

INTRODUCTION

The Author

In the biographical and bibliographical reference books there is nothing to be found about the author, Muhammad ibn 'Alī ibn Muhammad Ibn al-'Imrānī. A number of sources mention a certain 'Alī ibn Muhammad ibn 'Alī al-'Imrānī, who is called al-Khuwārizmī by some authors and al-Sarakhsī by others ³⁾. Mustafā Gawād and al-'Azzāwī thought that this person was the father of the author of *al-Inbā'* ⁴⁾ but further research indicates that probably the two were completely different people. In the oldest biographical reference book, that of as-Sam'ānī (d. 562 H), al-'Imrānī as-Sarakhsī appears and as-Sam'ānī states that he himself is a member of the same family. The next author to discuss al-'Imrānī is Ibn Arslān in his history of Khuwārizm where, however, he refers to him as al-Khuwārizmī. This biography is later cited by Yāqūt in his biographical reference book about scholars. Al-'Imrānī as-Sarakhsī was a political functionary. He was *ra'īs* of *Sarakhs*, while the 'Imrānī al-Khuwārizmī is described as a scholar. Apart from the coincidence of the names, there are no compelling reasons to conclude that either of the 'Imrānis named was the author's father.

The only facts concerning the author's life come from the only book of his which is known to us:

1. Ibn al-'Imrānī lived in the time of the Caliph al-Mustangid bi-llah. This is clear from the eulogy for this caliph in his introduction:
"May God elevate Islam and the Moslems through the continuation of his reign".
2. The author was still living in the year 560 H. and was not in Iraq. This is clear from his announcement at the end of the work:
"And because I have been away from Iraq a long time I have no news of it to record". He writes this after mentioning the death of Ibn Hubaira, the Vizier of al-Mustangid bi-llāh.
3. In his description of the city Sāmarrā (in the section about al-Mu'tasim) the author says that he spent a day and a night there and that the city "was deserted". It is known that this city was deserted in the time of the Caliph al-Mu'tadid bi-llah, who

came to the throne in 279 H. ⁵⁾, The journey during which al-‘Imrānī visited the city remains obscure.

4. The author was probably not a Mu‘tazilite, because in his description of the case against Ahmad ibn Hanbal he clearly is on the side of the latter, as can be seen in his words: “It was Ahmad ibn Abī Du‘ād who incited al-Mu‘tasim to do this to Ahmad ibn Hanbal because he was a Mu‘tazilite”. Moreover, there is a certain satisfaction in the author’s mentioning of the fact that Ahmad ibn Abī Du‘ād became paralysed before his death. But when he mentions the death of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, al-‘Imrānī adds a quite extensive eulogy.
5. Ibn al-‘Imrānī was a lawyer, for al-Kāzarūnī called him *faqīh* in his supplement to the *Inbā’*. His enthusiastic praise of Ibn Hubaira ⁶⁾, the Hanbalite Vizier of the Caliphs al-Muqtafi and al-Mustangid bi-llah, and his special praise mentioned above of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, give the impression that al-‘Imrānī was a lawyer of the Hanbalite school, but this cannot be said with any certainty.

The Work

In his work the author treats the period which begins with the Prophet and ends with the beginning of the caliphate of al-Mustangid bi-llah, in 560 H. After a short description of the birth and career of the Prophet, al-‘Imrānī mentions those members of Muhammad’s family who are important for the genealogy of the ‘Abbāsids. After a short description of the period of the “Four Directly-Descended Caliphs” the author proceeds to the shortest possible treatment of the Omayyads, who are not recognized by him as Caliphs but as kings (*mulūk*). al-‘Imrānī’s work is an authentic pro-‘Abbāsīd history. This is also clear from the separate paragraph which al-‘Imrānī inserts between the Omayyads and the ‘Abbāsids, entitled “Those who were known as caliphs in their time”; in this paragraph he mentions sympathetically the opponents of the Omayyads. The author then comes to the actual subject of his book, history of the ‘Abbāsīd dynasty, in which each caliph receives a more extensive description.

al-‘Imrānī organizes his material according to the system he already knew from works such as those of as-Sūlī ⁷⁾ and al-Ya‘qūbī ⁸⁾; the material is reported per caliphate while, for example, at-Tabarī ⁹⁾ gives the facts by year.

