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SOME LIGHTS ON AN EARLY ZAYDITE MANUSCRIPT: AKHBĀR FAKHKH WA-KHABAR YAHYĀ B. ‘ABDALLĀH

Maher Jarrar, Beirut

Among the recently catalogued manuscripts of the *Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz zu Berlin*, there appeared a volume containing various works and epistles all of which belong to the Zaydite historiographical literature. The scribe of the entire volume is the celebrated Zaydite scholar Humayd b. Ahmad al Muhallī (d. 652/1254)¹. Professor G. Schoeler, who described this volume in his catalogue², kindly drew my attention to it in November 1991. Upon studying it more closely³, I became convinced of the importance of its content, especially the section entitled “*Akhbār Fakhkh wa-khābar Yahyā b. ‘Abdallāh*” (fols. 154b-184a) by Ahmad b. Sahl al-Rāzī, who was still alive in the first quarter of the fourth/tenth century⁴.

This work under discussion was one of the sources of al-Muhallī’s *al-Hadā’iq al-wardiyya*. al-Muhallī never gives his chains of transmitters, and although he occasionally mentions his sources such as the *Maqātil al-Tālibiyyīn of Abū l-Faraj al-Isfahānī* (d. 356/967) and *al-Ifāda* of al-Nātiq bil-Haqq (d. 424/1032)⁵, he never mentions this work.

In preparing the edition I compared it with the *Maqātil* and the *Ifāda*. It became obvious, that 1) Abū l-Faraj and al-Nātiq bil-Haqq did not know this work; and 2) that both Abū l-Faraj and the author of this work, who belongs to the preceding generation, have a common source; 3) and that even al-Muhallī did not make use of all its material. The second step was to compare the material contained in this work with that of early historians like al-Balādhurī, al-Tabarī, al-Mas’ūdī, Abū Ishāq al-Sābī and with Imāmī sources, especially *al-Irshād* of al-Shaykh al-Mufid and *al-Kāfi*

1 Cf. R. Strothmann, in: *Der Islam* 1/1910/361-362; A.F. al-Sayyid, *Masādir* 127f.

2 *Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland. Arabische Handschriften*, Teil II., no. 322, 323, 106-108.

3 My thanks go to the following: Dr. H.-D. Feistel, the director of the *Orient Abteilung* at the Berlin *Staatsbibliothek*, Dr. H. Kurio of the above mentioned library and to the director of the *Bayrische Staatsbibliothek* in Munich for their friendliness and help. I would like to thank, too, Dr. J. Strauß (Freiburg i.Br.) who read the final version of this article.

4 Cf. p. 275f. below.

5 Cf. A.F. al-Sayyid, *Masādir* 91f.

of al-Kūlaynī. At this stage I was certain of the originality of this book, which not only preserves unique information going back to early Zaydite transmitters and narrators, but moreover sheds new light on the material already available in other sources.

In the present article I am not going to deal with all the questions involved, but will rather limit my presentation to the content of this manuscript. A critical edition and a study are already in preparation and are due to appear in Beirut.^{5a}

The text of Ahmad b. Sahl al-Rāzī is divided into three parts:

1. Part one (fols. 154a-160a) deals with the accounts leading to the battle of Fakhkh (154a-155b), the events of the battle (155b-159a) and its aftermath (159a-160a). The author follows up the lot of some 'Alides who took part in these events. The material of this first part goes back to eight sources⁶:

1.1. al-Hasan b. 'Abdalwāhid al-Kūfī. He is quoted three times and the bulk of the main report is given on his account. His *isnād* reads: Muhammad b. 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm⁷ > Bakr b. Sālih al-Rāzī⁸ > 'Abdallāh b. Muhammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Muhammad b. 'Abdallāh b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī

5a It has come to my attention recently that another manuscript of the same work (copied in 1305/1887) exists at the library of the great mosque in Ṣan'ā', cf. *Fihrist makhtūtāt al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr-Ṣan'ā'* 4/1731, no. 2347 (ed. A. 'A. al-Ruqayhī and 'A. a.-Husayn. Ṣan'ā' 1404/1984).

6 In this short article I am going to treat the *isnāds* only cursorily. Due to the lack of Zaydite biographical works it is difficult to identify the early Zaydite transmitters. I have ordered the *Matla' al-budūr* of Ibn Abī l-Rijāl from the Ambrosiana library but I was told that the library is under repair now. I therefore tried to make use of the work of R. Traini, *Sources Bibliographiques des Zaidites, alif-hā'*.

7 He is likely to be identified with al-Hamdānī, who was like his father in charge of the province of Hamdān apparently as a deputy of the Zaydite Imams. He was there at the time of al-Qāsim (presumably al-Rassī d. 246/860). One of the reports taken from him goes back to 279/892. He appears in the *Maqātil* once as Muhammad b. 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm and once as 'Alī b. Muhammad b. Ibrāhīm (cf. p. 404, 443; (ed. Najaf) 270, 296) and even the sources were not sure of the order of the name (cf. Najāshī, *Rijāl* 242f.; *Ardabīlī, Jāmi'* 1/596, 2/150).

8 A client of Dabba, he is said to have transmitted from the seventh Imam Mūsā al-Kāzim (d. 183/799). The Imāmi scholars regard him as untrustworthy (cf. Najāshī, *Rijāl* 79; *Ardabīlī, Jāmi'* 1/127; Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Ma'ālim* 24, no. 142; Prozorov, *Arabskaia Istoricheskaia* 69, 103, 143). Some of his reports are varified in *Bihār al-anwār* 13/392, 14/132, 460, 17/88, 18/409.

b. ‘Abdallāh b. Ja‘far b. Abī Tālib. The name of this Ja‘farī as it appears here is difficult to identify but we find in the Shiite sources two possibly identical names:

1.1.1. ‘Abdallāh b. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abdallāh b. Ja‘far b. Abī Tālib who is the author of two books, one of which is directly connected to the topic of our book “*K. khurūj sāhib Fakhkh wa-maqtalih*”. The other one deals with the revolt of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya “*K. Khurūj Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh wa-maqtalih*”⁹. The main transmitter from him is Bakr b. Sālih to whom these books were later attributed¹⁰. In our case Bakr b. Sālih is also the main transmitter. Abū l-Faraj al-Isfahānī mentions in his *Maqātil* two reports dealing with the battle of Fakhkh, on the authority of ‘Abdallāh b. Ibrāhīm al-Ja‘farī. His *isnāds*, too, go back to Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm, Bakr b. Sālih, ‘Abdallāh b. Ibrāhīm al-Ja‘farī¹¹.

