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ARE THERE ONE OR TWO AUTHORS OF THE WORK AR-RWAD AL-MI'TÂR BY AL-HIMYARÎ?

The book *Ar-Rawd al-Mi'târ fî Ḥabar al-Aktâr*, (Ar-Rawd al-Mi'târ) for centuries was known and referred to in Arabic works on geography and in historical descriptions of places and countries. However, it has never been determined as yet whether this renowned book was authored by one or two men by the name al-Himyari. For this reason, I would like to attempt in this paper to throw as much light as historical evidence will allow to explain this salient point of our discussion. In so doing, I hope to review most of the literature which has been written on the subject, and which is of direct significance to our survey.

One of the best known studies of this work was made in 1931 by the French orientalist E. Lèvi-Provençal, in a paper read before the International Congress of Orientalists held that same year in Lyon¹. In that paper he made known his first attempts at presenting the historico-geographical lexicon, *Ar-Rawd al-Mi'târ*, by Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Himyari. Again in 1938 he published his findings, as well as a French translation of the part relating to the Iberian peninsula in that work². In the Introduction he presented a fine study of the life of al-Himyari as an author, and mentioned several manuscripts upon which he based his research.

¹ E. Lèvi-Provençal, *Actes du XVIII International Congrès des Orientalistes*, Leyde 1932, p. 138—40.

² E. Lèvi-Provençal, *La péninsule Ibérique au Moyen Âge d'après le Kitāb ar-Rawd al-Mi'târ fî Ḥabar al-Aktâr d'Ibn 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Himyari*, Leyde 1938.

Time passed and nothing was mentioned about *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār*, and no other part of it was ever published. Nevertheless the orientalist G. Wiet indicated that he was planning to publish selections from *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār*, especially passages relating to Egypt³. But still no such study or edition has appeared. In 1956 Professor Umberto Rizzitano published selected passages referring to the Italian islands and territories mentioned in *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār*⁴. Two years earlier Ch. Pellat also published a short article on Baṣra (Iraq) according to the same work⁵. Then in 1959, the orientalist Professor T. Lewicki published a study concerning the Brāga et Miška⁶. His student A. Małecka published, in 1962, that part of *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār* relating to East Africa⁷. Later S. Hamarneh published the part dealing with Damascus (1964) and Jerusalem (1970)⁸.

In each of the above mentioned studies, apart from a few biographical details, no direct attention is turned towards the question of the authorship of *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār* except in the publications of U. Rizzitano, and Lèvi-Provençal.

Lèvi-Provençal maintains that there were two works bearing the title *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār*, written by two different authors living in completely different periods, yet both are claimed to be the descendents of Banū Himyar. But U. Rizzitano confirms that the book was composed by one and same author, namely Abū

³ G. Wiet, *Un résumé d'Iḍrīsī*, „Bull. Soc. Royale de Géogr., d'Égypte“, XX, 1939, p. 161.

⁴ Umberto Rizzitano, *Kitāb al-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār li Ibn 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Himyarī Khāṣṣa bi-l-Djuzur wa-l-biḳā' al-Italiyya, fi Mad-jallat Kulliyat al-Adāb*, XVIII, Cairo, May 1956.

⁵ Ch. Pellat, *Documents et notices. Extraits d'une notice inédite sur Baṣra*, „Arabica“, 1954, t. I, fasc. 2, pp. 213—215.

⁶ T. Lewicki, *Brāga et Miška d'après une source arabe inédite*, „Folia Orientalia“, tome I, fasc. 2 (1959), Cracovie 1960, p. 322.

⁷ M. Małecka, *La côte Orientale de l'Afrique au Moyen Age d'après le Kitāb ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār de al-Himyarī (XV^e S.)*, „Folia Orientalia“, tome IV, Cracovie 1964.

