

FOREWORD

In 1971 I first became acquainted with al-‘Imrānī’s *Information Concerning the History of the Caliphs*, when my attention was drawn to it by the remark of the 13th century historian al- Kāzarūnī, ¹⁾ that he had written something as a supplement to the history of al-‘Imrānī. The publisher of this text, my former teacher, Professor Mustafā Gawād, indicated in a footnote that this valuable historical work is still extant, among other places, in the University Library at Leiden. The Library’s Keeper of Arabic Manuscripts informed me that the Library was not aware of any previous publication of the text and would gladly give permission for its publication.

After reading the Leiden manuscript I discovered that ‘Abbās al-‘Azzāwī, a well-known Iraqi historian, had written two articles mentioning al-‘Imrānī and his history ²⁾). In the second article, which was entirely devoted to al-‘Imrānī and his work, ‘Azzāwī stated his plan to publish the piece. ‘Azzāwī, who died in 1970, actually worked on the preparation of its publication, as can be seen from the manuscript of al-‘Imrānī’s history which is provided with ‘Azzāwī’s erudite commentary now in the Iraqi Museum (see illustration 8). However, it never reached the point of publication. Judging from ‘Azzāwī’s notes, he had not yet consulted other manuscripts in order to assess the correct reading. Only in the summer of 1972 did I become extensively acquainted with ‘Azzāwī’s manuscript. Since it appeared to me that his study had stopped at an early stage, I was able to make use of his comments in only one case.

At this point I decided to resume ‘Azzāwī’s project. At my request the Keeper of Arabic Manuscripts at Leiden assembled microfilms of all registered manuscripts of al-‘Imrānī’s work, for which I wish to express my gratitude. These microfilms are kept in the University of Leiden Library collection, and in describing the manuscripts I shall refer to the Leiden microfilm numbers. The problem of having to wait a long time for obtaining films from Istanbul, was solved by Mr. at-Tikrītī of Edinburgh and Mr. Hamad al-Gāsir of Beirut, who kindly made available to me their photographs of the two manuscripts in Istanbul. For this I sincerely thank them. I am equally indebted to my brothers: Prof. Dr. Yousif ‘Izzidien and ‘Abd al-’Ilāh al-Samarrai for their assistance and encouragement and to Dr. ‘Isā Salmān; the general director of the Iraqi Antiquity for supplying me with photostats of ‘Azzāwī’s

introduction. Finally, I also wish to thank all my colleagues here at Leiden for their help and encouragement in this project, particularly Prof. Dr. J. Brugman and his wife and my friend Drs. P. Sj. van Koningsveld for their moral support and the Netherlands Institute of Archaeology and Arabic Studies of the University of Leiden and its director, Drs. W. F. G. Stoetzer, in particular, for beginning its series of Publications with the present work.

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