Ibn al-‘Imrānī used the following sources in his work ¹⁰⁾ (in the

footnotes to this edition the places concerned will be indicated):

a) Sources mentioned by the author:

1. *Kitāb al-awraq* of as-Sūlī;
2. *Kitāb al-wuzarā'* of as-Sūlī (there is no known manuscript of this).

b) Sources not explicitly mentioned by the author, which, however, considering their literal correspondence with al-'Imrānī's work, were most probably used by him:

3. *Tā'rikh al-Ya'qūbī*;
4. *Ta'rikh at-Tabarī*;
5. *Kitāb al-wuzarā' wa'l-kuttāb*, of al-Gihshiyārī;
6. *al-Farag ba'da ash-shidda* of at-Tanūkhī;
7. *Kitāb nishwār al-muhādara*, of at-Tanūkhī;
8. *Kitāb al-aghānī*, of Abū 'l-Farag al-Isfahānī;
9. *Kitāb thimār al-qulūb* of ath-Tha'ālibī;
10. *Kitāb latā'if al-ma'ārif*, of ath-Tha'ālibī;
11. *Ta'rikh Baghdād*, of al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī;
12. *Kitāb silat ta'rikh at-Tabarī*, of 'Arīb al-Qurtubī.

For a number of the reported incidents no sources can be traced or indicated. It is fairly certain here that al-'Imrānī used folk tales, which added a considerable dose of spice to the bland reports of historians like at-Tabarī. This is true, for example, in the story about the events surrounding the head of the murdered al-Husain, the Prophet's grandson; the story appears in *Ta'rikh al-Tabarī* in what is relatively a very sober form, and also in the work which Abū Mikhnaḥ wrote specially about the murder of al-Husain ¹¹⁾. al-'Imrānī gives, instead, a highly developed folktale which deliberately attempts to catch the listener's attention and to fascinate him. Without much difficulty one can imagine that Ibn al-Gawzī's criticism concerning the story-tellers (the *qussās*) also loosely fitted al-'Imrānī. Ibn al-Gawzī, a contemporary of al-'Imrānī, accused the *qussās* of not nearly being as concerned with the accuracy of the facts they presented as with the sensation their tales caused. ¹²⁾

That al-'Imrānī used oral sources is also indicated by his report in the section about the Caliph al-Mustarshid of a song sung by the children of Baghdād in the streets to the accompaniment of loud clattering and in the same section of another song (in dialect), which was sung in the markets of Baghdād in response to an unsuccessful attempt to prevent the Sultān Mahmūd from entering Baghdād (also in the section about the Caliph al-Mustarshid). al-'Imrānī's work is particularly valuable in reporting these pieces of folklore.

al-‘Imrānī’s work is cited by the following authors:

- a) authors who mention al-‘Imrānī by name:
 1. Ibn at-Tiqtaqā, in his *Kitāb al-fakhrī fī l’ādāb as-sultānīyya*;
 2. as-Salāh as-Safadī, in his *Kitāb al-wāfi bi l-wafayāt*;
 3. Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, in his *Kitāb fawāt al-wafayāt* (cites from as-Safadī’s work without naming him).
- b) authors who do not mention al-‘Imrānī by name but who almost certainly used al-‘Imrānī’s work, as is apparent from frequent literal similarities:
 1. al-‘Imād al-Isfahānī, in his *Nusrat al-fitra*;
 2. Ibn al-Kāzarūnī, in his *Kitāb mukhtasar at-tā’rīkh* (in which he mentions having written a supplement to the work of al-‘Imrānī; the supplement, however, seems to be lost);
 3. ‘Abd ar-Rahmān Ibn Sunbut Qanitū al-Arbillī (who continually cites from the work of al-Kāzarūnī);
 4. Ibn Abī ‘Udhaiba, in his *Kitāb duwal al-a’yān*.