⁸ S. Hamarneh, *The description of Damascus in the ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār by al-Himyarī*, „Folia Orientalia“ tome IX, Cracovie 1968, pp. 275—290. — *An unpublished description of Jerusalem in the Middle Ages*, „Folia Orientalia“, tome XI, Cracovie 1970.

'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. Abd al-Mun'im al-Himyarī, who died in 723 or 727 A. H.⁹.

Lèvi-Provençal supports his explanation with the following:

1. That Hāggī Halifa in his *Kaṣf az-Zunūn* mentioned that there were two works entitled *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār* and that one of the authors of *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār* was Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Himyarī who is mentioned in *As-Siyar w'l Aḥbār*, and who also died in 900 A. H.

The other work of *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār* is by al-ṣayḥ al'Umdah (trustworthy teacher) Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Himyarī (without date)¹⁰.

2. That al-Kakašandī in his *Subḥ 'l A'šā*, completed in 814 A. H. (1412 A. D.), refers repeatedly to *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār*¹¹.

3. There is a work entitled *Ġany al-Azhār (or Ġanā) min ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār*, attributed to al-Maḳrīzī who died in 848 A. H. (1442 A. D.), which Lèvi-Provençal considers a summary of *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār*¹².

4. In colophone of the manuscript found in *De Tombauctou in Senegal*, referred to as T manuscript and which is now owned by Prof. Alfred Martineau (Paris) we read: „This is the end of part II of *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār* by the ṣayḥ (teacher) and trustworthy theologian Abu al-Mun'im Ibn Abd al-Nūr al-Himyarī, may God have mercy on him, who here ends the whole book on Friday morning, Ṣafar 17, 866 A. H. at the port of Giddah, the prosperous, and I (completed) copying it in 'Āšūrā' of 1049 A. H. by the copyist Ibrāhīm b. Yaḥyā b. Ibrāhīm al-Aḳawī (al-Anṣarī)¹³. So this is Lèvi-Provençal's theory, that there are two authors of two books bearing the same title.

To this Prof. U. Rizzitano replies basing, his arguments on the following proofs:

1. That the book entitled *Ġany al-Azhār* is but a summary of the Idrīsī's *Nuzhat al-Muštāk*, as stated also by K. Vollers,

⁹ Z. Rizzitano, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

¹⁰ Hāggī Halifa, *Kaṣf az-Zunūn fi asāmi 'l-Kutūb wa 'l-funūn* ed. F. Flügel, p. 580.

¹¹ C. Brockelmann, GAL II, p. 41.

¹² E. Lèvi-Provençal, *op. cit.*, p. XIV.

¹³ E. Lèvi-Provençal, *Ibid.* X—XII.

R. Blochet and G. Wiet¹⁴. This belief was also favoured by W. Kubiak who even goes so far as to consider *Ġany al-Azhār* a pseudo-Maḳrīzī work¹⁵.

2. The date mentioned in the colophone of Manuscript T (that is 866 A. H.) which was considered by Lèvi-Provençal as the year in which al-Himyārī completed writing his *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār*, is actually the year in which the first copyist completed al-Himyārī's work. Then this copy was used as the basis for the present manuscript, written by Ibrāhīm, the last copyist. This U. Rizzitano asserts for two reasons:

a. That the word the „ended“ (*bitamāmih*), which he looked up in several Arabic dictionaries, is not used by the copyists, who, as a rule use other expressions at the end of their labour.

b. It is not customary for an author to use such phrases of praise and eulogy as are found at the end of this manuscript; these could be an addition by the copyist and as such the date 866 A. H. is therefore for the copy and not the original work.