1.1.2. ‘Umar b. Shabba (d. 263/876)¹² is quoted six times in *Maqātil al-Tālibiyyīn*¹³ giving reports on the authority of Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh Ibn Abī l-Kirām al-Ja‘farī¹⁴. Ibn Shabba introduces these reports with the formulae: *haddathanī*, *haddathanā* and *akhbaranī*. It is unlikely that Ibn Shabba could have heard directly from him¹⁵. Obviously, he is taking his material from a written source which is not known to us¹⁶. All these reports deal with the revolt of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya

9 Najāshī, *Rijāl* 149f.; Ardabīlī, *Jāmi‘* 1/464; Āghā Buzurg, *Dhārī'a* 7/150f., no. 817, 818. Majlisī quotes in *Bihār al-anwār* (48/160f., his source is *Ikmāl al-dīn*) a report on the battle of Fakhkh going back to ‘Abdallāh b. al-Hakam al-Armanī, ‘Abdallāh b. Ja‘far b. Ibrāhīm al-Ja‘farī. This Armanī is mentioned in the sources as the main transmitter from ‘Abdallāh b. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Ja‘farī.

10 This could indicate that he was the main *rāwī* who put the written notes of his master in the form of a book and transmitted them further.

11 *Maqātil* 404, 443; (ed. Najaf) 270, 296. In both cases Abū l-Faraj is deriving his material from ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-‘Alawī, who wrote two books on the same subject as ‘Abdallāh b. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Ja‘farī: “*Akhbār sāhib Fakhkh*” and “*Akhbār Yahyā b. ‘Abdallāh b. al-Hasan*” (cf. Najāshī, *Rijāl* 186; Ardabīlī, *Jāmi‘* 1/544; Āghā Buzurg, *Dhārī'a* 1/337 (1760), 1/354 (1864); S. Günther, *Quellenuntersuchungen* 141-144).

12 Cf. 1.3. below.

13 *Maqātil* 206, 255, 270, 334f., 345, 348, cf., too, 343 and 406 both referring to the report given on p. 334f.; (ed. Najaf) 143, 177, 187, 226, 233, 235 and 232, 270; S. Günther, *Op. Cit.* 221.

14 Cf. Najāshī, *Rijāl* 16; Ibn Dāwūd, *Rijāl* 13 (11); Ardabīlī, *Jāmi‘* 1/17, 28, 32; Dāwūdī, *‘Umda* 45f.

15 I could not find this chain, either in the newly edited *Akhbār al-Madīna* of ‘Umar b. Shabba or in other sources available to me.

16 Cf. on the sources of Ibn Shabba regarding the revolt of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, T. Nagel, in: *Der Islam* 46/1970/227-262.

and his brother Ibrāhīm. It is probable that this Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh b. Abī l-Kirām al-Ja‘farī is the father of the above mentioned Ja‘farī who appears in our manuscript and whom we identified with the person mentioned by al-Najāshī, especially because Ibn Abī l-Kirām¹⁷ is the common link in the genealogical line of the three of them, i.e. ‘Abdal-lāh b. Muḥammad al-Ja‘farī (ms. fol. 154a), ‘Abdallāh b. Ibrāhīm al-Ja‘farī (Najāshī, *Rijāl* 149f.) and Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Jaf‘arī (Najāshī, *Rijāl* 16) and furthermore because the above mentioned Ja‘farī wrote a book on *Khurūj Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh wa-maqtaluh*. The Shiīte sources suggest that as early as the fourth/tenth century the genealogists were not any more sure about the identity of the *Tālibiyyīn* and were mixing them together (no wonder because most of them and their descendants had identical names)¹⁸. It is not possible to give a final word on the identity of these authors given the lack of sources dealing with Zaydite historiography which have come down to us.

Al-Hasan b. ‘Abdalwāhid (1.1.), the main source of Ahmad b. Sahl, appears five times in *Maqātil al-Tālibiyyīn*, i.e. in *isnāds* of accounts dealing with the revolts of Zayd b. ‘Alī, al-Nafs al-Zakiyya and his brother Ibrāhīm and once in a short report on Fakhkh¹⁹. In four of these *isnāds* he is the second transmitter in the chain. Abū l-Faraj transmits from him through two authorities: ‘Alī b. Ahmad b. Hātim and ‘Alī b. al-‘Abbās al-Muqā-nī²⁰. In the fifth report he appears as the third member of the *isnād*: Ahmad b. Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd²¹ > Muḥammad²² b. Mansūr al-Murādī. al-Hasan b. ‘Abdalwāhid, al-Murādī, a Kufan, is one of the well known and highly estimated Zaydite scholars, who died in 290/903²³. In our manuscript al-Murādī appears, like al-Hasan b. ‘Abdalwāhid, as a direct

17 Ibn Abī l-Kirām was on the side of the ‘Abbasids during the revolt of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya and is said to be the one who brought his head to Egypt, though other reports mention that it was the head of Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abdallāh, the brother of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya (cf. *Maqātil* 275, 350; (ed. Najaf) 191, 236; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh* 6/21; Ardabīlī, *Jāmi‘* 2/143; Dāwūdī, *‘Umda* 45).

18 In our case cf. al-Abtāhī, *Tahdhīb* 303-306 and the sources mentioned in fn. 9.

19 *Maqātil* 132, 354, 388, 436, 524; (ed. Najaf) 96, 240, 261, 290, 343.

20 Cf. S. Günther, *Op. Cit.* 136ff. (al-Hasan b. ‘Abdalwāhid is not mentioned here), and 139f; cf., too, Ardabīlī, *Jāmi‘* 1/588.

21 Abū l-‘Abbās b. ‘Uqda, d. 333/944, *GAS* 1/182; R. Traini, *Sources biographiques*, no. 167; S. Günther, *Op. Cit.* 127ff.

22 He appears once in our manuscript and twice in *Maqātil* (ed. Najaf) 270, 365 as Hamdān b. Mansūr, cf. Schoeler, *Op. Cit.* 382.

