and Diversity in the Life of Islam, 632 to 1722* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 37.

<sup>15</sup> I-Wen Su, "The Family History of Abū Al-Faraj Al-Isfahānī: The Ninth-Century 'Abbasid Political Elite and the Ṭālibids in Samarra," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 29-3 (2018): 421–422.



### The Members of the Iṣfahānī Family

Based on al-Iṣfahānī's references in the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (hereafter, *Aghānī*), Aḥmad b. al-Haytham seems to have led a privileged life in Sāmarrā', while his sons were well **connected** **inlinked with** the elite of the 'Abbāsīd capital at that time.<sup>16</sup> His son, 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Aḥmad, was "one of the high ranking scribes in the days of al-Mutawakkil (r. 232–247/847–861) (*min kibār al-kuttāb fī ayyām al-Mutawakkil*)".<sup>17</sup> Another son, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad (*viz.*, al-Iṣfahānī's grandfather), was associated with the 'Abbāsīd **functionaries**, the vizier, Ibn al-Zayyāt (d. 233/847), the scribe, Ibrāhīm b. al-'Abbās al-Ṣūlī (176–243/792–857), and the vizier 'Ubaydallāh b. Sulaymān (d. 288/901), besides the Ṭālibīd notables, above all, al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥusayn b. Zayd, who was the leader of the Banū Hāshim of his time.<sup>18</sup>

The close ties with the 'Abbāsīd court continued in the generation of Muḥammad's sons, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (al-Iṣfahānī's father). Al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad, al-Iṣfahānī's uncle, was also a scribe and **closely** connected with the court elite, including 'Ubaydallāh b. Sulaymān, the sons of Ibn al-Zayyāt, and the Ṭālibīd, Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Ḥamza (d. 286-7/899-900).<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad, al-Iṣfahānī's father, seems a rather obscure figure. That al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad transmitted works on poets and musicians, **though to a lesser extent**, perhaps reveals the family's general interest in these subjects and its subsequent

<sup>16</sup> Su, "The Family," 422–423.

<sup>17</sup> Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat*, 107.

<sup>18</sup> Su, "The Family," 424–426; al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn*, ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqr, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Qom: Manshūrāt al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, 1991), 547.

<sup>19</sup> Su, "The Family," 426–430.

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influence on al-Iṣfahānī's **intellectual** pursuits.<sup>20</sup> However, it does not inform much about himself, except for his presence in Baghdad **from 300/912-3 on**,<sup>21</sup> and his friendship with Muḥammad b. Khalaf b. al-Marzubān (d. 309/921).<sup>22</sup> That said, al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad's marital connection with the family of Thawāba (Āl Thawāba) deserves further **investigation**.

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In various places in the *Aghānī*, al-Iṣfahānī refers to **Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad b. Thawāba (from the Āl Thawāba) as his grandfather on his mother's side**.<sup>23</sup> It is often suggested that the family of Thawāba, being Shī'ī, bequeathed their sectarian inclination to al-Iṣfahānī.<sup>24</sup> However, the identification of **the Thawāba family as Shī'īs is only found in a late source, Yāqūt's (574–626/1178–1225) work**.<sup>25</sup> Although it is not implausible for the family of Thawāba to have been Shī'ī-inclined in one way or another, since many elite families working under the 'Abbāsīd caliphate during this period of time indeed allied with 'Alids or their partisans,<sup>26</sup> there is no evidence that **the members** of the Thawāba family embraced an extreme form of Shī'ism.<sup>27</sup>

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In short, al-Iṣfahānī came from a family well-entrenched in the networks of the 'Abbāsīd elite, which included the **officials** and the 'Alids. Despite the epithet, al-Iṣfahānī, it does not seem that the Iṣfahānī family has much to do with the city, Isfahan. Rather, the family was mainly based in Sāmarrā', **from** the generation of Aḥmad b. al-Haytham, and then Baghdad. In the seats of the caliphate, **five** members of this family worked as scribes, while maintaining friendship or alliance with other scribes, viziers, and notables. As many of the court elite, al-Iṣfahānī's family maintained an amicable relationship with the offspring of 'Alī and allied with families, such as the Thawāba family,<sup>28</sup> sharing their veneration of 'Alī and 'Alids. However, it

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<sup>20</sup> Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, ed. Yūsuf al-Baqā'ī and Gharīd al-Shaykh (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A'lamī, 2000), vl.2, 124–125; vl.13, 90.

<sup>21</sup> Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.23, 21.

<sup>22</sup> Al-Iṣfahānī mentions a conversation between his father and Muḥammad b. Khalaf b. al-Marzubānī and notes the long-term friendship and marital tie between the two families; see: al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.24, 37. I owe this reference to Hilary Kilpatrick, *Making the Great Book of Songs: Compilation and the Author's Craft in Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī's Kitāb al-Aghānī* (London: Routledge, 2003), 17.

<sup>23</sup> Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.12, 29; vl.14, 113, 157; vl.16, 317–318; vl.19, 35, 49; vl.20, 116. For the identity of Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad b. Thawāba and other members of the Thawāba family; see: Khalafallāh, *Ṣāhib*, 52–58; Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 143–144.

<sup>24</sup> Khalafallāh, *Ṣāhib*, 58. Both Kilpatrick and Azarnoosh follow Khalafallāh's argument as to the Thawāba family's impact upon al-Iṣfahānī's Shī'ī conviction; see: Kilpatrick, *Making*, 15; Azarnoosh, *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, s.v. "Abū al-Faraj," 728.

<sup>25</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vl.4, 147–149.

<sup>26</sup> Su, "The Family," 433–441.

<sup>27</sup> Su, "The Family," 431–432.

<sup>28</sup> Besides the Thawāba family, one may count among the pro-'Alid or Shī'ī families the Banū Furāt and Banū Nawbakht; see: Su, "The Family," 429–430.

is hard to pinpoint such a reverential attitude towards 'Alids in terms of sectarian alignment, given the scanty information about al-Iṣfahānī's family and the fluidity of sectarian identities at the time.

## Education and Career

The Iṣfahānī family's extensive social outreach is reflected in al-Iṣfahānī's sources. Among the direct informants whom al-Iṣfahānī cites in his works, one finds the members of his own family, who were further connected to other notable families, as mentioned above,<sup>29</sup> the Thawāba family,<sup>30</sup> the Munajjim family,<sup>31</sup> the Yazīdī family,<sup>32</sup> the Ṣūlī family,<sup>33</sup> the Ḥamdūn family,<sup>34</sup> the Ṭāhirid family,<sup>35</sup> the Marzubān family,<sup>36</sup> and the Ṭālibid family.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Su, "The Family," 421–432; Khalafallah, *Ṣāhib*, 41–51.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Iṣfahānī's sources are al-'Abbās b. Aḥmad b. Thawāba and Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad b. Thawāba, al-Iṣfahānī's grandfather from the maternal side, who is cited indirectly; see: Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 29, 133.

<sup>31</sup> Al-Iṣfahānī has three informants from the Munajjim family, whose members were associated with the 'Abbāsīd court as boon companions, scholars, or astrologists: Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. 'Alī (262–327/876–940); 'Alī b. Hārūn b. 'Alī (277–352/890–963); and Yaḥyā b. 'Alī b. Yaḥyā (241–300/855–912); see: Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 38, 40, 68–69. About the Banū Munajjim; see: Manfred Fleischhammer, *El<sup>2</sup>*, s.v. "Munadjjim," accessed July 24 2018, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_5501](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5501).