3. As for the date 900 A. H. as the year of al-Himyārī's death, U. Rizzitano doubts it on the ground that some Arabic letters are often erroneously written by copyists, with which according to U. Rizzitano, any one familiar with Arabic manuscripts agrees. For this reason we could assume that the copyist wrote 900 instead of 700. Therefore many authors in medieval Islam were careful not to mix these two numbers (900 and 700) by starting in the seven hundreds and in the nine hundreds (*sab'umāyah* and *tis'umāyah*) with *s* or the *t* to be sure of the correct spelling. And so U. Rizzitano insists that the date for the death of al-Himyārī should read in *Kaṣf az-Zunūn* 700 rather than 900 A. H.¹⁶ The same was suggested by Gaudefroy-Demombynes also¹⁷. Then

¹⁴ K. Vollers, *Note sur un Manuscrit arabe attribué à Maḳrīzī*, „Bull. Soc. Khed. de Géogr. du Caire“, IIIème Série, Num. 2, 1889, pp. 131—139. — R. Blochet, *Catalogue des mss. arabes des nouvelles acquisitions* (1882—1944), Paris 1925, N. 5919. — G. Wiet, *Un résumé d'Edrisī*, „Bull. Soc. Royale de Géogr. d'Égypte“, XX, 1939.

¹⁵ W. Kubiak, *Some West and Middle European Geographical Names to the Abridgment of Idrīsī's „Nuzhat al-Muštāḥ“*, „Folia Orientalia“, tome I, fasc. 2, Cracovie 1959.

¹⁶ U. Rizzitano, *op. cit.*, pp. 133—134.

¹⁷ E. Lèvi-Provençal, *op. cit.*, p. XV.

U. Rizzitano continues to justify the error in *Kaṣf az-Zunūn* by suggesting that Ḥāḡḡī Ḥalīfa reported two books, because he apparently had two records of the same book each on a separate paper, and therefore when the time came for him to put them alphabetically in his compilation he listed them separately for fear of missing one.

4. Subsequently he draws on the discussion in the entry about (Lucera) Lūḡārah, a town in the region of Pulia in southern Italy, which reads: „Lūḡārah... is an Italian city in the great plains to which the unjust King of Sicily carried all those Muslims who remained in Sicily, where they resided for several generations. Later they were removed from there by the King of Sicily in our time“. From this text it can be understood that the *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār* was written originally while King Charles (Carlos II) of Sicily was still alive, a king who dealt rather harshly with the Muslims of Lujarah in 70 A. H. (1300 A. D.) in order to annihilate them. The text refers to the King of Sicily called Frederick II who brought Muslims in the first quarter of the thirteenth century to his country¹⁸.

U. Rizzitano concludes by saying that „having closed the discussion“ regarding the second troublesome author, who never existed in my judgement, we can therefore with ease proceed to discuss the first, and no doubt the only author as far as we are concerned, namely Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd Al-Mun'im Al-Himyārī who died in 723 A. H. or possibly 727 A. H. a fact that coincides with the statement mentioned by the author himself regarding his time in the discussion on Lujarah¹⁹.

I have discussed the points of view of both Lèvi-Provençal and U. Rizzitano on this matter, which as the reader can see contradict each other. Prof. T. Lewicki, for example, agrees to the explanation given by Lèvi-Provençal, suggesting the possibility of there being two Himyaris and that the last of them died in 900 A. H. (1494/5 A. D.) as mentioned by Ḥāḡḡī Ḥalīfa and C. Brockelmann²⁰. But W. Kubiak in discussing the book *Ar-*

¹⁸ U. Rizzitano, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

¹⁹ U. Rizzitano, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

²⁰ T. Lewicki, *op. cit.*, pp. 322—326.

Rawḍ al-Mi'tār states that it is „a geographical encyclopaedia composed in the year 800 A. H. (1397 A. D.) by a certain Ibn 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Himyarī“²¹. Unfortunately, however, the date given here is not accurate.