23 al-Jandārī, *Tarājim* 36; R. Strothmann, in: *Der Islam* 13/1923/6; W. Madelung, *Der Imam al-Qāsim* 80ff, 95; *GAS* 1/563; S. Günther, *Op. Cit.* 202-204.

authority of ʻAhmad b. Sahl al-Rāzī, mainly transmitting directly from the Zaydite Imam al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm (d. 246/860). The fact that al-Murādī, in the *isnād* of Abū l-Faraj, relates directly from al-Hasan b. ʻAbdalwāhid suggests that Hasan was a little younger than him.

1.2. ʻIsā b. Mihrān. The author relates one report from him concerning the allegiance pledge of al-Husayn al-Fakhkhī with the *isnād* ʻIsā b. Mihrān, Muhammad b. Marwān²⁴ > Artāt b. Ḥabīb²⁵. ʻIsā, known as Abū Mūsā al-Musta‘tif, is the author of several books²⁶. The Sunnite sources accuse him of being a *Rāfidite* for his writing a book cursing the companions of Muhammad²⁷. Abū l-Faraj gives four reports where ʻIsā is the second chain in the *isnād*²⁸.

Artāt b. Ḥabīb, to whom this report goes back, is a Kufan who is supposed to have transmitted from Ja‘far al-Sādiq²⁹. He appears another time in *Maqātil al-Tālibiyyīn*³⁰ relating from Ibrāhīm b. Abī Yahyā, the famous traditionist who was a *dāī* of Yahyā b. ʻAbdallāh³¹. Our manuscript mentions a certain Ḥabīb b. Artāt among Yahyā’s *du‘āt*³²; most likely we have to do here with a scribe’s error which is to be emended in Artāt b. Ḥabīb.

1.3. ʻUmar b. Shabba (d. 263/876). The author transmits from him, directly, three times in this part quoting al-Madā’īnī (ʻAlī b. Muhammad, d. 235/850³³). It is difficult to establish from which of Ibn Shabba’s books this material originates. It is neither found in the edited part of his *Akhbār*

24 I have not been able to identify him yet.

25 The same report is given by Abū l-Faraj on the account of al-Hasan b. Muhammad al-Muzanī, Muhammad b. Marwān, Artāt b. Ḥabīb (*Maqātil* 449f.; (ed. Najaf) 301).

26 Ibn Dāwūd, *Rijāl* 269; al-Tūsī, *Fihrist* 142; Najāshī, *Rijāl* 210f; Ardabīlī, *Jāmi‘* 1/654; Prozorov, *Arabskaia Istoricheskiaia* 129f. and index 223.

27 al-Khatīb, *Ta’rīkh Baghdađ* 11/167 (5866); Sam‘ānī, *Ansāb* 11/239; Dhahabī, *Mīzān* 3/324 (6613). al-Khatīb mentions that he is one of the sources of al-Tabarī, but I could not find any report by al-Tabarī going back to him.

28 *Maqātil* 69, 78, 561; (ed. Najaf) 47, 51, 368; See other reports in: Majlisī, *Bihār* 15/7; 16/143.

29 He is the author of a book, cf. Najāshī, *Rijāl* 78; Ardabīlī, *Jāmi‘* 1/78.

30 251; (ed. Najaf) 174; cf., too, Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh* 5/34.

31 See below (2.1.) and fn. 48 and 49.

32 Fol. 168a. He is mentioned neither in *K. al-Masābīh* of Abū l-ʻAbbās al-Hasanī, nor in *al-Hadā’iq al-wardiyya* by Muḥallī; cf. W. Madelung, *Akhbār* 55f., 175.

33 GAS 1/314f; G. Rotter, in: *Oriens* 23-24/1974/103-133; S. Günther, *Op. Cit.* 147f. al-Madā’īnī has a book entitled *Kitāb man qutila min al-Tālibiyyīn*.

al-Madīna, by al-Ṭabarī. Abū l-Faraj mentions Ibn Shabba in a collective *isnād* dealing with the battle of Fakhkh, whereby it is difficult to separate his wording from that of the other authorities³⁴.

In his history of this battle Abū l-Faraj mentions reports going back to al-Madā'ini³⁵ but he relates them on the authority of Aḥmad b. al-Ḥārith al-Kharrāz³⁶ and they do not occur in our manuscript.

1.4. Aḥmad b. Ḥamza al-Rāzī. I still could not identify him. He transmitted once from Aḥmad b. Rāshid, Sa‘īd b. Khuthaym al-Kūfī, and once from Ḥārūn al-Washshā'. Aḥmad b. Rāshid (in some sources Rushd, Rāshid or Rushayd)³⁷, a Zaydite, is the main transmitter from his uncle Sa‘īd b. Khuthaym (in some sources Khaytham) Abī Ma‘mar al-Hilālī³⁸, who was one of the *du‘āt* of Zayd b. ‘Alī and took part in his revolt as well as in the revolts of Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abdallāh and al-Husayn al-Fakhkhī. He is supposed to have transmitted from Aṣbagh b. Nubāṭa³⁹, a companion of ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib. The Sunnite sources speak positively of him and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal transmitted from him⁴⁰. Abū l-Faraj gives ten reports on his account⁴¹ dealing with the three Zaydite revolts already mentioned.

1.5. Ḥārūn al-Washshā' is still unidentified⁴².

1.6. Muḥammad b. Maṇṣūr al-Murādī (already mentioned in 1.1.2.).

34 *Maqātil* 442; (ed. Najaf) 295; cf., too, 459; (ed. Najaf) 308.

35 *Maqātil* 456, 457, 459; (ed. Najaf) 305, 306, 307.

36 D. 258 Or 259/871 or 872, *GAS* 1/518f.; Prozorov, *Arabskaia Istoricheskia* 116ff.

37 Cf. Ibn Abī Hātim, *al-Jarh wal-Ta‘dīl* 2/51 (Rushd); Mizzī, *Tahdhīb* 10/413 (Rushd); Majlisī, *Bihār* 18/1f. (Rushayd).