<sup>32</sup> The Yazīdī family was famed for its members' mastery of poetry, the Qur'ānic readings, the *ḥadīth*, and philology. Muḥammad b. al-'Abbās al-Yazīdī (d. c. 228–310/842–922) was the tutor of the children of the caliph, al-Muqtadir (r. 295–320/908–932) and transmitted Abū 'Ubayda's *Naqā'id*, Tha'lab's *Majālis*, and the works of his family; many of his narrations are preserved in the *Aghānī*; see: Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 54–56; Rudolf Sellheim, *El<sup>2</sup>*, "al-Yazīdī," accessed July 24 2018, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_COM\\_1365](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1365).

<sup>33</sup> The association with the Ṣūlī family likely began in the generation of al-Iṣfahānī's grandfather, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, who was close to Ibrāhīm b. al-'Abbās al-Ṣūlī; see above, the section on Family. Al-Iṣfahānī's direct sources from this family are the famous al-Ṣūlī, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā (d. 335/946 or 336/947), who was the boon companion of a number of the caliphs and a phenomenal chess player; his son, Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad al-Ṣūlī; and al-'Abbās b. 'Alī, known as Ibn Burd al-Khiyār; see: Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 32, 64–65; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.9, 229. See also: Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 167; Stefan Leder, *S El<sup>2</sup>*, s.v. "al-Ṣūlī," accessed July 24 2018, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_7177](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7177).

<sup>34</sup> The Banū Ḥamdūn were known for their boon-companionship at the 'Abbāsīd court in the ninth century; al-Iṣfahānī's informant is 'Abdallāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥamdūn; see: Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 30; about the Ḥamdūn family; see: Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 161; Jean-Claude Vadet, *El<sup>2</sup>*, "Ibn Ḥamdūn," accessed July 24 2018, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_3187](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3187).

<sup>35</sup> Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir, identified by al-Iṣfahānī as the nephew of 'Ubaydallāh b. 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir (d. 300/913); that is, he is the son of Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir (d. 296/908-9), the governor of Khurāsān; see: Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 69; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.21, 48. See also: Karl V. Zetterstéen, *El<sup>2</sup>*, s.v. "Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir," accessed July 24 2018, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_5367](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5367); Clifford E. Bosworth, Manuela Marín and G.R. Smith, *El<sup>2</sup>*, "Ṭāhirids," accessed July 24 2018, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_COM\\_1152](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1152).

<sup>36</sup> The old friend of al-Iṣfahānī's father, Muḥammad b. Khalaf b. al-Marzubān, is a ubiquitous informant in the *Aghānī*; see footnote 2220; Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 58–59.

<sup>37</sup> The Ṭālibid informants of al-Iṣfahānī comprise: 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Ḥamza; 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad; 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ja'far; Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. Ja'far; Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Ḥamza; see: Sebastian Günther,

Commented [S33]: [K36]

Commented [S34]: [K 37]

Commented [S35]: [K 38-45]

[Su]: I can relate to K's suggestions here, as the terms are frequently found in the sources, but not sure if that's clear and understandable to non-specialist readers?

Commented [ET36R35]: I'd go with Kilpatrick's suggestions. As you say, it will help readers approach the sources and "family" can mean different things in different contexts.

Given that al-Ṣfahānī and his family very likely settled in Baghdad since the beginning of the tenth century,<sup>38</sup> it is no surprise that he transmitted from a considerable number of the inhabitants of or visitors to that city, such as, to name just a few: Jaḥẓa (d. 324/936),<sup>39</sup> al-Khaffāf,<sup>40</sup> ‘Alī b. Sulaymān al-Akhfash (d. 315/927 or 316/928),<sup>41</sup> and Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/922).<sup>42</sup> Like other scholars of his time, al-Ṣfahānī travelled in pursuit of knowledge. Although the details are not sufficient for us to establish the dates of his journeys, based on the chains of transmission (*asānīd*, sing. *isnād*) al-Ṣfahānī cites consistently and meticulously in every report, it is certain that he transmitted from ‘Abd al-Malik b. Maslama and ‘Āṣim b. Muḥammad in Antakya;<sup>43</sup> ‘Abdallāh b. Muḥammad b. Iṣḥāq in Ahwāz;<sup>44</sup> and Yahyā b. Aḥmad b. al-Jawn in Raqqa.<sup>45</sup> If we accept the ascription of the *Kitāb Adab al-ghurabā*’ to al-Ṣfahānī, then he once visited Baṣra besides other towns such as Ḥiṣn Maḥdī, Mattūth, and Bājistrā.<sup>46</sup> Yet, none of these cities seems to have left as tremendous an impact upon al-Ṣfahānī as Kūfa and Baghdad did. While al-Ṣfahānī’s Baghdādī informants were wide-ranging in their expertise as well as sectarian and theological tendencies, his Kūfan sources, to a certain degree, can be characterised as either Shī’ī or keen on preserving and disseminating memory that favours ‘Alī and his family. For example, Ibn ‘Uqda (d. 333/944), mentioned in both the *Aghānī* and the *Maqātil*, is invariably cited for the reports about the ‘Alids and their merits.<sup>47</sup>

The journey in search for knowledge taken by al-Ṣfahānī may not be particularly outstanding by the standard of his time,<sup>48</sup> but the diversity of his sources’ occupations and fortes is beyond

*Quellenuntersuchungen zu den "Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn" des Abū-l-Faraj al-Ṣfahānī (gest. 356/967): Ein Beitrag zur Problematik der mündlichen und schriftlichen Überlieferung in der mittelalterlichen arabischen Literatur* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1991), 140–141; 141–144; 150; 161–162; 190–191.

<sup>38</sup> See footnote 2149; al-Ṣfahānī’s uncle, al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad, mentioned in the *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām*, either settled in Baghdad with him or at least active for some time there; see: al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.8, 440.

<sup>39</sup> Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 34–35.

<sup>40</sup> Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 46–47.

<sup>41</sup> Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 41–42.

<sup>42</sup> Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 58.

<sup>43</sup> Al-Ṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.13, 25; vl.14, 46–50.

<sup>44</sup> Al-Ṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.17, 157.

<sup>45</sup> Al-Ṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.24, 67.

<sup>46</sup> Azarnoosh, *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, s.v. “Abū al-Faraj,” 721; Kilpatrick, *Making*, 18.

<sup>47</sup> Günther, *Quellenuntersuchungen*, 127–131; Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 36–37; I-Wen Su, “The Shī’ī Past in Abū Al-Faraj Al-Ṣfahānī’s *Kitāb Al-Aghānī*: A Literary and Historical Analysis,” (PhD diss., The University of Edinburgh, 2016), 204–209. About Ibn ‘Uqda, see also: Jonathan Brown, “Crossing Sectarian Boundaries in the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Century: Ibn ‘Uqda, a Man for All Seasons,” *al-Usur al-Wusta*, 20-2 (2008): 55–58.

<sup>48</sup> Compare with, for instance, his teacher, al-Ṭabarī: Clifford E. Bosworth, *Et*, “al-Ṭabarī”, accessed 23 July 2018, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_COM\\_1133](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1133).

Commented [S37]: [K 46] around [A5] at [Su]: What is wrong with since?

