

topics covered by his works. Besides the *Aġānī*, among thirty works attributed him, the ones which still exist today, either in fragment or in complete, are: *the Monasteries* (*al-Diyārāt*), *the Extract of the Songs* (*Muġarrad al-aġānī*), *the Singing Girls* (*al-Qiyān*), *the Ṭālibid Martyrs* (*Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn*), *the Poetess Maids* (*al-Imā' al-šawā'ir*), and *the Etiquette of the Strangers* (*Adab al-ġurabā'*).³

The *Aġānī* is a huge *aḥbār* compilation extending to twenty-four volumes.⁴ It consists of articles on people (especially poets and musicians) and events (from pre-Islamic tribal sagas, the Prophet's *maġāzī*, and others) related to songs. The *Aġānī* is divided into three parts: first, the Hundred Songs — a collection of songs compiled by Iṣḥāq; second, the musicians in the caliphal families; third, a selection of songs, possibly of al-Iṣfahānī's own choice (Kilpatrick 2003, 258–267). Whereas the second part mainly follows the musicians in chronological order, the first and the third parts are arranged around songs. The text of a song usually introduces one or more articles about the source of its lyrics, its composer, or any other relevant issue. Each article usually also comprises a summary by al-Iṣfahānī of the subject's name, genealogy, and other important themes in his or her life; reports juxtaposed with poems and songs; and, more often than not, an account of the biographe's demise.

Al-Iṣfahānī's Fandom

As a book of songs, the *Aġānī* unsurprisingly takes a certain stance towards different approaches to the performance and interpretation of music, and, here, al-Iṣfahānī goes for Iṣḥāq and his *madḥab*. Al-Iṣfahānī's inclination towards Iṣḥāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī is noted by Ḥalafallāh and Kilpatrick (Ḥalafallāh 1962, 72–73; Kilpatrick 2003, 16–17). In the preface to the *Aġānī*, al-Iṣfahānī explains the motivation behind his compilation of a book of songs: a *ra'īs* heard that Iṣḥāq's book of songs, which was in circulation, was not really his own work, but a forgery attributed to him (al-Iṣfahānī 2000, vl.1, 16).⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī agrees with this *ra'īs* and corroborates his view with two *ḥabars*, one of which contains the testimony of Iṣḥāq's son, Ḥammād (al-Iṣfahānī 2000, vl.1, 16). Upon the request of this *ra'īs*, al-Iṣfahānī sets out to reconstruct the original song list selected by Iṣḥāq (al-Iṣfahānī 2000, vl.1, 16). In the preface, al-Iṣfahānī states that, for the description of musical settings, he uses Iṣḥāq's terminology for melodic modes, as opposed to that of Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī (162–224/779–839) (al-Iṣfahānī 2000, vl.1, 15–16). That is, the very *raison d'être* of al-Iṣfahānī's compilation of the *Aġānī* is partly to do with Iṣḥāq, and Iṣḥāq's nomenclature for musical modes lays the foundation for it (Kilpatrick 2003, 16–17).

³ For a list of al-Iṣfahānī's works; see: (Kilpatrick 2003, 16–17). The authorship of *Adab al-ġurabā'* remains debatable; see: (Su 2016, 61).

⁴ The number, twenty four volumes, is based on the edition published by Mu'assasat al-A'lamī li-l-Maṭbū'āt, which I use in this study.

⁵ This *ra'īs*, in all likelihood, is identifiable with al-Iṣfahānī's patron, Abū Muḥammad al-Muhallabī (291–352/903–963); see: (Ḥalafallāh 1962, 98–120)