38 D. between 180/796 and 190/805, Ibn Dāwūd, *Rijāl* 456; Najāshī, *Rijāl* 128; Ardabīlī, *Jām‘* 1/359f.; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb* 10/413-416; Dhahabī, *Mizān* 2/133 (3162); C. van Arendonk, *Opkomst* 284f., 291; W. Madelung, *Der Imam al-Qāsim* 72. In *Maqātil* 152 (ed. Najaf) 111 his nephew Aḥmad calls him Ibn Abī l-Hādiya al-‘Abdī.

39 Barqī, *Rijāl* 50; Najāshī, *Rijāl* 6; Ardabīlī, *Jām‘* 1/106f.

40 When Ibn Ma‘īn was reminded that Ibn Khuthaym was a Shiīte and a Qadarite, he answered: “*Shī‘i thiqa wa-qadarī thiqa*”.

41 S. Günther, *Op. Cit.* 215f.

42 It may be far-fetched to identify him with Abū Bishr Ḥārūn b. Hātim al-Kūfī al-Bazzāz (d. 249/868, Bazzāz has the same meaning as Washshā'), a Zaydite who is one of the sources of Abū l-‘Abbās Ibn ‘Uqda (*Mizān* 4/282 (9152); *GAS* 1/316). In another *isnād* in our manuscript, Ḥārūn al-Washshā' transmits from ‘Abdal‘azīz b. Yahyā al-Kinānī, most probably the traditionist who died in 240/860 (cf. 3.7. below).

1.7. Muhammad b. al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī, the son of the Zaydite Imam⁴³. The author relates from him directly twice.

1.8. Sulaymān b. Mūsā. The author transmits from him one report on the authority of his father Mūsā who relates from his relatives (*mashā'ikh ahl baitih*). This Sulaymān b. Mūsā is most probably the son of Mūsā b. 'Abdallāh b. Mūsā al-Jūn who was killed in 256/869 during the reign of al-Muhtadī⁴⁴. Sulaymān outlived his father but did not have any male descendants⁴⁵.

2. Part two (fols. 160a-166b) starts with a report following up the narration on the flight of Yahyā b. 'Abdallāh and his brother Idrīs to Abyssinia after the defeat of Fakhkh. This chapter is mainly devoted to the story of Idrīs, his flight to Egypt and his career in North Africa. The reports of this part originate from three different sources:

2.1. Idrīs's flight to Egypt is given according to a certain Hārūn (most probably al-Washshā' mentioned in part one 1.5.). The author mentions that it is likely that this Hārūn was one of the *du'āt* of Yahyā b. 'Abdallāh. On his authority, Ahmad b. Sahl, gives the text of the letter which Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Abī Yahyā wrote on behalf of Yahyā b. 'Abdallāh to Abū Muḥammad al-Hadramī in Egypt. Ibn Abī Yahyā (d. 184/800), a Madinan, was a client (*mawlā*) of the tribe Aslam, and Ibn al-Murtadā puts him in the fifth generation of the Mu'tazila⁴⁶. He was one of the teachers of al-Shāfi'ī⁴⁷ but was not held in any esteem among the Sunnite sources which accused him of having been a Qadarite⁴⁸. Though the later twelver

43 W. Madelung, *Der Imam al-Qāsim* 98f., 121ff., and index, p. 266.

44 Ibn Tabātiba, *Muntaqila* 170 (He gives 255/868 as his death date); *Maqātil* 678; (ed. Najaf) 425f.; K. Öhrnberg, *The Offspring*, table 32, 33, 40.

45 Dāwūdī, *'Umda* 102; K. Öhrnberg, *The Offspring*, table 40.

46 *Tabaqāt* 134; *Qalā'id* 54.

47 The Zaydite sources claim that al-Shāfi'ī was a supporter of Yahyā b. 'Abdallāh and one of his *du'āt* (al-Jandārī, *Tarājim* 33) and that he had studied with him when Yahyā was hiding himself in Yemen during the time when al-Shāfi'ī held the post of a judge there (see 3.2. below); on al-Shāfi'ī's (trip(s) to Yemen, cf. J. Schacht, in: *Studia Orientalia Ioanni Pedersen* 320; W. al-Qādī, in: *Arabian Studies in Honour of Mahmoud Ghul* 127-141. al-Shāfi'ī's relation to the Zaydites still needs more attention.

48 Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqāt* 5/314; Fasawī, *al-Ma'rifa* 3/33, 55, 132; Abū l-Shaykh, *Tabaqāt* 1/395f.; Abū Nu'aym, *Tabaqāt* 1/171; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb* 2/184-191; Dhahabī, *Siyar* 8/450-454; J. van Ess, *Zwischen Ḥadīth und Theologie* 120.

Shiites adopted him since he was an expert on the traditions of both the fifth Imam al-Bāqir and the sixth Imam al-Sādiq⁴⁹, he rather seems to have been a Zaydite, a follower of Yahyā b. ‘Abdallāh⁵⁰. The Zaydite sources quote him (on the account of Artāt b. Habīb 1.2. above) preferring al-Nafs al-Zakiyya to Ja‘far al-Sādiq⁵¹. The letter which Ibn Abī Yahyā wrote on behalf of Yahyā b. ‘Abdallāh appears in al-Muḥallī’s *Hadā’iq*⁵², though he neither gives the reason of its writing nor does he mention his source.

2.2. al-Madā’īnī (cf. above 1.3.). He is mentioned once continuing the report given in part one. Most probably the author is relying here on Ibn Shabba. Curiously enough the *mawlā* of Idrīs who is supposed to have accompanied Idrīs to Egypt and to have had played a decisive role in Idrīs’s career in North Africa and taken over his office after his death, occurs in the sources under the name of Rāshid, but is named in this report of al-Madā’īnī: Ishāq b. Rāshid (cf. below 2.5.).

2.3. Idrīs’s career in North Africa is quoted after an *isnād* which is rather difficult to identify: *haddathānī* Muḥammad b. ‘Amr b. Khālid, Abū ‘Ulā-tha › Abū Khaythama, ‘Alī b. ‘Amr b. Khālid⁵³ Ibrāhīm b. Abī Ayyūb.

2.4. In this report, the author quotes a letter of Idrīs addressed to the Berber tribes, on the authority of al-Hasan b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Hasan b. Ja‘far b. al-Hasan b. al-Hasan⁵⁴, a grandson of Muḥammad al-Saylaq⁵⁵.