Commented [S38]: [K47]

Commented [S39]: [K 48]

Commented [S40]: [K49] and [A7]

Commented [S41]: [K50]

Commented [S42]: [K 51] and [A9]

Commented [S43]: [A 11] Would proto-Shī’ī be a better description of these people at the end of the 10th/beginning of the 11th c.?

Commented [S44]: [Su] revision: I could add a footnote saying that what I mean by Shī’ī here and elsewhere is in a broad sense with being limited to a specific sect. Presumably, this can mitigate the misgiving in: [A23]: I think there needs to be a slightly clearer understanding of what these terms might have meant at different times in history. At the moment, the categories (Shī’ī, Zaydī, etc.) are being discussed as if they always existed and always meant the same thing. I would personally prefer to use the terms that contemporaries used and to note the changes in understandings of these terms over time. For categories that are still actively being formed at this moment in history, it may be useful to say something like proto-Shī’ī if you think that’s appropriate.

Commented [S45]: [K52] [Su]: I don’t understand this

doubt impressive. His informants can be assigned into one or more of the following categories<sup>49</sup>: first, philologists and grammarians;<sup>50</sup> second, singers and musicians;<sup>51</sup> third, booksellers and copyists (*ṣaḥḥāfūn or warrāqūn, sing. ṣaḥḥāf or warrāq*);<sup>52</sup> fourth, boon-companions;<sup>53</sup> fifth, tutors (*muʿaddibūn, sing. muʿaddib*);<sup>54</sup> sixth, scribes (*kuttāb, sing. kātib*);<sup>55</sup> seventh, imams or preachers (*khuṭabāʾ, sing. khaṭīb*);<sup>56</sup> eighth, religious scholars (of the *ḥadīth*, the Qurʾānic recitations and exegesis, or jurisprudence) and judges;<sup>57</sup> ninth, poets;<sup>58</sup> tenth, *akḥbārīs* (transmitters of reports of all sorts, including genealogical, historical, and anecdotal reports).<sup>59</sup> The variety of the narrators and their narrations enriched al-Ṣfahānī's literary output, which covers a wide range of topics from amusing tales to the accounts of the 'Alids' martyrdom.<sup>60</sup> His erudition is best illustrated by Abū 'Alī al-Muḥassin al-Tanūkhī's (329–384/941–994) comment:

Amongst the Shīʿī narrators whom we have seen, none has memorised poems, melodies, reports, traditions (*al-āthār*), *al-aḥādīth al-musnada* [narrations with chains of transmission, including the Prophetic *ḥadīth*], and genealogy by heart like Abū al-Faraj al-Ṣfahānī. Very proficient in these matters, he is also knowledgeable in the military campaigns and the biography of the Prophet (*al-maghāzī and al-sīra*), lexicography, grammar, legendary tales (*al-khurāfāt*),

Commented [S46]: [K53]

[Su]: not sure why this emendation is suggested

Commented [ET47R46]: I think Kilpatrick wants a simple list of areas of expertise and professions which is easier to read. I agree that "first...second" and so on are unnecessary and that perhaps two lists, of areas of expertise and professions, would read well but I also think you shouldn't dispense with the Arabic terminology.

Commented [S48]: [K54]

Commented [S49]: [K55]

Commented [S50]: [K56]

<sup>49</sup> It has to be kept in mind that the categorisation is based on the attributives given by al-Ṣfahānī. Just as al-Ṣfahānī was not a local Ṣfahānī, the subjects discussed here do not necessarily engage with the professions their *nisbas* indicate.

<sup>50</sup> Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 41–42 (al-Akhfash); 60–61 (Ibn Durayd); 32 (Ibn Rustam); 30 ('Abd al-Malik al-Darīr).

<sup>51</sup> Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 42 (Dhukā' Wajh al-Ruzza); 34 (Jaḥza).

<sup>52</sup> Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 52–53 ('Isā b. al-Ḥusayn al-Warrāq); 40 ('Alī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Warrāq); 37 (Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ṣaḥḥāf); 31 ('Abd al-Wahhāb b. 'Ubayd al-Ṣaḥḥāf); 65 (Muḥammad b. Zakariyyā al-Ṣaḥḥāf).

<sup>53</sup> Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 32 (Abū al-Qāsim al-Shīrbābākī); see footnotes 2927–3735 above.

<sup>54</sup> Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 32 (Aḥmad b. al-'Abbās al-Mu'addib); 35 (Aḥmad b. 'Imrān al-Mu'addib); 61–62 (Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Mu'addib); 62 (Muḥammad b. 'Imrān al-Mu'addib).

<sup>55</sup> Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 43–44 (Ja'far b. Qudāma al-Kātib); 50–51 (al-Ḥusayn b. al-Qāsim al-Kawkabī al-Kātib); 53 (Ishāq b. al-Ḍahḥāk al-Kātib); 41 ('Alī b. Ṣāliḥ al-Kātib); 39 ('Alī b. al-'Abbās al-Talḥī al-Kātib); 39–40 ('Alī b. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Kātib); 49 (al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Kātib); 57 (Muḥammad b. Baḥr al-Ṣfahānī al-Kātib).

<sup>56</sup> Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 61 (Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn al-Kindī was al-Ṣfahānī's tutor and the preacher at the congregational mosque in Qādisiyya); 40–41 ('Alī b. Muḥammad, an imam of a Kūfan mosque). See also: al-Ṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.15, 255; vl.19, 38; vl.20, 163; vl.21, 158.

<sup>57</sup> Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 30 ('Abdallāh b. Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī); 36–37 (Ibn 'Uqda); 58 (Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī); 59–60 (Muḥammad b. Khalaf Wakī').

<sup>58</sup> Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 42 ('Āṣim b. Muḥammad al-Shā'ir); 49 (al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Shā'ir).

<sup>59</sup> Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 37 (Aḥmad b. Sulaymān al-Ṭūsī); 37–38 (Ibn 'Ammār); 42–43 (Abū Khalīfa al-Jumāḥī); 45–46 (al-Ḥaramī b. Abī al-'Alā').

<sup>60</sup> See below, the section on Legacy.

and **the accomplishments required of courtiers** (*ālat al-munādama*), like falconry (*al-jawāriḥ*), veterinary science (*al-bayṭara*), **some notions of medicine** (*nutafan min al-ṭibb*), astrology, drinks (*al-ashriba*), and other things.<sup>61</sup>

With his encyclopaedic knowledge of music, musicians, poetry, poets, genealogy, history, and other subjects, al-Isfahānī established himself as a learned scholar and **teacher**.<sup>62</sup>

**He was also a scribe and this is not** surprising, given his families' scribal connections, but the details of his *kātib* activities are rather opaque.<sup>63</sup> Although both al-Tanūkhī and al-Baghdādī refer to al-Isfahānī with the attribute, *kātib*, they mention nothing of where he worked or for whom.<sup>64</sup> The details of his job as a scribe only come later, with Yāqūt, many of whose reports about al-Isfahānī prove problematic. For instance, a report from Yāqūt claims that al-Isfahānī was the scribe of Rukn al-Dawla (d. 366/976) and mentions his resentment at Abū al-Faḍl b. al-'Amīd (d. 360/970).<sup>65</sup> However, the very same report is mentioned by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (active fourth/tenth century<sup>66</sup>) in his *Akhlāq al-wazīrayn*, where the aforementioned scribe of Rukn al-Dawla is identified as Abū al-Faraj Ḥamd b. Muḥammad, not Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, it is hard to know with certainty to what extent al-Isfahānī was engaged **in his capacity as a *kātib***. **Nevertheless, al-Isfahānī's association with the vizier, Abū Muḥammad al-Muhallabī (291–352/903–963), is well-documented.** The friendship between the two began before al-Muhallabī's vizierate in 339/950.<sup>68</sup> The firm relationship between **them** is supported by al-Isfahānī's poetry collected by al-Tha'ālibī: half of the fourteen poems are panegyrics dedicated

<sup>61</sup> Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.13, 339; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān wa-anbā' abnā' al-zamān*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1972), vl.3, 307; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 2774; al-Qiftī, *Inbāh*, vl.2, 251. It is noteworthy that the first sentence of this quote is written differently from the works given here in al-Khaṭīb's *Tārīkh*.

