

(6) *Masā'il al-imām Ahmad*. Juridical opinions from Ahmad b. Hanbal.

(7) *Su'ūl al-ʿAlīmad b. Hanbal*. Opinions on traditionists from Ahmad b. Hanbal.

(8) *Su'ūl Abī Ubayd al-ʿAjurrī*. Data on traditionists, mostly from Abū Dāwūd, as collected by Abū Ubayd Muhammad b. ʿAlī al-ʿAjurrī (d. early fourth/tenth century?).

(9) *Tasniʿat al-ikhtaw alladhina rawāya ʿan-hum al-ḥadīth*. On brother traditionists.

(10) *Nawāḥi al-Qurʿān wa-mamsūkhāt*. On abrogation within the Qurʿān.

(11) *al-Taḥarrūḍ*. On *ḥadīth* found among the traditionists of only one city.

(12) *Dalā'il al-mubawwā*. Presumably a collection of *ḥadīth* showing that Muḥammad was a genuine prophet, probably also comparing him with earlier prophets.

(13) *al-Radd ʿalā ahl al-qaḍir*. Presumably a collection of predestinarian *ḥadīth*.

(14) *al-Du'ā'*. Presumably a collection of prayers.

(15) *Fadā'il al-anṣār*. Presumably a collection of *ḥadīth* extolling the people of Medina who adhered to the Prophet's cause when he immigrated there from Mecca.

(16) *Masnad Mālik*. Presumably a collection of *ḥadīth* transmitted by Mālik b. Anas (d. Medina, 179/795).

(17) *Iḥdā' al-waḥy*. Presumably a collection of *ḥadīth* on the Prophet's earliest moments of inspiration.

(18) *Alḥabār al-khawārij*. Most likely a history of the movement, but also possibly a collection of *ḥadīth* from the Khawārij, for Abū Dāwūd is quoted as saying that no heretics had sounder *ḥadīth* than they.

(19) *Ashāb al-Sira' bi*. On traditionists who related *ḥadīth* from the famous Basran ʿAmir b. Sharāḥl (d. after 100/718-19).

(20) *Ma'rifat al-waqūf*. Presumably a collection of *ḥadīth* on the times of the required ritual prayers, possibly an extract of (1).

from Ahmad b. Hanbal (nos. 6 and 7 in the list of his works above, with more than 100 additional quotations in no. 8). Formal schools of law in the classical sense formed only after Abū Dāwūd's lifetime, but it seems safe to say that Abū Dāwūd was as much a Hanbalī as any of his contemporaries.

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CHRISTOPHER MELCHER

Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī

Abū l-Faraj ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. Ahmad b. al-Haytham al-Umawī **al-Iṣfahānī** (or al-Iṣbahānī) (d. shortly after 360/971) was a celebrated man of letters, a historian with sociological interests, a musicologist, and a poet. He is best known for his great "Book of songs," the *Kitāb al-aghānī*, one of the most important works of classical Arabic literature. He was born in 284/897, probably in Baghdad. Tradition-

ally, he was thought to have died there in 356/967, but recent research suggests his death should be dated to the early 360s, shortly after 971 (cf. al-Munajjid (ed.) in Abū l-Faraj, *Adab* 10-14; and Kilpatrick, *Makātib*, 19-20, 27-8). Although Abū l-Faraj was a direct descendant of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān b. Muḥammad, he was a Zaydī Shīʿī.

1. LIFE AND CAREER

Abū l-Faraj seems to have received his early education in Kufa, at that time a centre for the study of Arabian antiquity, Arabic grammar, and the indigenous Iraqi musical tradition, as well as for Shīʿī learning. This environment may have been a factor in developing and directing his main academic and literary interests, that is: "poetry, songs, anecdotes, historical reports, authenticated *ḥadīth*s and general-ogies," along with "lexicography, grammar, fantastic stories (*ḥawāṣif*), and accounts of conquests," as his contemporary, the littérateur al-Fanākhī (d. 384/994), lists them (al-Baghdādī, 1:399). At some point after 300/912, Abū l-Faraj settled in Baghdad, where he remained for most of his life. Working there, he benefited greatly from the vigorous intellectual milieu of the cosmopolitan ʿAbbāsīd capital, with its many bookshops and particularly well-equipped libraries. He quickly established a reputation as a remarkably knowledgeable scholar. Although mediaeval biographers list only a dozen or so scholars with whom he studied, the *isnād*s, or chains of transmitters, that Abū l-Faraj provides in his works reveal that he relied on a much wider circle of teachers and academic acquaintances, including many specialists in history, literature, poetry, philology, and music. Interestingly, he also names such prominent contemporaries as the

Qur'an commentator and historian al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/922), the philologist Ibn Durayd (d. 321/933), and the man of letters and court companion of several caliphs al-Ḥālī (d. 335/947) (Fleischhammer, 20).