49 Ibn Dāwūd, *Rijāl* 17; Tūsī, *Fihrist* 16; Najāshī, *Rijāl* 11; Ardabīlī, *Jāmi‘* 1/33f.; Ibn Shahrāshūb; *Ma‘ālim* 3; Abtahī, *Tahdhīb* 240ff. The Imami sources make the unfounded claim that al-Wāqidī used his books without mentioning him.

50 As our ms. ascertains, cf., too, C. van Arendonk, *Opkomst* 290.

51 *Maqātil* 251; (ed. Najaf) 174; Muḥallī, *Hadā’iq* (ms. München, Glaser 86) 1/92a, 22-28.

52 Cf. W. Madelung, *Akhbār a’immat al-Zaydiyya* 175-178.

53 It is difficult to substantiate my hunch that we are dealing here with two brothers who could be the sons of the well known Kufan Jārūdite ‘Amr b. Khālid, Abū Khālid al-Wāsītī, the main transmitter of the *Corpus Juris Zayd b. ‘Alī’s* (cf. R. Strothmann, in: *Der Islam* 13/1923/23ff.; W. Madelung, *Der Imam al-Qāsim* 44, 48, 54f., 57).

54 Dāwūdī, *‘Umda* 151; K. Öhrnberg, *The Offspring* 18; ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Saylaq is not known to have a son called al-Hasan.

55 Bukhārī, *Sīr al-silsila* 19, 74f.; Dāwūdī, *‘Umda* 151.

2.5. The last report in this part deals with the wars between Idrīs and the Ibādite Imam, 'Abdalwahhāb b. Rustam, with the following *isnād*: *akhbaranī* 'Isā b. Idrīs abīh Ishāq b. Rāshid, *mawlāhum*.

One is inclined to think that this 'Isā b. Idrīs mentioned here could refer to the son of Idrīs II.⁵⁶, i.e. the grandson of Idrīs b. 'Abdallāh. But one wonders where the author, Ahmad b. Sahl al-Rāzī, could have met him. Furthermore, even if the name Ishāq b. Rāshid refers to Rāshid, the *mawlā* of Idrīs I., it remains improbable that 'Isā b. Idrīs II. had heard from him since Rāshid died either in 184/800, 186/802 or 188/804⁵⁷. In any case when he died, Idrīs II. is said to have been eleven years old⁵⁸. This *isnād* seems to me somewhat suspicious. The author could have derived his material from a written source still unknown to me.

This long report which occupies fols. 165a-166a is devoted more to the inner political and military situation in North Africa at that time than to the career of Idrīs who is hardly mentioned any more. It adds new details to the material already available in other sources dealing with the career of 'Abdalwahhāb b. Rustam, 'Abdallāh b. al-Jārūd and others. It would be interesting to compare this Zaydite material with the reports which appear in the Ibādite sources dealing with the history of the early community in North Africa. As far as Idrīs is concerned we are confronted here with three questions: 1- how long did his stay in North Africa last, 2- when did he die and 3- who was his alleged murderer?⁵⁹

Although our manuscript does not give a date for Idrīs's arrival in North Africa, it provides us with a clue for it. The other sources give dates varying between 170/786-87 and 172/788-89⁶⁰. We read in the manuscript that Idrīs arrived in Egypt occurred during the government of Mūsā b. 'Isā. Mūsā took over the government of Egypt in 171/787 and was granted leave in Ramaḍān 172/February 788 after having governed for one year and five and a half months⁶¹. This indicates that Idrīs had left

56 Cf. H. Beck, *Idris de kleine* 26, 35, 88, 89, 114; K. Öhrnberg, *The Offspring*, table 30.

57 Cf. M. Talbi, *L'Emirat Aghlabide* 347; H. Beck, *Idris de kleine* 67f., 80ff., 96ff. and see index 371.

58 H. Beck, Op. Cit. 65f. The history of Idrīs I. and Idrīs II. is based on contradictory and mostly legendary reports.

59 I am not going here to discuss these problems in detail, cf. M. Talbi, *L'Emirat Aghlabide* 362ff.; H. Beck, *Op. Cit.* 15ff.

60 M. Talbi, *Op. Cit.* 366f.; M. Ismā'īl, *Adārisa* 55ff.

61 Kindī, *Wulāt Misr* 132; at the same time Wādīh was in charge of the post. Kindī mentions that Idrīs entered Egypt under the government of 'Alī b. Sulaymān, who overlooked him so he could leave to North Africa (*Wulāt* 131f.).

Egypt before Ramadān 172, a fact that is confirmed by some other sources⁶².

In the report of ʻIsā b. Idrīs, it is said that Idrīs had stayed in Tangier for seven years and that he was killed there after Harthama b. A‘yan⁶³ took over Kairouan in Jumāda 179/May-June 795⁶⁴. In his discussion, M. Talbi argues that this year most probably coincides with that of Idrīs' death⁶⁵. The report passes over the personality of the man who is supposed to have poisoned him in silence (he speaks of a group and uses the verb in the plural: ...*ilā l-nafar alladhīn kāna Hārūn wajjahahum ilā Idrīs ilā tanja li-yasqūh al-summ hattā fa‘alū*)⁶⁶. A few pages earlier the author mentions on the authority of Abū Ulatha, Muḥammad b. ‘Amr b. Khālid (cf. 2.3) that Shammākh al-Yamāmī was appointed by Hārūn al-Rashīd to the post office of Egypt, instead of Wādīh who had helped Idrīs to flee from Egypt, under the government of Mūsā b. ʻIsā. al-Shammākh was given the instruction either to kill Idrīs or to send someone to do the job, if Idrīs had left for North Africa. At any rate this report does not suggest that al-Shammākh himself was the murderer, but only that he was instructed to invigilate the case. The oldest report on this case is referred to by Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 245/859) who, however gives no source⁶⁷, but mentions that the assassination was carried out during the government of Harthama by a Medinan (*rajul min ahl al-Madīna*) who poisoned him with a fish. Two other versions of his assassination found circulation in the sources⁶⁸: The first mentions al-Shammākh al-Yamāmī to have poisoned Idrīs, either with tooth powder or with a water-melon. This version is

62 Cf. M. Talbi, *Op. Cit.* 366ff.

63 Ch. Pellat, in: *E.I.*² 3/1971/231.

64 Most of the sources agree that Idrīs I. died in Walīla. Walīla is in the province of Tangier.

65 *Op. Cit.* 371f.; but cf. Abū Zakariyyā’Ibn Khaldūn, *Bughya* 1/79 (French translation 1/101f.), who dates his death in the year 175; Lévi-Provençal, *Islam d’Occident* 14 dates his death even earlier; M. Ismā‘īl, *Adārisa* 59.