<sup>62</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vl.13, 129–130; Khalafallāh, *Ṣāhib*, 168–169; al-Aṣma'ī, *Abū al-Faraj*, 73–85; Ḥusayn 'Āṣī, *Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1993), 24–30.

<sup>63</sup> For the few references by al-Isfahānī to his administrative tasks; see: Kilpatrick, *Making*, 18.

<sup>64</sup> Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vl.13, 337; al-Tanūkhī, *al-Faraj ba'da al-shidda*, ed. 'Abbūd al-Shālījī (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1978), vl.2, 334; al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār al-muḥāḍara wa-akhbār al-mudhākara*, ed. 'Abbūd al-Shālījī, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1995), vl.1, 18.

<sup>65</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, vl.13, 110–111.

<sup>66</sup> Samuel M. Stern, *EP*, s.v. "Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī," accessed July 24 2018, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_0202](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0202).

<sup>67</sup> Azarnoosh, *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, s.v. "Abū al-Faraj," 726–727; Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *Akhlāq al-wazīrayn*, ed. Muḥammad T. al-Ṭanjī (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1992), 421–422.

<sup>68</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vl.13, 105. Among the frequently cited sources in the *Aghānī* is Ḥabīb b. Naṣr al-Muhallabī (d. 307/919), presumably from the Muhallabid family, but it is not clear how this source relates to Abū Muḥammad al-Muhallabī; see: Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 44.

**Commented [S51]:** [K58]

**Commented [S52]:** [K59]  
[Su] the suggested translation reads funny to me

**Commented [S53]:** [K60]

**Commented [S54]:** [A16]  
[Su] see fn 60

**Commented [S55]:** [K61]

**Commented [S56]:** [K 62]  
[Su]: I see where the comment in Review comes. I guess my phrasing is a bit uncertain here.

**Commented [S57]:** [K63]

**Commented [S58]:** [K64]

**Commented [S59]:** [K] The article gives the impression that Abū l-Faraj was mainly active as a scholar and teacher, because most of the sources about his life focus on scholarly activities. Apart from the fact that early sources qualify him simply as a *kātib* or *adīb*, however, the titles in his oeuvre, taken as a whole, reflect the interests of court circles as much as – if not more than – those of strictly speaking scholarly ones. And the anecdotes about him, whether exaggerated or not, are set in the world of the *kutūb*.  
[Su]: The section on al-Isfahānī's family, which Kilpatrick suggests to downsize, and the following description in this paragraph do illustrate how al-Isfahānī is involved in the world of the court elite. I don't think I try to sideline how the courtly life shaped al-Isfahānī and his works, but I do refrain from discussing his role as a scribe, since there is no reliable information in this regard.  
Any suggestion from the editorial board?

**Commented [ET60R59]:** Sorry. Without knowing how much evidence is available to support a discussion of his career at court, I don't know how fair your coverage is. Perhaps include a sentence flagging up the possible biases in the evidence towards his scholarly career?

**Commented [S61]:** [K65-6]

**Commented [S62]:** [K67]

to al-Muhallabī.<sup>69</sup> In addition, al-Ṣfahānī’s own work, *al-Imā’ al-shawā’ir* (“The Slave Poetesses”), refers to the vizier — presumably, al-Muhallabī — as his dedicatee.<sup>70</sup> His **no longer surviving** *Manājīb al-khiṣyān* (“The Noble Eunuchs”), which addresses two castrated male singers owned by al-Muhallabī, was composed for him.<sup>71</sup> His *magnum opus*, the *Aghānī*, was very likely intended for him, as well.<sup>72</sup> As a return for his literary efforts, according to al-Tanūkhī, al-Ṣfahānī frequently received rewards from the vizier.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, for the sake of their long-term friendship and out of his respect for al-Ṣfahānī’s genius, al-Muhallabī exceptionally tolerated al-Ṣfahānī’s uncouth manners and poor personal hygiene.<sup>74</sup> The sources say nothing about al-Ṣfahānī’s fate, after al-Muhallabī’s death. In his **last** years, according to his student, Muḥammad b. Abī al-Fawāris, he suffered from senility (*khallata*).<sup>75</sup>

### Personality, Preferences and Beliefs

As a boon companion, al-Ṣfahānī was unconventional in the sense that he does not seem to have been bothered to observe the social decorum of his time, **as noted by a late biographical source**: with his uncleanness and gluttony presented a counterexample to elegance (*ẓarf*), as defined by one of his teachers, Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Washshā’ (d. 325/937).<sup>76</sup> His unconformity to the social norms did not hinder him from being part of al-Muhallabī’s entourage or participation in the literary assemblies, but, inevitably, it resulted in frictions with other scholars and detraction from his enemies.<sup>77</sup> Although al-Ṣfahānī appeared eccentric to his human associates, he was a caring owner to his cat, by the name of Yaqaq (meaning: white):

<sup>69</sup> Al-Tha’ālibī, *Yatīmat*, vl.3, 127–131.

<sup>70</sup> Al-Ṣfahānī, *al-Imā’ al-shawā’ir*, ed. Jalīl al-‘Aṭīyya (Beirut: Dār al-Niḍāl, 1984), 23.

<sup>71</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu’jam*, vl.13, 100.

<sup>72</sup> See discussion below, the section on Legacy.

<sup>73</sup> Al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār*, vl.1, 74; Hartmut Fāhndrich, *EP*, s.v. “al-Tanūkhī,” accessed July 24 2018, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_COM\\_1172](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1172).

<sup>74</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu’jam*, vl.13, 101–103.

<sup>75</sup> Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.13, 340. See also: Kilpatrick, *Making*, 19.

<sup>76</sup> Al-Washshā’ says: “It is not permissible for the people of elegance and etiquette to wear dirty clothes with clean ones, or clean ones with new ones,” and they should eat with small morsels, while avoiding gluttony. Al-Ṣfahānī never washed his clothes and shoes and only replaced them when they became too shabby to put on. See: Yāqūt, *Mu’jam*, vl.13, 101–102, 107–108; al-Washshā’, *al-Muwashshā*, 161 (quotation), 167.

<sup>77</sup> Kilpatrick, *Making*, 17–18; Azarnoosh, *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, s.v. “Abū al-Faraj,” 730–731.

**Commented [S63]:** [A 17]: I would prefer “Enslaved women who composed poetry”  
[Su]: I found in the word ‘enslaved’ a negative connotation (lower social economical status), which does not necessarily reflect their social status in reality.  
Editor suggestion?

