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FLEISCHHAMMER, M. — Die Quellen des *Kitāb al-Aḡānī*. (Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, Band LV, 2). Verlag Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 2004. (22 cm, 281). ISBN 3-447-05079-9, ISSN: 0567-4980. € 58.

In the preface the author explains that the present book is an elaborated version of his *Habilitationsschrift* entitled *Quellenuntersuchungen zum Kitāb al-Aḡānī*, which he presented to the Philosophical Faculty of the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg in 1965. He did not publish it at the Saxonian Academy in the 1960s because the remaining volumes of the Cairene Dār al-kutub edition were unobtainable. Publication in the original form was not planned until later, though there was much interest in the typewritten version. The debate about oral and written transmission in the Middle Ages had, of course, moved on since then, but the author did not make any major changes in his present work.

After the Introduction the author turns his attention in Chapter One to structure and order in the *Kitāb al-aghānī*, the Book of Songs of Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī. He also deals with the problem of sources, methods and identification. As the other chapters in the book are a schematic overview of various aspects of the *Aghānī*, the discussion of the results and conclusions is presented in this first chapter. Here, he provides a concise survey of the most important results (especially on a statistical level). The results are based on the schemes of Chapters Two to Five, which give an exact idea of the number of informants of Abū l-Faraj, i.e. 150 persons, including two women. This figure is then broken down into 51 informants (34%) who were responsible for 96.1% of the *isnāds* (chains of trustworthy transmitters); 21 informants (14%), each with over 100 quotations, featuring at the top in 83.3 % of the *isnāds*, etc. The writings of the historian al-Ṭabarī (d. 922) are widely quoted in the *Aghānī*, notably his *History of Prophets and Kings* with its passages on the *maghāzī* (raids and battles) in the time of the prophet.

Among the long list of other sources (pp. 23-26) are Ibn al-Marzubān's (d. 921) *Ṭabaqāt al-shu'arā'* (Generations of

⁶⁾ In other words, shorter fieldwork visits on tourist visa, because a formal research permit is unlikely for bureaucratic and/or political reasons.

Poets), Yaḥyā ibn al-Munajjim's (d. 912) *Kitāb al-bāhir fī akhbār mukhaḍramī l-dawlatayn* (The Poets who participated in both periods) and his father 'Alī ibn Yaḥyā's *Kitāb al-shu'arā' al-qudāmā wa-l-islāmiyyīn* (Book of Old and Islamic Poets), and al-Ṣūlī's (d. 947) *Akhbār Abī Tammām* (Anecdotes on the Life of Abu Tammam).

In the Appendix to Chapter One the author explains his system of cross references and other practices related to his presentation of the works and the persons (pp. 26-28).

Chapter Two (pp. 29-70) deals with the informants of Abū l-Faraj: 150 are mentioned with references to where they occur in the *Kitāb al-aghānī* and one item is devoted to anonymous persons. Chapter Three deals with 76 important and frequently quoted authorities (pp. 71-109). Chapter Four deals with written sources: a total of 99 works are addressed. Item 100 is devoted to anonymous written sources, for instance: 'ba'd al-kutub', "one of the books" (pp. 110-134). Chapter Five concentrates on the articles of the *Kitāb al-aghānī*, following the sequence of the book itself, and includes a survey and enumeration of articles: 482 articles in 24 books (pp. 135-152); analyses of chosen articles (pp. 152-226); and identification tables (pp. 227-232). In the Appendix the author presents corrections in the text of the present *Aghānī* editions (pp. 233-249). Finally, the book provides a list of abbreviations, a bibliography, and a register of persons and works.

This book could be a useful tool to further develop the interest aroused by the appearance of Hilary Kilpatrick's *Making the Great Book of Songs* (2003). In a certain sense a cross-fertilization has occurred between the publication of the two books: the fact that scholars such as Hilary Kilpatrick have used Fleischhammer's typewritten dissertation has, without any doubt, contributed to the idea of republishing it. Hopefully, it will not take too long for other unpublished studies on the *Aghānī* to see the light of day!