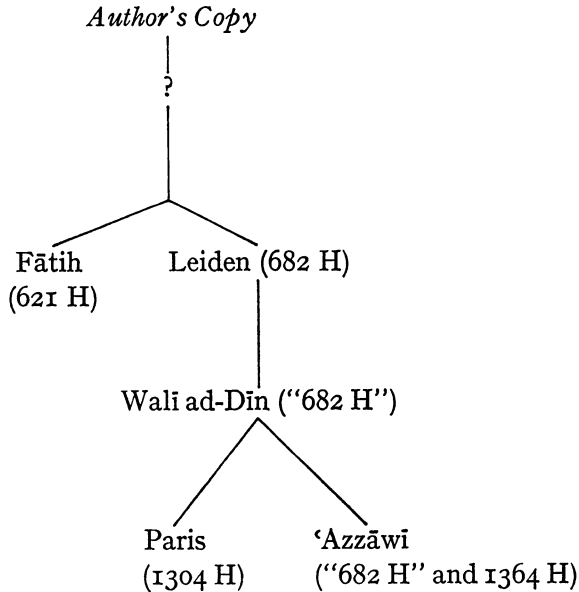
The precise places will always be indicated in the footnotes to this edition except in the case of Ibn Abī ‘Udhaiba, who incorporated virtually all of al-‘Imrānī’s work in his book. ¹³⁾

The Manuscripts

There are five registered manuscripts of al-‘Imrānī’s work.

1. Cod. Or. 595 of the Leiden University Library (dated 682 H.);
2. No. 4189 of the Fātih collection in the Sulaymāniyya Library of Istanbul (dated 621 H) of which a microfilm is preserved in Leiden no. F. Or. A. 193;
3. No. 2360 of the Walī ad-Dīn collection in the Sulaymāniyya Library of Istanbul (the date is given as 682 H., but the ms. is undoubtedly of a much later date, ca. 17th. century A.D.);
4. *Manuscrit arabe* 4842 of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (dated 1304 H.). A microfilm is also preserved in Leiden, no. F. Or. A. 185;
5. The manuscript which was formerly in the possession of Mr. ‘Abbās al-‘Azzāwī, and was recently placed in the Iraqī Museum in Baghdād, not yet numbered (the date is given as 682 H. and next to it is written 1364 H.) ¹⁴⁾

The derivations of these manuscripts look like this :



The relationship between the manuscripts may be shown as follows:

a) *The Walī ad-Dīn ms. is a copy of the Leiden ms. for the following reasons:*

1. Although the Walī ad-Dīn ms. is undoubtedly of a much later date, it bears precisely the same colophon, thus with the same date and copyist's name as those of the Leiden ms. :

وكان الفراغ منه على يد العبد الفقير الى الله أبو بكر بن عبد الله (عرف بابن الجونجي ؟)
في الرابع من شهر شوال سنة اثنتين وثمانين وستمائة ، أحسن الله خاتمتها ورحم من دعاه
بالمغفرة .

2. In the Leiden ms. a number of words are affected by moisture or otherwise damaged. An owner who possessed the book in 934 H. in Aleppo (as shown on the title page of the Leiden ms.), did his best to restore the damaged places. He sometimes made mistakes in the process, and also sometimes had to leave blank spaces because he was no longer able to reproduce the original text. The copyist of the Walī ad-Dīn ms. had the Leiden ms. before him in its "restored" form, and thus also copied mistakes made by the Aleppo owner. For example, the damaged word *وفصلا* (folio 1b, line 13) was damaged so much that the *و* as well as the *ف* were no

longer visible. The owner from Aleppo restored the ف but left out the و. The copyist of the Walī ad-Dīn ms. followed the Leiden ms. in this mistake and thus reads:

فانى ذاكر في كتابى هذا طرفا من أخبار الدولة القاهرة العباسية فصلا من مناقب الدعوة الهادية الهاشمية .

3. The owner from Aleppo also, in several places, wrote explanatory comments in the margin which the copyist took to be parts of the text and so interpolated them in the text of the copy. Thus the Aleppo owner noted in the margin from the section about the Caliph al-Amin on through the end of the text the years in which the caliph concerned had reigned. The copyist of the Walī ad-Dīn took this as part of the text and inserted these bits of information systematically in his manuscript. Here is an example: on folio 36a of the Leiden ms. is written in the margin:

فكانت خلافته أربع سنين وس وثمان أيام رحمه الله .