66 *Akhbār Fakhkh* 166b, 21.

67 *Asmā’ al-mughtālīn* 197f.

68 Both appearing with variations, cf. M. Talbi, *L’Emirat Aghlabid* 369ff.; H. Beck, Idris de kleine 18-56. The late sources made a synthesis between the two reports and added to the legendary features, cf. Ibn Abī Zar‘, *al-Anīs al-mutrib* 22ff.; Ibn Khaldūn, ‘Ibar 4/24f.; al-Himyarī, *al-Rawd al-mi‘tār* 610; Ibn al-Qādī al-Miknāsī, *Jadhwa* 22f.; al-Salāwī, *Istiqsā* 1/142-144.

transmitted on the account of four authorities: Șālih b. 'Alī⁶⁹, Ahmad b. al-Hārith b. 'Ubayda⁷⁰, the Zaydite Muhammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Muhammad b. al-Qāsim⁷¹ and Muhammad b. Mūsā al-Barbarī⁷². The second version goes back to 'Alī b. Muhammad b. Sulaymān al-Nawfalī (d. 204/819)⁷³. He identifies the murderer with the Zaydite theologian and one of the *du'āt* of Yahyā b. 'Abdallāh (according to the ms. 167b)⁷⁴, Sulaymān b. Jarīr⁷⁵ al-Jazari⁷⁶, who poisoned him with perfume (*qārūrat ghāliya*; some reports have a fish instead)⁷⁷. However, the originator of this report was an Imāmī, who is accused by the Zaydite Abū l-Faraj of being prejudiced in what he reports about the Zaydites and of telling lies⁷⁸. Although this report is isolated⁷⁹, the fact that it found circulation in Zaydite literature indicates that it was accepted to a certain extent among them⁸⁰. We also may have to take into consideration the controversies among the Zaydites themselves which could have led to the adop-

69 Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān* 81f. (tooth powder), on Șālih b. 'Alī, cf. H. Beck, *Idris de kleine* 18; H. Masse, *Abrégué du Livre des pays* 99, he identifies him wrongly (index 428) with Șālih b. 'Alī b. 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās who died in 151/768.

70 Bakrī, *Masālik* 121 (tooth powder).

71 Bakrī, *Masālik* 121 (water-melon).

72 Abū l-Faraj, *Maqātil* 490 (tooth powder), on Muhammad b. Mūsā (d. 294/906), cf. S. Günther, *Op. Cit.* 205f. Abū l-Faraj's source is 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-'Alawī, who wrote a book on "Akhbār sāhib Fakhkh" and another on "Akhbār Yahyā b. 'Abdallāh" (fn. 11 above).

73 Ardashī, *Jāmi'* 1/598; Prosorov, *Arabskaia Istoriceskaia* 181; Günther, *Op. Cit.* 151-152.

74 C. van Arendonk, *Opkomst* 73. Yahyā and Sulaymān could have met during Yahyā's short stay in al-Jazīra before Yahyā entered Baghdad (cf. fol. 166b).

75 In some sources the name is distorted into Hurayz.

76 Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, index 636; C. van Arendonk, *Opkomst* 73f., 82ff.; W. Madelung, *Der Imam al-Qāsim* 61ff.; M. Watt, *Formative Period* 162ff. (German version *Der Islam* II, 165ff.).

77 *Maqātil* 489; Bukhārī, *Sīr al-silsila al-'alawiyya* 12; Bakrī, *Masālik* 118ff. (*Istibṣār* 194-196); Abū Zakariyyā' Ibn Khaldūn, *Bughya* 1/79.

78 *Maqātil* 518; (ed. Najaf) 238f.

79 A shorter but similar report (*Maqātil* 490) is given on the authority of Yahyā b. al-Hasan (d. 277/890, S. Günther, *Op. Cit.* 226ff.) › Dāwūd b. al-Qāsim al-Ja'farī (d. 261/875, *Tūsī, Fihrist* 131; *Najāshī, Rijāl* 113; al-Khaṭīb, *Ta'rīkh Baghdād* 8/369).

80 Cf. C. van Arendonk, *Opkomst* 73; W. Madelung, *Der Imam al-Qāsim* 62; Turjumān 78b, 13-23; Muhallī mentions in *al-Hadā'iq al-wardiyya* (ms. München, Glaser 86, fol. 110b) the version which names Sulaymān b. Jarīr, he then adds that some reports mention instead a man who was wearing like the Jews (most probably al-Muhallī is depending on Ahmad b. Sahl al-Rāzī, cf. fol. 162a) and others mention a barber. Strangely enough, al-Muhallī gives Muhammad b. Jarīr *al-Tabarī* as his source. In his history (*Ta'rīkh* 3/561f.; (ed. Ibrāhīm) 8/198f.; (Engl. transl.) 30/29). Tabarī gives only the version with al-Shammākh without naming his source (*wa-qīla*).

tion of this version. Our manuscript, on the contrary, confirms the early reports which put Idrīs's death in relation with al-Shammākh al-Yamānī.

3. Part three (fols. 166b-184b) follows the career of Yahyā b. 'Abdallāh and his fate in the jail of Hārūn al-Rashīd. The *isnāds* in this part are the following:

3.1. al-Hasan <b. 'Abdalwāhid> (cf. 1.1. above). He relates a report on Yahyā's sojourn in Baghdad during his concealment and his flight afterwards. This is reported with the following *isnād*: al-Hasan > Ibrāhīm b. Yūnus (?) > his father(?) > Fulayt 'an Sulaymān. The 'an mentioned after Sulaymān seems to be a slip of the pen which has to be corrected to Fulayt ibn Sulaymān who is mentioned fol. 161b and 167b among the *du'āt* of Yahyā, and who accompanied his brother Idrīs to Egypt⁸¹.

3.2. Sa'īd b. Buhlūl *min abnā' Fāris bi-San'ā'* (?). He relates a report on Yahyā's eight months' stay in Yemen, where al-Shāfi'i⁸² and others are said to have studied by him.