Abū l-Faraj had a career in administration, about which nothing is known, except that as part of these professional duties he travelled to such cities as Antioch, al-Ahwāz, al-Raqqā, and Basra. It is not known when and how the Būyid *wazīr* al-Muhallabī (d. 353/962), a refined man of culture, became his patron in Baghdad. Yet a series of popular anecdotes portrays Abū l-Faraj as a frequent *naḏīm*, "boon companion," of al-Muhallabī. He was welcome in al-Muhallabī's famous intellectual circle because of his vast knowledge of Arabic literature and culture as well as his skills as a courtier—his wit, his sharp tongue, his skill in satire, and his gifts as a raconteur—despite his reportedly neglected appearance and peculiar table manners. Abū l-Faraj was well into his sixties when his patron died and the self-made chief commander of Baghdad, Mu'izz al-Dawla, confiscated all of al-Muhallabī's property, arrested his family, and harassed many of his associates. The sources say nothing about what happened to Abū l-Faraj at this critical time. Some biographers claim that he found a warm welcome in Aleppo at the court of the Ḥamdānīd prince Sayf al-Dawla (r. 333-56/945-67) (Yāqūt, 5:150; Ibn Khallikān, 3:307), a claim that has been called into question by modern research (Kilpatrick, *Maknūz*, 19-20).

Abū l-Faraj's final years were spent in decline and in his last years he seems to have suffered from mental confusion. He died at the age of about seventy (al-Baghdadī, 9:400).

2. WORKS

Some thirty titles are ascribed to Abū l-Faraj (see the analytical list in Kilpatrick, *Maknūz*, 23-30). Most of these are lost; a few have survived in part in later works. Four works are extant and have been published. These are:

(1) *Kitāb al-aghānī* ("The book of songs"), Abū l-Faraj's masterpiece, which draws a most fascinating picture of mediaeval Arabic-Islamic culture and society.

This monumental compilation was prepared over a period of more than fifty years (Ibn Khallikān, 3:307) and fills no fewer than twenty-four volumes in its 1974 Cairo edition. It not only offers precious information on Arabic musical traditions but also provides much invaluable literary, historical, and biographical data on pre-Islamic and classical Arabic-Islamic civilization. The work includes data on ancient Arab tribes and their social life, the court life of the Umayyads, and various aspects of 'Abbāsīd society, including, of course, the milieu of musicians and singers. Hence, in the *Aghānī* "we pass in review the whole of Arabic civilization from pre-Islamic times down to the end of the 3rd/9th century" (Nallino). Additionally, in this book Abū l-Faraj quotes lengthy passages from earlier works (many of which are lost), a fact that makes the *Aghānī* a unique source for research on the history of Arabic language and literature.

In the introduction to the *Aghānī*, Abū l-Faraj identifies the most important collections of "songs" (that is, poems and lines of poetry sung to certain melodies) that constitute the main sources of the great "Book of songs." Specifically, these are:

(a) a selection of the best songs, prepared at the request of the 'Abbāsīd caliph Ḥarūn

al-Rashīd (r. 170-93/786-809). Abū Faraj provides two conflicting accounts of how these songs were chosen: The first depicts Ishāq al-Mawṣilī (d. 235/850), at the time the most prominent singer at the Baghdad court, relating from his father (who also was a celebrated singer) that Ḥarūn al-Rashīd had invited many singers to designate the three best songs in the whole repertoire. Ishāq says that when he mentioned this incident in the presence of the caliph al-Wāthiq (r. 227-32/842-7), al-Wāthiq ordered him to prepare a second collection of the best songs. Ishāq included in his assortment not only songs of famous composers of previous eras but also those of some contemporary composers who had followed the musical tradition of their predecessors (*al-Aghānī*, 1:7; see also Neubauer, 187). In contrast, a different account, based on authorities other than Ishāq, claims (*al-Aghānī*) that the caliph Ḥarūn al-Rashīd ordered these singers first to prepare a list of the one hundred finest songs, then to choose the best ten, and then the top three (*al-Aghānī*, 1:7-8). Although Abū l-Faraj prefers the first report and explains why he has reservations about the latter (*al-Aghānī*, 1:9), the story of the Hundred Songs became the traditional account in later sources (for this issue, see Kilpatrick, *Maknūz*, 45-6.) (b) a collection of the seven most famous compositions of the singer Ma'bad (d. 125 or 126/743-4), entitled *Muḍan* ("Circles") or *Ḥuṣṣā* ("Castles"); (c) a collection of the seven most famous compositions of the singer Ibn Surayj (d. 96/714 or possibly as late as 126/744); (d) the so-called "Zaynab songs" of Yūnus al-Kātib (d. c. 147/765), that is, a number of poems that Yūnus's friend, the poet Ibn Ruḥayma, had dedicated to his beloved; and, finally, (e) songs of caliphs and their descendants.