**Commented [ET64R63]:** Both words seem to have similar connotations to me. And there is a problem with the word “slave” and related words in modern writing, in that the early modern European practice of slavery was significantly more racist and violent than slavery had been in previous contexts, meaning that the word now has irretrievably deeply negative connotations.

Is there any other way the Arabic can be translated? If not, I’d go with Adam’s suggestion, as the syntax is better, even if the semantics remain tricky.

**Commented [S65]:** [A 18]

**Commented [S66]:** [Su] emendation in red

**Commented [S67]:** [K73–4]

**Commented [S68]:** [K66–75] Red apostrophes to be deleted according to K

**Commented [S69]:** More critical with sources, as K suggests

**Commented [S70]:** [K 76–7]

he treated Yāqāq's colic (*qulanj*) with enema (*al-ḥuqna*).<sup>78</sup>

In contrast to his uncomely *modus vivendi*, al-Ṣfahānī's prose style is lucid, "in clear and simple language, with unusual sincerity and frankness."<sup>79</sup> Al-Ṣfahānī's capacity as a litterateur is well illustrated by Abū Deeb, who depicts al-Ṣfahānī as 'was one of the finest writers of Arabic prose in his time, with a remarkable ability to relate widely different types of *akbār* in a rich, lucid, rhythmic, and precise style, only occasionally exploiting such formal effects as *saj'* (rhyming prose). He was also a fine poet with an opulent imagination. His poetry displays preoccupations similar to those of other urban poets of his time.'<sup>80</sup> His pinpoint documentation of *isnāds*<sup>81</sup> and meticulous verification of information<sup>82</sup> provided in all his works, embody a true scholarly character. Usually, in his treatment of a subject or an event, al-Ṣfahānī lets his sources speak, but, occasionally, he voices his evaluation of poems and songs, as well as their creators.<sup>83</sup> When dealing with conflicting reports, al-Ṣfahānī either leaves his readers to decide or issues his judgment as to the most credible account.<sup>84</sup> Yet, he frankly condemns sources whom he holds to be unreliable, for instance, Ibn Khurdādhbih on musicological information and Ibn al-Kalbī on genealogy.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, al-Ṣfahānī assesses his source material with a critical eye, while impartially presenting his biographees, by focusing on their merits instead of elaborating on their flaws.<sup>86</sup>

That said, al-Ṣfahānī's personal preferences and sectarian partisanship are not absent from his works. In terms of music and songs, al-Ṣfahānī is a fan of Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī (155–235/772–850). In al-Ṣfahānī's eye, Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm was a multi-talented man, who excelled in a number of subjects, but, most importantly, music.<sup>87</sup> Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm, as a collector of the

<sup>78</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, vl.13, 104–105. For the discussion of colic and its treatment by enema; see: Golnouth S.M. Nezhad, *et alii*, "Insights into Avicenna's Knowledge of Gastrointestinal Medicine and His Account of An Enema Device," *Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica* 13 (2005): 29–40.

<sup>79</sup> Azarnoosh, *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, s.v. "Abū al-Faraj," 731. See also: Jabrī, *Abū al-Faraj al-Aṣbahānī* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1965), 27–29; Sallūm, *Dirāsāt*, 56–69.

<sup>80</sup> K. Abū Deeb, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, s.v. "ABU'L-FARAJ EṢFAHĀNĪ," accessed July 23 2019, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/abul-faraj-esfahani-ali-b>.

<sup>81</sup> Al-Ṣfahānī specifies not only his sources (the identities of his informants, or the titles of the written material used by him) but also the methods by which he acquired the reports. Now and then, he mentions the occasions in which he received the given information. See: Kilpatrick, *Making*, 94–104.

<sup>82</sup> Kilpatrick, *Making*, 40–46, 60–63, 115–119; Sallūm, *Dirāsāt*, 38–55, 101–118.

<sup>83</sup> Kilpatrick, *Making*, 46–47, 66–69.

<sup>84</sup> Kilpatrick, *Making*, 111–119.

<sup>85</sup> Kilpatrick, *Making*, 112–113; Sallūm, *Dirāsāt*, 85–89.

<sup>86</sup> Kilpatrick, *Making*, 46–47, 68–69, 114–115; Jabrī, *Abū al-Faraj*, 19–20, 25–26.

<sup>87</sup> Al-Ṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.5, 190.

Commented [S71]: [A19]: Prose? Prosaic has a negative connotation

Commented [S72]: [A20]: I'm not sure I find these two things in contradiction, or rather they are not sufficiently interrelated for this to be a contradiction. [K 82] delete [Su] okay

Commented [ET73]: "truly"?

Commented [S74]: [K81]

Commented [S75]: [K83]

Commented [S76]: [k85]

Commented [S77]: [A21]: How would we know if he were not being impartial? Focusing on their merits instead of their flaws doesn't strike me as impartial, rather it seems very subjective, no?

Commented [ET78R77]: What's your response to this?

Commented [S79]: [Su] revision: , while striving to present a more balanced view on his biographees by focusing....?

Commented [S80]: [K87]

Commented [S81]: [K88-89]

reports about poets and singers, is an important source in his *Aghānī*.<sup>88</sup> Besides being a mine of information, Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm's terminology for the description of the melodic modes is preferred over that of his opponent, Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī (162–224/778–839), and adopted by al-Iṣfahānī in his *Aghānī*.<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, al-Iṣfahānī embarked on the compilation of the *Aghānī*, because he was commissioned by his patron to reconstruct the list of exquisite songs selected by Ishāq.<sup>90</sup> In other words, the *raison d'être* of the *Aghānī* is partly related to al-Iṣfahānī's idol, Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm and its information about singers, songs and performance owes a tremendous amount to him.<sup>91</sup> Al-Iṣfahānī's admiration for scholars or men of letters can be detected from time to time, usually in the passing comments in the chains of transmission.<sup>92</sup> Yet, al-Iṣfahānī outspokenly expresses his admiration, in some cases, such as that of Ibn al-Mu'tazz (247–296/862–909).<sup>93</sup>

As an Umayyad by ancestry, al-Iṣfahānī's biographers mention his Shī'ī affiliation with exclamation.<sup>94</sup> Yet, in the light of the history of the family's connections with the 'Abbāsīd elite of Shī'ī inclination and the Ṭālibids, and of his learning experience in Kūfa, his Shī'ī conviction is understandable. Al-Ṭūsī (385–60/995–1067) is the only early source specifying the exact sect to which he pertains in the fluid Shī'ī world: al-Iṣfahānī is a Zaydī.<sup>95</sup> Although al-Ṭūsī's view is widely accepted, its veracity is not beyond doubt.<sup>96</sup> Al-Iṣfahānī does not seem to have been

<sup>88</sup> Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen*, 89–91.

<sup>89</sup> Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 15–16. See also: George D. Sawa, "The *Kitāb al-aghānī*," in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 6: The Middle East*, ed. Virginia Danielson, Scott Marcus, and Dwight Reynolds (New York: Routledge, 2002), 384–385.

<sup>90</sup> Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.1, 16. See the section below on al-Iṣfahānī's works.

<sup>91</sup> See also: I-Wen Su, "Al-Iṣfahānī's Fandom in the *Kitāb al-Aḡānī* (The Book of Songs): An Analysis of the Biography of Ibn Surayḡ," *Jurnal Hadhari: An International Journal*, 10-2(2018): 275–289.