3.3. Abū Zayd (i.e. 'Umar b. Shabba). On his authority originates the bulk of the material dealing with Yahyā's stay in Daylam, his imprisonment by Hārūn al-Rashīd and his death in jail (fols. 167b-183b). Ibn Shabba's main source here is al-Madā inī who is quoted eight times without raising the transmitters chain after him. Although we find in the sources reports with similar content, this material, derived from Ibn Shabba > al-Madā'inī, is new and quite original. On one occasion, Ibn Shabba relates a report from Ibn Zabāla⁸³.

81 Both Abū l-'Abbās al-Husaynī in *K. al-Masābīh* and Muhallī in *al-Hasā'iq al-wardiyya* have instead: Fulayt b. Ismā'īl (W. Madelung, *Ākhbār* 56, 175; cf., too, C. van Arendonk, *Opkomst* 291). I could not identify this name in the available sources. Possibly, Fulayt, could be a misspelling of Talīd; a certain Talīd b. Sulaymān (d. 190/805) attested in the Imāmī sources (Najāshī, *Rijāl* 83; Ardabīlī, *Jāmi'* 1/132). He transmitted from Ja'far al-Sādiq. He appears once in Abū l-Faraj's *Maqātil* (p. 181 *tilmūdh* instead of *Talīd* which is clearly an error; (ed. Najaf) 129) transmitting from 'Abdallāh b. al-Hasan b. al-Hasan (al-Nafs al-Zakiyya's father). This report by Abū l-Faraj is taken from Talīd on the authority of 'Abbād b. Ya'qūb (d. 250/864, Najāshī, *Rijāl* 208; Ardabīlī, *Jāmi'* 1/431; S. Günther, *Op. Cit.* 112f.) who else appears in *Maqātil* (ed. Najaf, 174) as a transmitter from Arṭāt b. Ḥabīb (1.2. above).

82 Cf. fn. 46 above.

83 GAS 1/343f.; G. Schoeler, *Verzeichnis* 382.

An account of the clash between Yahyā and Bakkār al-Zubayrī at al-Rashīd's court is introduced with this short *isnād*: *wa-haddathanī Abū l-Nattāh 'an al-Madā'īnī qāl wa-haddathanī al-Dabbī 'an ba'd al-Nawfaliyyīn*. G. Schoeler suggested, quite rightly, Abū l-Nattāh to be emended in Ibn al-Nattāh⁸⁴. Ibn al-Nattāh (d. 252/866) is Muḥammad b. Ṣalīḥ, from whom Ahmad b. Sahl al-Rāzī, the author of our manuscript, could not have transmitted directly⁸⁵. He is a historian with 'Abbāsid sympathies on whose authority al-Tabarī relies in reporting certain accounts on Yahyā's career. He is also the alleged author of "*Akhbār al-'Abbās wa-wuldih*"⁸⁶. al-Tabarī's material on Yahyā is clearly anti-Talibide and characterized by Abbasid tendencies. This report is also found in al-Tabarī (*wa-dhakara al-Dabbī anna shaykhan min al-Nawfaliyyīn qāl..*)⁸⁷. Most probably, the author takes this report from the same book by Ibn Shabba from which he derives the remaining material⁸⁸, and Muḥammad b. Ṣalīḥ appears as a source of Ibn Shabba elsewhere⁸⁹. al-Dabbī, mentioned here, is al-Mufaddal b. Muḥammad the famous scholar who is said to have been a Zaydite⁹⁰.

3.4. Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm <al-Rassī> (1.7. above). Three reports quoted in this part are based on his account.

3.5. Abū Hāshim Ismā'īl b. 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. 'Alī b. Hasan b. 'Ubaydallāh b. al-'Abbās b. 'Alī b. Abī Tālib. The author transmits from him directly another report on the confrontation between al-Zubayrī and Yahyā b. 'Abdallāh at the court of al-Rashīd (cf. 3.3.). His father 'Alī died in 264/877⁹¹. Abū Hāshim Ismā'īl is transmitting from Ḥamza b. al-Qāsim,

84 *Verzeichnis* 382.

85 Cf. fn. 88 below.

86 Cf. The editor's preface 15ff.

87 *Ta'īkh* 3/616f.; (ed. Ibrāhīm) 8/244f.; (Engl. transl. 30/120).

88 Else, is Ibn al-Nattāh two generations elder than Ahmad b. Sahl the author of this manuscript, and thus he could not have transmitted directly from him; hereto, cf. p. 275f. and fn. 95-97 of this article.

89 Cf., eg., *Akhbār al-Madīna* 1270.

90 Abū l-Faraj, *Maqātil* 338, 372; (ed. Najaf) 251; I. 'Abbās's preface on: Dabbī, *Amthāl al-'Arab* 18-20 where he discusses the date of his death (thus Bosworth's fn. 458 (Tabarī, Engl. transl. vol. 30) is to be revised).

91 Dāwūdī, *'Umda* 286f.; Muṣab, *Nasab Quraysh* 79; Ibn Hazm, *Jamhara* 67.

most probably a descendant from Hamza b. Hasan b. 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās b. Abī Tālib, who studied by Ja'far al-Ṣādiq⁹².

3.6. Abū 'Alī al-Bustānī (?) › Ibn Sammā'a sāhib Muḥammad b. al-Hasan al-Shaybānī⁹³. He tells the story of al-Rashīd's infringement of the indemnity he had granted Yahyā b. 'Abdallāh (through al-Faḍl b. Yahyā). al-Shaybānī refused to give a legal judgment (*fatwā*) which could have enabled Hārūn al-Rashīd to infringe the indemnity, thus causing al-Rashīd to harbor ill will against him. Such a legal opinion was given then by Abū l-Bakhtārī⁹⁴. The story is verified also in other sources with some variations⁹⁵. Only Abū l-'Abbās al-Hasanī gives at the end of the report an account transmitted by Muḥammad b. Sammā'a showing that al-Rashīd used to favour al-Shaybānī thereafter⁹⁶. The Zaydite sources claim that al-Shaybānī had good relations to their Imams and that he relied in his *K al-Siyar al-kabīr* mainly on *K al-Siyar* of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya without mentioning him⁹⁷.