To these materials, Abū l-Faraj added more songs "of which he knew a useful story or valuable report" (*al-Aghānī*, 1:2). He arranged all this data in nearly five hundred articles, each bearing the name of the (male or female) poet, the (male or female) singer, or the event from pre-Islamic or Islamic times that was featured in the article. Further subdivisions of *al-Aghānī* make nearly two thousand chapters and paragraphs of various lengths, which bear the simple title *ṣaww* ("Melody" or "Song"). In these chapters, Abū l-Faraj presents invaluable information on the poet (i.e., the author of the song in question), giving an account of his or her life and quoting many of his or her verses. Furthermore, he provides information on the metre of the poem or song in question, explanations of vocabulary items, and the name of the singer, along with the beginning of the melody used for the piece and, sometimes, information on composers (Fleischhammer, 12).

(2) *Kitāb maqāzīl al-Ṭālibīyyīn* ("The book of the killing of the Ṭālibīds"), a unique encyclopaedia of historical-biographical information on the Shī'īs of the first three centuries of Islam. Abū l-Faraj composed it in 313/923 at the age of only twenty-eight. In a well-structured and scholarly manner, it deals with various aspects of society and politics in early Islam, in particular with Shī'ī uprisings and the stances taken by the individuals and groups participating in them. More specifically, the compendium contains more than two hundred biographies of the descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad in the line of his uncle Abū Ṭālib (thus called Ṭālibīds), i.e., from Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib (who was, like his more prominent brother 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, one of the first Muslims), to the seventy Ṭālibīds

who died during the reign of the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Muqadīr (r. 295–320/908–32). In the preface, Abū l-Faraj states that he dedicated this book to those Ṭālibids who were tracked down and poisoned; feared the government (*sultān*), escaped, and died in hiding; or were imprisoned (for political reasons) and kept there until they died. Yet he includes only the stories of Ṭālibids who had shown laudable manners and behavior had followed the legitimate way of life and the faith, had not departed from that or from the path of their predecessors, and had not caused any disturbance or damage to the community (*Maqātil*, ed. Saqr 4–5). This Shi'ī martyrology can be viewed as the spouse of the *maqātil* as a historical-biographical sub-category of classical Arabic literature. It contributed considerably to providing the textual grounds for the many hagiographies written later in Arabic and Persian on the martyrs of the Shi'a. (Günther, *Quellenuntersuchungen* 13–6; idem, *Maqātil* literature, 205–9; idem, «...nor have I learned», 139–41).

(3) *Kiṭāb al-īmā' al-shawā'ir* ("The book of slave poetesses"), a collection of reports about female slave poets of the 'Abbāsīd period, prepared for al-Muhallabī. The preface is followed by thirty-one sections devoted to thirty-three poets. The sections are arranged chronologically and according to the poets' gifts, using each of these leading figures to introduce lesser artists of the same period. The many short sections give a general picture of the female slave poet, while only the three longer sections provide an in-depth treatment of such significant activities of slave poets as competitions with fellow poets and their contributions in the genres of *ghazal* and panegyric (Abū l-Faraj, *al-īmā'*, ed. al-Qaysi, 6–7; Kilpatrick, *Maqātil*, 26–7).

(4) *Kiṭāb adab al-ghurabā'* ("The book on being a stranger"), a collection of seventy prose and poetry works on the subject of *ghurba*, that is, absence from one's homeland and loved ones. In the preface, Abū l-Faraj speaks, as H. Kilpatrick puts it, "of the difficulty of enduring a reversal of fortune from prosperity to want and decline in social standing, and outlines the social effects of such trials on those who suffer them." *K. Adab al-ghurabā'* is psychological in approach and melancholic in tone. Personal and informal, the book reveals the author reflecting on his own situation, while he seeks consolation in the words and deeds of men of the past. The book ends on an optimistic note, suggesting that Abū l-Faraj's "venture into auto-therapy may have succeeded" (Kilpatrick, *Maqātil*, 27–8).

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SEBASTIAN GÜNTHER

Abū l-Futūḥ al-Rāzī

Abū l-Futūḥ al-Rāzī (fl. sixth/twelfth century) was a Shi'ī author and preacher, most famous for his Persian commentary on the Qur'ān, entitled *Rawḍ al-jānān wa-rawḍ* (or *rūḥ al-jānān*). He was supposedly descended from the Khuẓā'a tribe, a contingent of which settled in Nisābūr (Nishapur). Some of the Khuẓā'a are said to have relocated to Rayy, where Abū l-Futūḥ lived. Hence his full name is often given as Abū l-Futūḥ al-Fusayn b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ahmad al-Khuẓā'ī al-Rāzī al-Nisābūrī. Biographical references record disagreement concerning whether to record his great-grandfather as Ahmad or Muḥammad al-Khuẓā'ī, though the former is more common (indeed he is said to have signed his name as such).

His *Rawḍ al-jānān* is an encyclopaedic work of *tafsīr*, reaching five hefty volumes

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