

850), in the article on Ibn Surayġ (d. c. 96/714), in his monumental compilation, the *Kitāb al-Aġānī* (hereafter, the *Aġānī*). The *Aġānī* is one of the most important sources for Arabic literature, classical Arabic music, and early Islamic history.² Besides abundant information on the poets, musicians, and men of letters before the tenth century, the detailed citation of the chains of transmissions by al-Iṣfahānī also facilitates source studies (*Quellenforschungen*), which provide important insights into the transmission and dissemination of knowledge within mediaeval Islamic society (Zolondek 1961; Fleischhammer 2004; Sezgin 1984; al-Ṣāliḥī 2013). Recent studies, by Sallūm and Kilpatrick, on the *Aġānī* address its structure, al-Iṣfahānī's conception of his own work, and his treatment of source material (Kilpatrick 2003, 1997; Sallūm 1985). Following on from these works, which reveal al-Iṣfahānī's authorial ingenuity, this article engages with the compiler's editorial concern and its impact upon his re-presentation of the past, in hope of furthering our understanding of this great *Book of Songs*, and, in general, of classical Arabic textual culture and editorial convention.

In what follows, this article first introduces the compiler, al-Iṣfahānī, and the work, the *Aġānī*, with reference to al-Iṣfahānī's favouritism towards the musician, Iṣḥāq. Then, it analyses the impact of the compiler's fandom in the article on Ibn Surayġ.

Abū al-Faraġ al-Iṣfahānī and His *Magnum Opus*, the *Aġānī*

Abū al-Faraġ 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. al-Hayṭam al-Umawī al-Iṣfahānī was a litterateur, mastering a number of Arabic sciences, including history, genealogy, music, and poetry. His reputation for erudition is best illustrated by Abū 'Alī al-Muḥassin al-Tanūḥī's (329–384/941–994) comment:

Amongst the Ṣī'ī narrators whom I have known, none has learnt poems, melodies, reports, traditions (*al-āṭār*), *al-aḥādīṭ al-musnada* [narrations with chains of transmission, including the Prophetic *ḥadīṭ*], and genealogy by heart like Abū al-Faraġ al-Iṣfahānī. Very proficient in these matters, he is also knowledgeable in the military campaigns and the biography of the Prophet (*al-maġāzī* and *al-sīra*), lexicography, grammar, legendary tales (*al-ḥurāfāt*), and the sciences desirable in the court (*ālat al-munādama*), like falconry (*al-ġawāriḥ*), veterinary science (*al-bayṭara*), something about medicine (*nutafan min al-ṭibb*), astrology, drinks (*al-aṣriba*), and other things (Al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baġdādī 2001, vl.13, 339; Ibn Ḥallikān 1972, vl.3, 307; al-Ḍahabī 2004, 2774; al-Qifṭī 1986, vl.2, 251).

Al-Iṣfahānī also composes poems, some of which are preserved in al-Ta'ālibī's anthology (Al-Ta'ālibī 1983, vl.3, 127). His broad interests are reflected in the wide range of different literary

² As the *Aġānī* is structured around the songs and contains abundant information about songs, melodies, singers and musicians, it is one of the most crucial sources for the classical Arabic music; see: (Sawa 2009, 1985, 2015, Farmer 1961, 1940, 1929). A summary of the musicological studies related to the *Aġānī*, see: (Bū Ḥasan 2003).