3.7. Another version of Hārūn al-Rashīd's infringement is given on the authority of Hārūn al-Washshā' (1.5. above) › 'Abdal'azīz b. Yahyā al-Kinānī, an eyewitness who took part in the occasion. al-Kinānī is mentioned elsewhere in this manuscript as one of the *du'āt* of Yahyā⁹⁸. Most likely, this 'Abdal'azīz is to be identified with 'Abdal'azīz b. Yahyā al-

92 Ardabīlī, *Jāmi'* 1/283.

93 D. 233/847 or 236/850, al-Khatīb, *Ta'rīkh* 5/3431-343; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb* 15-19.

94 Wahb b. Wahb (d. 200/815), *GAS* 1/267; Waki', *Akhbār al-qudāt* 1/248f.; Najāshī, *Rijāl* 303; Kashshī, *Rijāl* 261f.; Muṣ'ab, *Nasab Quraysh* 222; Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara* 119; Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Ma'ālim* 114; C. van Arendonk, *Opkomst* 62f.

95 Tabarī, *Ta'rīkh* 3/619f.; (ed. Ibrāhīm) 8/247, on the authority of: Abū l-Khattāb (Bosworth (Tabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, Engl. transl. 30/125, fn. 472) identifies him with Hamzā b. 'Alī, a *rāwī* frequently cited by Tabarī) › Ja'far b. Yahyā b. Khālid (al-Barmakī); Abū l-Faraj, *Maqātil* 479f., Abū l-Faraj relies on a collective *isnād* which he gave on page 465; Abū l-'Abbās al-Hasanī, *K al-Masābīh*, in: (W. Madelung, *Akhbār* 61ff.); Nātiq bil-Haqqaq, *al-Ifāda*, in: (W. Madelung, *Akhbār* 81f.); Muḥalli, *al-Hadā'iq al-wardiyā* (ms. München, Glaser 86) fol. and W. Madelung, *Akhbār* 204f., Muḥalli quotes here Abū l-Faraj's version; cf., too, al-Kardarī, *Manāqib* 2/436-38; M. Kawtharī, *Bulūgh al-murām* 49-55; M. Khadduri, *The Law of Nations* 33ff.

96 *K al-Masābīh*, in: W. Madelung, *Akhbār* 63.

97 Hereto, cf. M. Jarrar, "Sīra, Mashāhid and Maghāzī", fn. 184, in: *Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, vol. II (ed. L. Conrad).

98 Fol. 167b, cf., too, W. Madelung, *Akhbār* 56, 175; C. van Arendonk, *Opkomst* 291.

Kinānī al-Makkī (d. 240/854)⁹⁹, to whom *K. al-Hayda* is attributed¹⁰⁰. It seems that the words *qāla al-Makkī*, which precede the ensuing report (fol. 171b) refer to the same 'Abdal'azīz as well.

3.8. The remaining four *isnāds* in this part are difficult to explore. Most of the *isnād* members are local authorities of al-Rayy. These reports deal with the different stories of Yahyā's death and burial, and comprise clear legendary features (fol. 183a, 18-184a).

The study of the material and some of the main *isnāds* contained in this manuscript allow us to make certain observations on the milieu and the time in which the author, Ahmad b. Sahl al-Rāzī, lived. His surname (*kunya*) indicates that he was a native of Rayy, and is confirmed as well by some of the *isnāds*, whose material is derived directly from local authorities in Rayy. It can be established, too, that a remarkable number of his main transmitters were Kūfans¹⁰¹, a fact that points to the close links that existed between the Zaydite communities in both Kūfa and Rayy/Daylam.

When did the author live?¹⁰² If we consider that the youngest authority from which he relates is al-Murādī (d. 290/902) and the oldest 'Umar b. Shabba (d. 263/876)¹⁰³, he should have been born at least twenty years before 263/876¹⁰⁴, i.e. around 243/857, and should have died at least twenty years after his youngest authority, al-Murādī, i.e. around 315/928, especially if we take into account that he derived his materials directly from authorities which Abū l-Faraj al-Isfahānī (d. 356/967) quoted through an extra chain in the *isnād*. It seems strange that a transmitter

99 GAS 1/617; cf. fn. 42 above.

100 Cf. J. Salibā's introduction to *K. al-Hayda*; J. van Ess, in: Owens 18-19/1967/101.

101 Except, 'Isā b. Mihrān who is from Baghdad but could have visited Kūfa, and 'Umar b. Shabba who is from Basra.

102 Cf. the attempt of G. Schoeler, *Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland*, Teil II, 382.

103 If we understand that the term *haddathānī*, which he uses when he is quoting Ibn Shabba, means that he is taking from him directly and not citing from a book by Ibn Shabba. Another one of his old authorities should be: Muhammad b. al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī (cf. 1.7. and 3.4. above), the son of the Zaydī Imam (d. 246/860).

104 If we consider that the usual age of visiting lectures (*halaqāt al-'ilm* or *majālis al-tadrīs*) were twenty years, though we hear of some scholars who started visiting these lectures earlier. Some reports show that some scholars used to take an *ijāza* for their sons as early as the son was five years of age. Cf. al-Rāmhurmuzī, *al-Muḥaddith al-fāsil* 190-192; 'Iyād, *al-Ilmā'* 52ff.

could have taken directly from a late authority (i.e. al-Murādī) who died thirty years after the first authority this same transmitter relies upon (i.e. Ibn Shabba). Nevertheless we can conclude – considering the reservations we have just mentioned – that the author Ahmad b. Sahl should have died during the first quarter of the fourth/ tenth century.

Considering the common sources used by both Ahmad b. Sahl al-Rāzī and, one generation after him, Abū l-Faraj al-Isfahānī through different transmitters, it seems safe to suggest that both of them were using a written source which was already in circulation during the lifetime of al-Rāzī (i.e. the first quarter of the fourth/tenth century).

This manuscript which represents one of the earliest historiographic works of the Zaydites contains significant new information concerning the battle of Fakhkh, its aftermath and the career of both Idrīs and Yahyā b. ‘Abdallāh. It not only sheds new light on the available historical works, their sources (some of which are lost) and the relation between them (through the study of the *isnāds*), but also helps us to clarify the relation of many celebrated scholars of the third/ninth century to the early Zaydite Imams.

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