A. Gonzaler-Palencia in his book reports that „al-Maḥḥarī mentions in his *Nafḥ at-Tīb*, that there is a lexicon on geography entitled *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār fī Ḥabar al-Aḫṭār* by 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Himyarī from which he copied several passages which point to its high calibre... It was supposed that al-Himyarī lived in the time of al-Mu'tamid b. 'Abbād, but it is now clear that he lived in the ninth century A. H. and died in 866 A. H. (1461 A.D.)²². It seems very possible that Palencia in giving the above date relied on what has been mentioned by Lèvi-Provençal and what was stated in the colophone of manuscript T as mentioned earlier. As can now be seen, there is a diversity of opinion on the authorship of *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār*, and each party supports its claim with rather strong arguments. And what makes this matter even more difficult is the fact that most of the large encyclopedic works of the period do not mention al-Himyarī. Even al-Ḳaḳaṣandī refers to him without mentioning his full name but simply says: „the author of *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār*“²³. Later the Syrian scholar Shakib Arsalan in his *Al-Ḥulāl al-Sunsusiyyah*, and in the index, gives his name as Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Himyarī and as Ibn 'Abd al-Mun'im, and often speaks of him simply as does al-Himyarī in *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār*, without mentioning dates or authorship claims²⁴.

It seems therefore desirable to make the book itself the final judge in determining its date and authorship. This I propose to do in order to arrive at a definite opinion as to who wrote this important work and when.

In examining carefully the text of the book I came to the

²¹ W. Kubiak, *op. cit.*, pp. 198—209.

²² Angel Gonzalez-Palencia, *Historia de la Literatura Arabigo-Espanola*, Madrid 1945.

²³ Aḥmad al-Ḳaḳaṣandī, *Ṣubḥ al-'Aṣā fī Ṣinā'at al-Inṣā'*, Cairo 1913—1919, tome IV, p. 111.

²⁴ Sh. Arslan, *al-Ḥulāl al-Sundusiyyah fī al-Aḥbār wa-l-'Atār al-Andalusiyyah*, Cairo, al Ḥalabi Press, 1939 vol. III, pp. 14, 16, 44.

conclusion, which I hope to prove shortly, that the trustworthy teacher al-Himyarī (the first) lived and wrote his book in the second half of the seventh century A. H., as is evident from the passages and entries in the book itself. For example in speaking of the cities and ports of al-Šām (Syria and Palestine) he notes the following:

1. Concerning the city of 'Askalān, al-Himyarī writes, „it is a city in al-Šām... to-day it is a prosperous city under the Franks (the Crusaders)... Now if the author mentions that in his time 'Askalān was a prosperous city ruled by the Crusaders, then he was writing his book in the second half of the seventh century A. H. (13th century A. D.).

2. In mentioning the city of Šūr (Tyre) al-Himyarī says, „Šūr (Tyre) is a city in the country of al-Šām“, and after he has described the city in detail, he continues „and the Franks (the Crusaders) took the city back out of the hands of the Muslims in the year 518 A. H. and „this took place in the days of the Fatimid Caliph of Egypt al-'Āmir bi Aḥkām Allāh“. Then al-Himyarī concludes his description „In our day it is in the hands of the Franks“²⁵.

3. In describing the city of 'Akkā (Acre) the author says: „It is the capital of the Latin Kingdom in al-Šām... where Muslim and Christian merchants from all parts of the world meet“, which means that he wrote his book while Acre was the capital of the Latin Kingdom of the Crusaders, in the 13th century A. D. He continues „It was taken from Muslim control in the first decade of the sixth century A. H. Thus they (the Franks) transformed the mosques into churches. „He copied his detailed description of the city from Ibn Gubāyr's *Riḥlah*“²⁶, with the exception of the last sentence, in which he mentions that, „At the end, however, the Muslims took over, and destroyed it (the sanctuary) in Acre (and raised it to the ground under the orders of one of the late sultans of Egypt)“. This possibly was al-Sultān al-Ašraf in whose time Acre was recaptured by force in 1291 A. D. and this sentence could be a later addition, as we shall explain shortly.

²⁵ The Crusaders were expelled from Tyre in 1291 or 1292 A. D.