This remark can be found as part of the text on folio 35b. of Walī ad-Dīn ms.

4. Mistakes are found in the Walī ad-Dīn ms. which can be explained by the calligraphy of the Leiden ms. Folio 117a (line 9) of the Leiden ms. reads:

..... واستوزر المستنجد بالله
عون الدين أبو (كذا) المظفر يحيى بن هبيرة وزير أبيه ومات الوزير
عون الدين المذكور في جمادى الآخرة سنة ستين وخمسمائة وكانت .

in which both lines begin with عون الدين. The copyist of the Walī ad-Dīn ms. made a completely understandable mistake—he skipped a line. He discovered his mistake immediately however, and corrected it by crossing out the line just written and beginning again with the line he had missed.

5. Finally, between folios 110b and 111a of the Leiden ms. (between folios 154a and 155a of the Fātih ms.) there is one folio missing which this edition of the text supplements from the Fātih ms. The copyist of the Walī ad-Dīn ms. did not notice this lacuna in his model and continued after folio 113a as if nothing were amiss (see footnote 681 of this edition).

- b) *The manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, and of ‘Abbās al-‘Azzāwī are copies of the Walī ad-Dīn ms.*

Both manuscripts show the peculiarities mentioned above under nos. 2-5 of the Leiden and Walī ad-Dīn mss. Both differ from the

Leiden ms. at one decisive point: neither bears the correct title or the author's name. In this respect they coincide, however, with the Walī ad-Dīn ms., which also lacks these items. Its title is rather vague: *History of the Abbasid Dynasty*. The same title occurs in the Paris and Baghdād ms.

- c) *The manuscripts Fātih 4189 and Leiden Or. 595 derive from the same manuscript, namely of the author.*

The Fātih and Leiden mss. have a great many actual writing mistakes in common, which are enumerated in the appended critical list. This fact implies that both derive from one manuscript which had these common faults, or that Leiden must be a direct copy of Fātih. Considering the differences between the two mss., this seems, however, impossible. For example in the Fātih ms. on folio 105a a sentence is lacking, owing to *homoioteleuton* in the model, which must have looked like:

... لا يخرج الا في القمار
[وما يشبه ذلك ، ولو انى أعطيتك هذا المبلغ لما أمكنك صرفه الا في القمار]
وأما ضغوت

The passages in brackets appear in the Leiden ms. but not in the Fātih ms., and thus the Leiden ms. cannot have been copied from the Fātih ms. The Fātih ms. also shows other omissions which are absent from the Leiden ms. (see critical list).

Another difference between the Fātih and Leiden mss. is the number of interpolations and corrections which appear in the Leiden ms. but not in the Fātih ms.

1. *Interpolations*

At the end of the description of some of the caliphs the names of their judges are added, for example, in the cases of the caliphs al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn. This is not found in the Fātih ms.

2. *Corrections*

In the Fātih ms., folio 87b, the Caliph al-Mutawakkil is killed when he was forty years old, but in the Leiden ms., folio 53b, he is killed at the age of 39 years, nine months, and ten days. In the Fātih ms., folio 128a, Saif ad-Dawla dies in 355 H., but in the Leiden ms., folio 88b, he dies in 356 H. These interpolations and corrections point to a third manuscript between the Fātih and Leiden mss. and their common ancestor to which these corrections were added. This third manuscript must have been used as the model for the copyist

of the Leiden ms. It is also probable that this manuscript is responsible for another difference between Fātih and Leiden (differences of the kind of Fātih: *kathīr*, Leiden: *kabīr*,) which must be due to the lack of punctuation in the Leiden model, not the Fātih ms.

