THE WORLD OF ḤAMZA AL-IṢFAHĀNĪ: HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS IN CONTEXT

by

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Abstract

The 'Abbasid period of Islamic history is well documented by a wide range of Arabic texts which contributed to an enormous literary corpus as well as the larger understanding of Islam's role in the new multi-ethnic societies in which it was practiced. However, with the rise of writers from non-Arab origins developing their own literary contributions which sought to reevaluate and reconcile their own place in Islamic society, a growing resistance to Arab cultural norms in the production of *Shu'ūbiyya* (populist) literature sought to either synchronize and/or inject non-Arab cultural outlooks into this wider literary corpus or claim a sense of superiority altogether. By analyzing this literature, we can gain a better understanding of the interethnic relations in societies throughout the Islamic world in its more formative years. Even more so, such a study contributes to a better understanding of the role of non-Arabs in the canonization of Arabic literary heritage as a whole. In light of recent arguments questioning the actual nature and existence of any endonymic *Shu'ūbiyya* "movement," this thesis seeks to further this reevaluation by looking at it through the figure of Ḥamza b. al-Ḥasan al-Iṣfahānī (893-971) and two of his extant works: *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'* and *al-Tanbīh 'alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf*. This thesis ultimately argues that Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī occupied and represents a middle-ground position between two identities—one being an ethnic Persian identity which connected him to the pre-Islamic history of his people and another an intellectual identity rooted in his education and formal training in the field of Arabic literature and language.

Table of Contents

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taṣḥīf*.[1] I ultimately argue that Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī occupied and represents a middle-ground

position between two identities—one being an ethnic Persian identity which connected him to

the pre-Islamic history of his people and another an intellectual identity rooted in his education

and formal training in the field of Arabic literature and language.

Ḥamza is representative of an important group of scholars who I believe need to be

researched and explored further. These of course are scholars of non-Arab origin during the ninth

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1. There are multiple ways of transliterating Ḥamza's name, with many sources cited in this thesis utilizing different systems. Likewise, his *nisba* (origin-based surname) is commonly written as al-Iṣbahānī, reflecting a classical Arabic spelling and pronunciation for the city of Isfahan. I opt for the transliteration given here, but I will be referring to him solely as Ḥamza throughout this paper for the sake of simplicity.

and tenth centuries as the corpus of Arabic literature underwent a large scale of canonization, standardization and intellectual criticism by its readers.[2] These scholars still tended to maintain cultural ties with their homelands while living and working usually in Baghdad or other important areas of learning, but their contributions to the history of Arabic literature in particular can certainly not go unnoticed. One must ask to what degree did non-Arabs, especially Persians, truly influence these processes which has led to readers of today being able to still engage with and enjoy these many works important to Arab cultural history. For while many scholars frequently focus on sectarianism and the clashing of ethnic groups in the early years of Islam's expansion, we must not forget those scholars, like Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, who were educated in Arabic, lived and studied among Arabs, and delightfully engaged with the literary and cultural history of the Arabs even while they themselves were either not Arab or had partial ties to a distinct separate cultural origin.

A lack of sources makes any kind of in-depth biography of Ḥamza nearly impossible to produce, as is unfortunately the case with many historical figures of the period. However, thanks to the sources we do have such as geographical dictionaries, biographical dictionaries, literature indices and citations of Ḥamza's works by later authors, we are able to piece together at least some information about him and the works he produced in his lifetime. One of these is the *Mu'jam al-udabā* (*Encyclopedia of Writers*) by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (1179–1229). Ḥamza's full name is given by al-Ḥamawī as Ḥamza b. al-Ḥasan al-Iṣfahānī Abū 'Abd Allāh.[3] From his name alone, we can extract at least two possibilities regarding his personal life; he could have had a son by the name of 'Abd Allāh (most likely his first son), and he could have belonged to the

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2. Nadia Al-Bagdadi, "Registers of Arabic Literary History," *New Literary History* 39, no. 3 (2008): 440-442.

3. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-udabā: Irshād al-arīb ilā ma'rifat al-adīb*, ed. Ihsan Abbas (Beirut: Dar Algharb al-Islami, 1993), 1220.

Shi'a branch of Islam judging by his father's name, Ḥasan, typically named after the son of 'Ali and considered by Shi'a the second imam.[4] His father was a *mū'addib* (schoolmaster), and it is assumed that Ḥamza was educated from a very young age.[5] It is thought that he spent the majority of his lifetime in his hometown of Isfahan in the province of Jibal (modern western Iran), with several trips to Baghdad in between to study under prominent scholars such as the historian Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī (839-923) and the grammarian Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Durayd (837-933).[6] Ḥamza seems to have been somewhat of a polarizing, albeit highly respected, figure even shortly after his lifetime. Al-Ḥamawī makes a very interesting statement regarding Ḥamza in his biographical entry:

> Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī b. al-Ḥasan Abū 'Abd Allāh was a renowned figure for his virtues and good writings. However, [?] he was also considered disreputable and deficient in mind, but this was never proven. Despite this, there was no one seen in his time who was more knowledgeable in Persian than him, nor better at utilizing it than him.[7]

Reports of Ḥamza being seen as "disreputable" are probably similar to those of Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Malik Tha'ālibī (961-1038), a native of Nishapur (in far northeastern Khurasan) of Arab heritage who claimed that Ḥamza was biased with a preference towards Persians.[8]

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4. Evelyn Paxton, "Arabic Names," *Asian Affairs* 3, no. 2 (1972): 198-200. I leave these two inferences as mere possibilities, but Louis Massignon argued Ḥamza to be a "convinced Shi'ite" albeit without much evidence to support this claim; see: Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallāj, Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, vol. 1, trans. Herbert Mason (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 475, 487-488.

5. 'Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad al-Sam'ānī, *The Kitāb al-ansāb of 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Muḥammad al-Sam'ānī: Reproduced in Facsimile from the MS. in the British Museum, add. 23,355*, ed. D.S. Margoliouth (Leiden: Brill, 1912), fol. 41r-v; al-Sam'ānī reports the name of Ḥamza's father as Ḥusayn (also a common name among Shi'a), but it seems he is the only biographer to have reported it as such.

6. *Encyclopedia of Islam*, s.v. "ḤAMZA AL-IṢFAHĀNĪ."

7. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-udabā: Irshād al-arīb ilā ma'rifat al-adīb*, ed. Ihsan Abbas (Beirut: Dar Algharb al-Islami, 1993), 1220. The brackets (with question mark added by me) appear in the edited edition, presumably implying a problem with the original manuscript. Many thanks to Eleyan Sawafta for help with this translation.

8. Parvaneh Pourshariati, "Ḥamza al-Isfahani and Sasanid Historical Geography of *Sini Muluk al-ard w' al-anbiya*," in *Des Indo-Grecs aux Sassanides: données pour l'histoire et la géographie historique*, ed. by Rika Gyselen (Bures-sur-Yvette: Groupe pour l'étude de la civilisation du Moyen-Orient, 2007), 117; Pourshariati does not include a

The following works have been attributed to Ḥamza by various scholars to greatly varying degrees of certainty:

1. *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'* (*Chronology of the Kings of the Earth and the Prophets*) – A chronological history across ten respective chapters on the Persians, Romans, Greeks, Egyptians/Copts, Israelites, Lakhmids, Ghassanids, Himyarites, Kinda and Quraysh. The name *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'* seems to have come from a later manuscript, but it was otherwise known simply as *Tā'rīkh al-Umam*.[9]

2. *al-Durra al-fākhira fī'l-amthāl al-sā'ira* (*The Precious Pearl of Influential Proverbs*) – A collection of Arabic proverbs and expressions and commentary on their cultural origins.