²⁶ Ibn Ḡubayr, *Travels of Ibn Ḡubayr*, ed. Wright, Leiden 1852, pp. 308, 313.

4. It is of interest to mention that al-Kaḡaṣandī quotes al-Himyarī's *Ar-Rawḡ al-Mi'tār* twice, when he mentions the city of Ṣayḡā' (Saidon)²⁷.

This evidence suggests without doubt that the Himyarī wrote his book while the Crusaders were still in the Holy Land, and when some of the ports of Palestine and Syria were still in their hands, or at least at the time, when they were losing some of them. (The same with the Spaniards in al-Andalus during the 13th century struggle to recapture control of the Iberian peninsula with the exception of Granada and its territory).

It is improbable that al-Himyarī copied this information blindly from his predecessors, such as al-Idrīsī and Ibn Ġubayr without observing and recording the historical events which were taking place around him, especially those related to the ports and cities in Palestine and Syria held by the Crusaders, and which were recaptured one after the other by the Muslims. Therefore, it seems safe to presume that al-Himyarī quite often quoted his predecessors yet at the same time he was careful to add information he thought pertinent, which he did with good taste and historical precision. Moreover, he compiled information about one and the same place from more than a single source, which makes his descriptions more comprehensive. For example in discussing Jerusalem (Bayt al-Maḡdis or Iylīyā) we find that al-Himyarī (the first) quite often borrows from al-Idrīsī, but where as the al-Idrīsī mentions that „It (Jerusalem) was in their hands (the Crusaders) to the time of writing this book“²⁸, we find al-Himyarī speaks of Jerusalem as being in the hands of the Muslims in his time. And it is well known that the city was ruled by the Crusaders 1099 to 1187 A. D., when Ṣalāḡ ad-Dīn (Saladin) recovered it from them. Then from 1224 to 1244 A. D., it was taken once more by the Crusaders, which makes the statements of both authors correct each in his own time. Then Ibn Baṭṭūṡah (1304—1377 D. D.), who came after the time of al-Idrīsī (1100—1166) A. D., Ibn Ġubāyṡ (1145—1217 A. D.), and al-Himyarī (the first), says of the city of Aṣḡalan that it was in ruins in his time, as too was Ṣūr (Tyre). But of 'Akkā

²⁷ Aḡmad al-Kaḡaṣandī, *op. cit.*, tom. IV, p. 111.

²⁸ T. Lewicki, *Polska i kraje sąsiednie w świetle „Księgi Rogera“*, część I, Kraków 1945, pp. 24—25.

(Acre) he says that it was (in the past) a capital city for the Franks and a sea port, somewhat resembling Constantinople²⁹.

This leads me to another point of real significance to our discussion. That is the relationship with a second Himyarī, who had much to do with the additional statement at the end of several entries of a later date. There is no doubt that what U. Rizzitano proposed makes sense, and that it is very logical to insist that the author of *Ar-Rawḡ al-Mi'tār* is one man, but his discussion lacks details concerning chronology of events, personalities involved, and method of additions, as I have already shown above.

In addition I would like to bring forward the following proofs, which have not been mentioned by any of the above investigators:

1. In reviewing the text itself, under the entry for the city of Āylah, we find that al-Himyarī states „Āylah is on the route to Makkah (Mecca) ... It is the frontier city of al-Ḥiḡāz, ... a town of great importance ... hither come the pilgrims from Egypt and North Africa al-Maḡrib ... al-'Aḡabah of Āylah was renovated by Fā'ik the Mawla (minister) of prince Ḥumārawayḡ b. Aḡamd b. Ṭulūn, who repaired the road to it ... Āylah was also rebuilt during the latter part of the reign of King al-Aṣṡraf Kānsaw al-Ġawri, the last of the Cirkassian Mamluks dynasty, who repaired the road trodden by the pilgrims to Mecca before 920 A. H.³⁰“ It must be mentioned here that al-Aṣṡraf Kānsaw helped to reconstruct many buildings and regain and improve many ports and towns through his realm to help raise the social and living conditions of the people. Since he considered Āylah an important port and a „half-way stop“ for pilgrims going to Mecca, he therefore took the city over to be part of his kingdom³¹. Earlier al-Idrīsī (1100—1166 A. D.) spoke rather lightly of Āylah stating that:

²⁹ Ibn Baṭṭūṡa, *Tuhfat an-Nuṣṣār fī Ġarā'ib al-Amsār wa 'Aḡā'ib al-Aṣṡfār*, ed. G. Defremery and B. R. Sanguinetti, Paris 1854—1874, tome I, pp. 120, 130.

³⁰ Kānsaw al-Ġawri II reigned from 1500 to 1516 A. D., but the last of the Cirkassian Mamluks dynasty actually was al-Aṣṡraf Tumay Bay II (1516—1517) A. D.

³¹ There is an inscription from the year 1505 A. D. on the gate of a fortress near 'Aḡabah on which is inscribed the name Kānsaw al-Ġawri. (G. L. Harding, *The Antiquities of Jordan*. London 1959, p. 142).

„Äylah is a small town and the Arabs (Beduins) come to it to business“³².

2. A second proof is to be found in the part of the text which discusses the city of ar-Ramlah. It was mentioned twice. Once under the letter A (alef) and secondly under the letter R(ra) as it should be. In the first entry the author speaks of ar-Ramlah as „a progressive town in al-Šām with bazars and commercial establishments and with import and export transactions. From Ramlah to Yāfā (Joppa) on the sea-shore (it takes) one half of a day's journey“. It is evident that this description is taken from al-Idrīsī's *Nuzhat*³³. But in the second entry the description is identical with that mentioned in *Al-Uns al-Ġalīl fī Ta'rīḥ al-Kuds wa l-Ḥalīl*, by Muġīr ad-Dīn who died in or after 1463 A. D.³⁴.

I have concluded from this, and it seems obvious, that the first entry was written by the original author, (the first) Himyārī, while the second was added by the (second) Himyārī.

3. Moreover, in discussing the city of az-Zalaka (Saragossa), the author first describes how Yūsūf b. Tašfīn landed in al-Andalus to assist the Muslim ruler al-Mu'tamid b. 'Abbād against the Christian Spaniards. He then describes in great detail the battle at az-Zalaka, which ended in the victory of Ibn Tāšfīn, and he ends by saying: „Thus says the author of this book (during his life time), may Almighty God have mercy on his soul, I have violated what I promised in this book: to be always brief and avoid detail, simply because I am enchanted by the sweetness and beauty of the victory attained. This is the more impressive after all the worries and disappointment that have befallen us during this period of decline, but praise be to God Who does His own will, and in Whom we find succour“.

It is quite evident to me, that the above paragraph was added to the original text of *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār* by the second, Himyārī, in keeping with the custom, which still exists in Muslim lands, of praying to God for mercy on the dead (especially as this was

³² al-Idrīsī, *Nuzhat al-Muštāḥ*. Ed. R. A. Brandel, Upsala 1894, pp. 16—17.

³³ al-Idrīsī, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

³⁴ Ibn Muġīr ed-Dīn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, *Al-Uns al-Ġalīl bi ta'rīḥ al-Kuds wa-l-Ḥalīl*. Cairo 1866, pp. 416—417.

his forebear). It is also noteworthy that the second Himyārī speaks of the period of decline and stagnation (az-Zamān al-Ḥāmil), during which the Spaniards were completely victorious in the Iberian peninsula, even attempting take the Maġrib. In Egypt, moreover, the last Mamlūk dynasty fell and the Ottoman Turks extended their rule over the Arab world (especially in the East), under which creative activities, education and social life came to a standstill. By comparison the time of the first al-Himyārī was a time of moderate progress, Muslims were victorious, in Al-Andalus, and Holy Land.