<sup>92</sup> Kilpatrick, *Making*, 111–112; Khalafallah, *Ṣāhib*, 66–84.

<sup>93</sup> Su, "The Shī'ī Past," 175–179; Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, vl.10, 228–229; Kilpatrick, *Making*, 83–84.

<sup>94</sup> The cited statement expressing astonishment (*al-'ajab*) comes from: al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 2774; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*, ed. Muḥammad Y. al-Daqqāq (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1987), vl.7, 302. The earliest mention of the Umayyad-Shī'ī combination in the biographical sources is: al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.13, 340; this is then cited by: al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, vl.2, 253. A similar tenor, in a slightly different formulation, in "Alī b. al-Ḥusayn Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī al-Umawī, the author of the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, the Shī'ī, and this is rare for an Umawī (*wa-hādha nādir fī Umawī*)", see: al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-i'tidāl fī naqd al-rijāl*, ed. 'Alī M. Mu'awwaḍ and 'Ādil A. 'Abd al-Mawjūd (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1995), vl.5, 151; Ibn Hajar, *Lisān al-mizān*, ed. 'Abd al-Fattāh Abū Ghadda and Sulaymān 'A. Abū Ghadda (Beirut: Maktabat al-Muṭbū'āt al-Islāmiyya, 2002), vl.5, 526. Another formulation "*min al-'ajā'ib annahu marwānī yatashayya'u*," see: Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahaba*, ed. 'Abd al-Qādir al-Arnā'ūt and Maḥmūd al-Arnā'ūt (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1986), vl.4, 292.

<sup>95</sup> Al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣādiq (Qom: al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, n.d.), 192.

<sup>96</sup> Kilpatrick, *Making*, 14–16; Sebastian Günther, *EP*, s.v. "Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī," accessed July 24 2018, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_ei3\\_COM\\_0105](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_0105); Najam Haider, *The Origin of the Shī'a: Identity, Ritual, and Sacred Space in Eighth-Century Kūfa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 197; Najam Haider, "The Community Divided: A Textual Analysis of the Murders of Idrīs b. 'Abd Allāh (d.175/791)," *Journal of the*

Commented [S82]: [K90]

Commented [S83]: [k91]

Commented [S84]: [k92]

Commented [S85]: [K93]

Commented [S86]: [K95] delete [Su] why?

Commented [S87]: [K96]

Commented [S88]: [A22]: Maybe another word here would communicate more directly what you mean

Commented [S89]: [Su] revision: surprise?

Commented [ET90R89]: Yes, amend to surprise.

Commented [S91]: [K]: The sources for Abū l-Faraj's life used here range from contemporaries (al-Tanūkhī) or near contemporaries (al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī) to a writer of the 11<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century (Ibn al-'Imād). [Su]: The only reason footnote 92 includes so many late sources is to show how this seemingly contradiction impresses the biographers. Thus, I think it's okay to include such sources without exercising source criticism to the degree that I am wont to when it comes to al-Iṣfahānī's life.

Commented [ET92R91]: That seems fair.

informed of the latest Zaydī movements in Yemen and Ṭabaristān of his time, while his association with the Kūfan Zaydī community, which to some degree became less distinguishable from the Sunnīs, is yet to be studied in depth.<sup>97</sup> It is clear, based on examination of **how al-Isfahānī redacts his source material**, that he does honour ‘Alī, who plays a far more prominent role in his works than the first three caliphs, and some of his descendants, including Zaydī Shī‘ism’s eponym, Zayd b. ‘Alī (75–122/694–740), by presenting them positively, while, in some cases, leaving their enemies’ rectitude in question.<sup>98</sup> In spite of that, al-Isfahānī is neither keen to identify the imams in the past, nor articulate as to **the qualities of an imam**.<sup>99</sup> As a matter of fact, he hardly uses the word, not even applying it to Zayd b. ‘Alī.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, he does not unconditionally approve any ‘Alid revolt and seems somewhat lukewarm to the group he refers to as Zaydīs.<sup>101</sup> Taken together, al-Isfahānī’s Shī‘ conviction is better characterised as *tashayyu’*, **the kind of Shī‘ sentiment defined by al-Dhahabī**, that is, moderate love for ‘Alī without impugning the dignity of the caliphs before him.<sup>102</sup>

## Legacy

Al-Isfahānī **authored** a number of works, but only a few survive. Three of them are preserved through the quotations: *al-Qiyān* (“The Singing Slave Girls”), *al-Diyārāt* (“The Monasteries”), and *Mujarrad al-aghānī* (“**the Abridgement of the Book of Songs**”).<sup>103</sup> A fragment of the *Mujarrad al-aghānī* can be found in Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a’s *‘Uyūn al-anbā’ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’*, which quotes a poem by the caliph, al-Ma‘mūn, and arranged as a song by Mutayyam.<sup>104</sup> The first two have been reconstructed and published by al-‘Atiyya, who collects and collates the

*American Oriental Society* 128-3 (2008): 459–475; Patricia Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 100, footnote 4.

<sup>97</sup> Wilferd Madelung, *Der Imam al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm und die Glaubenslehre der Zaiditen* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1965), 223–228; Su, “The Shī‘ Past,” 72–90.

<sup>98</sup> Su, “The Shī‘ Past,” 183–265.

<sup>99</sup> Su, “The Shī‘ Past,” 253–260.

<sup>100</sup> Su, “The Shī‘ Past,” 253.

<sup>101</sup> Su, “The Shī‘ Past,” 87–89.

<sup>102</sup> al-Dhahabī, *Mizān*, vl.1, 14; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Zaybaq and ‘Ādil Murshid (Beirut: Mu‘assasat al-Risāla, n.d.), vl.1, 53.

<sup>103</sup> Kilpatrick, *Making*, 24–25.

<sup>104</sup> Kilpatrick, *Making*, 25.

**Commented [S93]:** {k98}

**Commented [S94]:** [99]

[Su] I can add in the footnote suggesting that is the sort of discussion exercising the Zaydi authors in the 9<sup>th</sup> and early 10<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Commented [S95]:** [K]: The concentration on problems of sectarian identity blinds the author to other dimensions of the context in which Abū l-Faraj worked, notably the administration and world of music. S/he questions whether he was a Zaydī, despite al-Ṭūsī’s affirming that he was, on the grounds that the *Maqātil* does not mention the latest Zaydī movements in Yemen and Ṭabaristān. S/he admits that this might have been because Abū l-Faraj had not heard about them. But other reasons can also be adduced: first, even in the politically much less sensitive *Aghānī* Abū l-Faraj does not deal with contemporary subjects, in this case singers, composers and poets. The period his material covers ends roughly at the start of the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century. Second, in the competitive world of the *kuttāb*, where retaining one’s position or getting advancement depended on one’s relations with those in power, intrigues were rife. Mentioning contemporary uprisings could be used against an individual by his rivals.

[Su]: While I do admit that I did not treat the musicology duly (as I am not an expert in this regard), I do not think the point is to discuss why al-Isfahānī does not write about the latest Zaydī movement (perhaps he simply does not care?) rather than what can be teased out on the basis of al-Isfahānī’s own works and words (NB he acknowledges that he does not know about the activities). Yet, I will leave the editorial board to judge if I am blind or not.