The edition and the commentary in the footnotes

The method used in preparing this publication was derived from the above findings.

a) *The edition*

1. The manuscripts of Wali-ad-Dīn, Paris and Baghdād have been eliminated because they derive from the Leiden ms.
2. The edition is the result of the comparison of the Fātih and Leiden mss. The reading of the Fātih ms. has been followed in the case of differences in content which cannot be seen as errors in copying. The reading of Leiden ms. seems, in many places, more accurate than that of Fātih, therefore, the reading of Leiden ms. has been followed either to supplement or to correct the text of Fātih ms. Interpolations in the Leiden ms. are given in brackets.

b) *The commentary in the footnotes.*

The commentary given in the footnotes to the edition, contains the following kinds of information:

1. References to other historical texts in which the same information appears, with mention of possible differences in content. The source closest to al-‘Imrānī’s information, which might have been his source, is also noted. In the case of lines of poetry the *dīwān* of the poet is referred to as closely as possible, and possible differences between the text of the *dīwān* and the *Inbā’* are noted. The works referred to are always given in abbreviated form; for complete titles the reader should consult the appended bibliography.
2. In the case of famous persons references are only given to one or more biographies in the literature. However, whenever possible, lesser-known persons are given brief biographical notes, naturally with reference to the sources.

3. Brief information is given about geographical names which may be unknown to the general reader.
4. Obscure passages in the text and unusual word usage are explained with reference to the literature.

NOTES

¹⁾ Ibn al-Kāzarūnī, *Mukhtasar at-taʾriḫh*, ed. Mustafā Gawād, p. 244.
²⁾ *Ibn Abī ʿUdhaiba wa-taʾriḫhuhu* in: Magallat al-magmaʿ al-ʿilmī bi-Dimashq. 21 (1946), p. 306-316; and: *al-ʿImrānī wataʾriḫhuhu* in: 23 (1948), p. 47-63.

³⁾ al-ʿImrānī as-Sarakhsī in: as-Samʿānī, *Kitāb al-ansāb*, f. 398b; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Lubāb fi tahdhīb al-ansāb*, Vol. 2, p. 151-152. al-ʿImrānī al-Khuwārizmī in: Yāqūt, *Muʿgam al-udabāʾ*, Vol. 5, p. 412; Ibn al-Fuwatī, *Talkhis magmaʿ al-ādāb fī muʿgam al-alqāb*, biography nr. 2246; as-Salāh as-Safadī, *Kitāb al-wāfi bi ʿl-wafayāt*, Nūr Uthmāniyya, ms. vol. 12, (quoted by ʿAbbās al-ʿAzzāwī in his introduction to the ms. of the Iraqi Museum at Baghdad), as-Suyūtī *Kitāb bugyat al-wuʿāt*, p. 350-351; Abū ʿl-Hasanāt al-Laknawī, *al-Fawāʿid al-bahīyya fī tarāgim al-hanafiyya*, p. 123; al-Khawansārī, *Kitāb rawdāt al-gannāt*, p. 485 (quotes also the biography given by as-Safadī); al-Qurashī *Kitāb al-gawāhir al-mudīʾa*, Vol. 1, p. 378 (without al-Khuwārizmī).

⁴⁾ Mustafā Gawād in his already quoted edition, p. 244, footnote 427; and ʿAbbās al-ʿAzzāwī in his second article quoted in footnote 2, p. 51.

⁵⁾ Yāqūt, *Muʿgam al-buldān*. Vol. 3, p. 19. Also: The Encyclopaedia of Islam, s.v. *al-Muʿtadid bi-ʿllāh* and s.v. *Sāmarrāʾ*.

⁶⁾ Biographies of Ibn Hubaira are mentioned in footnote 705 of this text-edition.

⁷⁾ In his *Akhhbār ar-Rādī bi-ʿllāh wa-ʿl-Muttaqī li-ʿllāh*.

⁸⁾ In his *Taʾriḫh*.

⁹⁾ In his *Taʾriḫh ar-rusul wa-ʿl-mulūk*.

¹⁰⁾ The used editions of these works are given in the Bibliography.

¹¹⁾ Abū Mikhnaḥ, *Masraʿ ash-shaʾin fī qatl al-Husain*. MS. Leiden Or. 959 (2).

¹²⁾ In his *Kitāb al-gussās wa-ʿl-mudhakkirin*, p. 10-11 of the Arabic text.

¹³⁾ See footnote 10.

¹⁴⁾ See ʿAzzāwī's first article quoted under footnote 2, p. 316; and his second article quoted there, p. 62-3.