It was previously mentioned that Hāġġī Ḥalīfa speaks of two Himyārīs in his *Kašf az-Zunūn*, and I found this quite evident in examining the various editions and existing manuscripts of his work, a fact that proves my point. In addition, however, we find that Isma'īl al-Baġdādī in his *Hadiyat al-'Arifin*, reports the following:

„Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Mun'im Šams ad-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Himyārī, who died in 900 A. H., wrote *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār fī Dīkr al-Mudun wa l-Syar wa'l-Aḥbār*, which is the only work I was able to find by him“³⁵. Here we see a variation in both the name of the author and the title of his book. Whereas in *Kašf az-Zunūn* the variation is in the full title of the book, where once the word „ḥabar“ is used, and a second time „aḥbār“. Al-Baġdādī of course gave the date closer to the second Himyārī.

I believe on the basis of the previous discussion, that *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār* was authored by the trust-worthy teacher Abu 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Himyārī who completed this work or the greater part of it before the end of the seventh century A. H. that is about the end of the 13th c. A. D. But the second Himyārī, whose name is Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Himyārī, added several passages and extra information to the original text, as well as omitting some parts at random, and it is possible that he erred greatly in leaving out some very important facts that the first Himyārī wrote down originally, in the 13th century A. D.

³⁵ Isma'īl al-Baġdādī, *Hadiyat al-'Arifin*, Istanbul 1951, tom. II, p. 217.

The second Himyarī lived, as is evident from the additions he made, in the early part of the tenth century A.H. (16th c. A.D.) In view of the scant additional information he gave, it seems to me that, only he deserves, to be called a copyist rather than an author, since he lacked completely the qualifications of an original author.

Supposedly al-Himyarī II was a descendant of al-Himyarī I. He inherited the book *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār* after his forebear, and the fact of this family connection, together with some small additions made to the *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār* work, enabled him to pose as its author.

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CONTRIBUTIONS OF 'ALĪ AL-ṬABARĪ TO NINTH-CENTURY ARABIC CULTURE

Abū'l-Hasan 'Alī b. Sahl Rabbān al-Ṭabarī (b. in Marw, Khurasān, 808, d. in Baghdād ca. 861) was active as a physician-statesman during the 9th century (3rd. A. H.), one of the great epochs in man's cultural history. This paper deals with some aspects and evaluations of his life and work.

'Alī was born into a prominent religious Syriac Christian family of Persia. His father was a highly placed government official who received the title of Rabbān (meaning our teacher) because of his vast learning and knowledge of medicine and philosophy, his religious and philanthropic activities, and his good deeds. He also took a special interest in the upbringing of his son. Beside giving him a good education, Rabbān taught him religion and a philosophy of life¹. Those concepts, exhortations, and doctrines were treasured in 'Alī's heart and led him to appreciate and love learning. When 'Alī was ten years old, he was taken to Ṭabaristān by his father, who was possibly sent there on an assignment for the state². Because of their residence in Ṭabaristān, the son was

¹ 'Alī al-Ṭabarī was first mentioned by the historian Muḥ. Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839—923) who copied and admired 'Alī's *Firdaws al-Ḥikmah*. See Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (1179—1229), *Dictionary of Learned Men*, D. S. Margoliouth ed., vol. 6, London, Luzac, 1931, pp. 429 and 460. A more detailed biography was given by Muḥ. Ishāq b. al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist* (completed 987), Cairo ed., Rahmāniyah Press, 1929, p. 426; and was quoted by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qiftī (d. 1248) in his *Tārīkh al-Ḥukamā'*, J. Lippert ed., Leipzig, Dieterich 1903, p. 187.

² See the introduction to Ṭabarī's *Firdaws al-Ḥikmah*, ed. by Muḥ. Z. Šiddīqī, Berlin, Gibb Memorial 1928, pp. 1—2, 518; Zāhir al-Dīn