**Commented [S96]:** [Su] Perhaps I should rewrite this sentence to avoid misreading?

**Commented [S97]:** [K] Thus Yāqūt is qualified, rightly, as a late source (p. 4) in connection with Abū l-Faraj’s sectarian orientation (a subject which exercises the author far more than his musical interests), but in the end the even later Dhahabī’s verdict on this point is approved (p. 12). Neither for these sources nor for others referred to does the author take account of the changes in attitudes of Sunnī writers to the Shī‘a over several centuries and the evolution of controversial terms such as “*rāfiq*”.

[Su] I simply use al-Dhahabī’s label to characterise what can be said of al-Isfahānī’s Shī‘i sympathy. I think al-Dhahabī’s label to a certain extent does capture some aspects of al-Isfahānī’s thought here, but in no way I seek to argue that a later constructed category such as al-Dhahabī’s was used and understood by al-Isfahānī and his contemporaries. Should I add a footnote here?

**Commented [ET98R97]:** Sectarian identities is a big and complex issue and, within Wikipedia, there is no particular obligation to provide exhaustive coverage in this particular article! My favoured solution would be to do what Adam suggests and adapt the terminology (e.g. proto-Shī‘ī) to be safe rather than getting into extended discussion.

**Commented [S99]:** [A23]: I think there needs to be a slightly clearer understanding of what these terms might have meant at different times in history. At the moment, the categories (Shī‘ī, Zaydī, etc.) are being discussed as if they always existed and always meant the same thing. I would personally prefer to use the terms that contemporaries used and to note the changes in understandings of these terms over time. For ...

passages from later works that quote from al-İşfahānī.<sup>105</sup> The former, *al-Qiyān*, is a collection of the biographies of the singing slave girls. In it, al-İşfahānī provides the basic information about the **biographical subjects**, their **owners** and their interaction with poets, notables such as caliphs, and their admirers, with illustration of their poetic and/or music talents. The latter, *al-Diyārāt*, provides **information** related to monasteries, with the indication of their geographical locations and, sometimes, history and topographical characteristics. However, it is questionable to what extent the reconstructed editions can represent the original texts, since the passages, which quote al-İşfahānī as a source **for** the given subject and are thus included by the editor, seldom identify the titles of the works.<sup>106</sup>

Four works survive **in manuscripts**: [Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn](#) (“The Ṭālibid Martyrs”), [Kitāb al-Aghānī](#) (“The Book of the Songs”), *Adab al-ghurabā* (“The Etiquettes of the Strangers”), and *al-Imā’ al-shawā’ir* (“The Slave Poetesses”).<sup>107</sup> As noted above, al-İşfahānī’s authorship of the *adab al-ghurabā* is disputed.<sup>108</sup> The author, whoever he may have been, mentions in the preface his sufferings from the hardship of time and vicissitude of fate, and the solace which he seeks through the stories of bygone people.<sup>109</sup> Hence, he collects in the *Adab al-ghurabā* the reports about the experiences of the strangers — those away from their homes or their beloved ones. Some of the stories centre on the hardship which the strangers, anonymous or not, encountered in their journey or exile, usually shown in the epigrams written on the monuments, rocks, or **walls**.<sup>110</sup> Others **relate excursions** to the monasteries for drinking.<sup>111</sup>

The *al-Imā’ al-shawā’ir* was composed at the order of the vizier al-Muhallabī, al-İşfahānī’s patron, who demanded collection of the reports about the slave poetesses from the Umayyad to the ‘Abbāsīd periods.<sup>112</sup> Al-İşfahānī confesses that he could not find any noteworthy poetess in the Umayyad period, because the people at that time were not impressed with the verses featuring tenderness and softness. Thus, he only records the ‘Abbāsīd poetesses, with mention of the relevant fine verses or the pleasant tales, and arranges them in chronological

<sup>105</sup> Al-İşfahānī, *al-Qiyān*, ed. Jalīl al-‘Aṭīyya (London: Riad El-Rayyes, 1989); al-İşfahānī, *al-Diyārāt*, ed. Jalīl al-‘Aṭīyya (London: Riad El-Rayyes, 1991).

<sup>106</sup> Kīlpatrick, *Making*, 25.

<sup>107</sup> Kīlpatrick, *Making*, 25.

<sup>108</sup> See above, the section on Dates.

<sup>109</sup> Al-İşfahānī, *Kitāb Adab al-ghurabā*, 20–21.

<sup>110</sup> For an example, see: al-İşfahānī, *Kitāb Adab al-ghurabā*, 25–26, 29–31.

<sup>111</sup> Al-İşfahānī, *Kitāb Adab al-ghurabā*, 34–36.

<sup>112</sup> Al-İşfahānī, *al-Imā’ al-shawā’ir*, ed. Jalīl al-‘Aṭīyya (Beirut: Dār al-Niḍāl, 1984), 23.

**Commented [S100]:** [A26]: Maybe instead of ‘their owners’ you could say ‘the men who enslaved them’

**Commented [S101]:** [Su] revision: how do we know they were men?

**Commented [ET102R101]:** This is subject-matter related. I have no idea...?

**Commented [S103]:** [K106-7]

**Commented [S104]:** [K108]

**Commented [S105]:** [A27]: Why say they survive in manuscript since they have also been edited and published? This is likely to confuse the reader in my opinion.

**Commented [S106]:** [Su] revision: deleted

**Commented [S107]:** [K109]

order.<sup>113</sup> There are 31 sections, addressing 32 poetesses, most of which are short and usually begin with al-Isfahānī's summary of the subject.<sup>114</sup>

The [Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn](#) is a historical-biographical compilation concerning the descendants of Abū Ṭālib, who died under the following circumstances: being killed, poisoned to death in a treacherous way, on the run from the governmental persecution, or confined until death.<sup>115</sup>

The *Maqātil* literature was rather common, amongst Shī'īs particularly, before al-Isfahānī and he used many works of this genre as sources for the *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn*.<sup>116</sup> Al-Isfahānī does not explain the motivation behind this compilation nor mention any dedicatee, but, according to the preface of this work, he sets out as a condition to recount the reports about the Ṭālibids who were “praiseworthy in their conduct and rightly guided in their belief (*maḥmūd al-ṭarīqa wa-sadīd al-madhhab*).”<sup>117</sup> Like the *al-Imā'*, the work is structured in chronological order, beginning with the first Ṭālibī martyr, Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib, and ends in the year of its compilation — Jumādā I 313/August 925.<sup>118</sup> For each biographical entry, al-Isfahānī gives the full name, the lineage (sometimes adding the maternal side), less often the virtues and personal traits of the given subject and other material he thinks noteworthy, for example, the prophetic *ḥadīth*. Then, al-Isfahānī gives the account of the death, which more often than not constitutes the end of the entry. Sometimes poetry for or by the subject is attached.<sup>119</sup> The *Maqātil* was adduced by many Shī'ī and non-Shī'ī compilers of the following centuries.<sup>120</sup>

The [Kitāb al-Aghānī](#), al-Isfahānī's best known work, is an immense compilation, including songs provided with musical indications (melodic modes and meter of songs), the biographies of poets and musicians of different periods in addition to historical material. As noted above, al-Isfahānī embarks on compiling the *Aghānī* first under the command of a patron, whom he calls *ra'īs* (chief), to reconstruct the list of one hundred fine songs, selected by Isḥāq b.

<sup>113</sup> Al-Isfahānī, *al-Imā'*, 23.

<sup>114</sup> Kilpatrick, *Making*, 26.

<sup>115</sup> Al-Isfahānī, *Maqātil*, 24; Ali Bahramian, *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, s.v. “Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn,” 734–735.

<sup>116</sup> Sebastian Günther, “Maqātil Literature in Medieval Islam,” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 25(1994): 200–205.

<sup>117</sup> Al-Isfahānī, *Maqātil*, 24–25.

<sup>118</sup> Al-Isfahānī, *Maqātil*, 24–25, 565.

<sup>119</sup> Günther, “Maqātil Literature,” 205–206; Ali Bahramian, *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, s.v. “Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn,” 734–735.

<sup>120</sup> Ali Bahramian, *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, s.v. “Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn,” 734–735; Sebastian Günther, *EP*, s.v. “Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī,” accessed July 24 2018, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_ei3\\_COM\\_0105](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_0105).

**Commented [S108]:** [A28]: I don't think I would describe the ruling structures at this time as a government, but perhaps I'm biased or uninformed.

**Commented [S109]:** [Su]: change to 'rulers'?

**Commented [ET110R109]:** Ok

**Commented [S111]:** [K]: As it is, the *Aghānī* does not even rate a page; it gets the same space as the *Maqātil*. I do not know if *Wikipedia* has rules for the length of its articles, but to reflect the *Aghānī*'s importance the section on it here should certainly be expanded somewhat, even if there is a separate article on it.

**Commented [S112]:** [Su] I recalled there is a word limit policy (5000 wds). The article is almost 7,000 words. I remembered I did write more about the Aghani and decided to downsize the part because of word limit. I am all ears to the further instruction from the editorial board.

**Commented [ET113R112]:** The Board, in reviewing the article, are going to consider whether more coverage of this text is needed...

I personally think what you have here now is quite adequate.

Ibrāhīm.<sup>121</sup> Due to an obscure report in Yāqūt's *Mu'jam*, this *ra'īs* is often assumed to be Sayf al-Dawla al-Ḥamdānī (r. 333–356/945–967),<sup>122</sup> but recent studies suggest the more plausible candidate for the dedicatee of the *Aghānī* being the vizier al-Muhallabī.<sup>123</sup> The *Aghānī* is divided into three parts: first, The Hundred Songs (*al-mi'a al-ṣawt al-mukhtāra*) and other song collections; second, the songs of the caliphs and of their children and grandchildren (*aghānī al-khulafā' wa-awlādihim wa-awlād awlādihim*); third, al-Iṣfahānī's selection of songs. The articles in each part are arranged based on different patterns, but it is mostly the song which introduces the articles on biographies or events.<sup>124</sup> **The *Kitāb al-Aghānī* is not the first book or collection of songs, but one can assert that it is the most important one, for it is a unique mine of information not only on hundreds of song texts with their modes and meters, but also on the lives of their poets and composers, and on the social context of music making in early Islam and at the courts of the caliphs in Damascus and Baghdad.**<sup>125</sup> Because of al-Iṣfahānī's pedantic documentation of his sources, the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* can also be used to reconstruct earlier books of songs or biographical dictionaries on musicians that are otherwise lost.<sup>126</sup>

As for the works that did not survive, based on their contents, as implied by their titles, they can be divided into the following categories<sup>127</sup>:

The genealogical works: *Nasab Banī 'Abd Shams* ("The Genealogy of 'Abd Shams"), *Jamharat al-nasab* ("The Compendium of Genealogies"), *Nasab Banī Shaybān* ("The Genealogy of the Banū Shaybān"), and *Nasab al-Mahāliba* ("The Genealogy of the Muhallabids"), **this last**

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<sup>121</sup> See above, the section on Personalities, Preferences and Beliefs.

<sup>122</sup> Khalafallāh, *Ṣāhib*, 101, 105–110: the misconception that al-Iṣfahānī gave his *Aghānī* to Sayf al-Dawla came from a misreading of the text in *Mu'jam al-udabā'*; the original initially mentioned that Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī al-Maghribī made an abridgement of the *Aghānī* and gave it to Sayf al-Dawla Abū al-Ḥasan Ṣadaqa Fakhr al-Dīn b. Bahā' al-Dawla, whom Yāqūt mistook for the Ḥamdānid Sayf al-Dawla. This account is then followed by a comment of al-Ṣāhib b. 'Abbād and a dialogue between al-Muhallabī and al-Iṣfahānī and then returns to the words of Abū al-Qāsim, who states that he only made one copy of this work in his life and that that is the one given to Sayf al-Dawla. See also: Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, vl.13, 97–98. Although Khalafallāh admits that his reading is conjectural, he rightly points out the obscurities in this text.

<sup>123</sup> Khalafallāh, *Ṣāhib*, 101–110; Kilpatrick, *Making*, 19–20.

<sup>124</sup> Kilpatrick, *Making*, 259–267.

<sup>125</sup> Eckhard Neubauer, "Arabic Writings on Music: Eighth to Nineteenth Centuries" in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 6: The Middle East*, 399.

<sup>126</sup> Eckhard Neubauer, "Arabic Writings on Music: Eighth to Nineteenth Centuries" in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 6: The Middle East*, 399.

<sup>127</sup> The list is taken from: Kilpatrick, *Making*, 23–24.

probably dedicated to his patron, the vizier, al-Muhallabī.

The reports about specified or unspecified topics, such as *Kitāb al-Khammārīn wa-l-khammārāt* (“The Book of Tavern-Keepers, Male and Female”), *Akhbār al-ṭufaylīyīn* (“Reports about Party Crashers”), *al-Akhbār wa-l-nawādir* (“The Reports and Rare Tales”), and *Ayyām al-‘arab* (“The Battle-days of the Arabs”), which mentions 1700 days of the pre-Islamic tribal battles and was in circulation only in Andalusia.<sup>128</sup>

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The reports about music, musicians and singers: the aforementioned *Manājīb al-khiṣyān* (“The Noble Eunuchs”), *Akhbār Jaḥḥa al-Barmakī* (“The Reports concerning Jaḥḥa al-Barmakī”), *al-Mamālīk al-shu‘arā’* (“The Slave Poets”), *Adab al-samā’* (“The Etiquettes of Listening to Music”), and *Risāla fī ‘ilal al-nagham* (“The Treatise on the Rules of Tones”).

There are two works, only mentioned by al-Ṭūsī: *Kitāb mā nazala min al-Qur’ān fī amīr al-mu‘minīn wa-ahl baytīh ‘alayhim al-salām* (“The Book about the Qur’ānic Verses Revealed regarding the Commander of the Faithful and the People of His Family, Peace upon Them”) and *Kitāb fīhi kalām Fāṭima ‘alayhā al-salām fī Fadak* (“The Book concerning the Statements of Fāṭima, Peace upon Her, regarding Fadak”).<sup>129</sup> Should the attribution of these two works to al-Iṣfahānī be correct, together with the *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn*, they reveal al-Iṣfahānī’s Shī‘ī partisanship.

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<sup>128</sup> This and the *Nasab ‘Abd Shams* seem to have been only available in the Iberian Peninsula; see: al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vl.13, 338.

<sup>129</sup> Kilpatrick, *Making*, 23.