3. *Sawā'ir al-amthāl ʿalá afʿal* (*Wisdom of Proverbs Concerning Deeds*)[10] – Another collection of Arabic proverbs. Many of the proverbs in this book deal with Arab-originated superstitions such as the "evil eye" and the use of amulets and spells for the curing of diseases (i.e., *ruqya*).[11]

4. *al-Amthāl al-ṣādira ʿan buyūt al-shiʿr* (*The Proverbs from the Houses of Poetry*) – Collection of Arabic proverbs which themselves derive from poetry. "Houses" (*buyūt*; sing. *bayt*) here refers to Arabic couplets.

5. *Dīwān ʿAbī Nuwās* (*Dīwān of ʿAbu Nuwās*) – A recension and commentary on the poetry of Abū Nuwās al-Ḥasan al-Ḥakamī (756-814), a poet of Persian descent through his mother and either Arab or Persian through his father. Ḥamza's collection is notable for his organizing of the poems alphabetically and for collecting poems which incorporated Persian vocabulary.[12]

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source for al-Thaʾālibī's claim. However, I believe it to be true, given the nature of his feelings toward Persian mythology in lieu of the fondness it received by royals and the public in his day; e.g., see: Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Malik al-Thaʾālibī, *Ta'rixi Ghurar Us-siyar Ma'ruf ba "Shohnoma"-yi Saolibī,* trans. Nosirjon Salimov (Dushanbe: Buxoro, 2014), 70.

9. *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, s.v. "Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī."

10. Works 3-16 recorded in: al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-udabā*, 1220-1221.

11. Eugen Mittwoch published a preliminary study of this book from a manuscript in Munich, comparing some of the proverbs listed by Ḥamza to those listed in *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (*The Ultimate Ambition in the Arts of Erudition*) by Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī (1279-1333); see Eugen Mittwoch, "Abergläubische Vorstellungen und Bräuche der alten Araber: nach Ḥamza al-Iṣbahānī," *Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen an der Königlichen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin, Zweite Abteilung: Westasiatische Studien* 16, (1913): 37-42.

12. Lara Harb, "Persian in Arabic Poetry: Identity Politics and Abbasid Macaronics," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 139, no. 1 (2019): 1-3. However, the bibliographer Muḥammad b. Isḥāq al-Nadīm (932-995; a partial contemporary of Ḥamza's) attributes it to an ʿAlī b. Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī; see: Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. al-Nadīm, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm: A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture*, trans. Bayard Dodge (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 353.

6. *al-Tanbīh 'alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf* (*Warning on the Occurrence of Distortion*) – A book documenting many instances and the dangerous implications of the grammatical error *taṣḥīf*, most prominently in poetry.[13]

7. *Tā'rīkh Iṣbahān* (*Chronology of Isfahan*)

8. *Iṣbahan wa-'akhbāruhā* (*Isfahan and Its History*)

9. *Kitāb al-tashbīhāt* (*Book of Similes*)

10. *'Anwā'i al-du'ā'* (*Types of Prayer*)

11. *Kitāb rasā'il* (*Book of Epistles*)

12. *al-Atamāthīl fī tabāshīr al-surūr* (*Insights into the Origins of Joyful Expressions*)

13. *Kitāb jama' feyh 'akhbār 'esharat min al-shu'arā' al-muhdithuīn 'awaluhum Bashār* (*Collection of Narratives about Ten Contemporary Poets, the First Being Bashār*)[14]

14. *Dīwān sh'ar 'Abi Tamām* (*Dīwān of the Poetry of 'Abu Tamām*) — A collection of poetry by 'Abu Tamām (796-845), an Arab poet from Jāsim (in modern-day Syria).

15. *Maḍāhik al-'ash'ār* (*The Ridicule of Poetry*)

16. *A'yād al-furs* (*Holidays of the Persians*)[15]

17. *al-Muwāzana bayn al-'arabī wa'l-fārsīya* (*The Comparison of Arabic and Persian*) – A work on linguistic comparison between Arabic and Persian. This book has also been reported titled as *al-Muwāzana bayn al-'arabī wa'l-'ajamī*.

18. *Risāla al-ash'ār al-sā'ira fī 'l-nayrūz wa'l-mihradjān* (*Message on the Prose Poetry during Nowruz and the Festivals*)[16]

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13. *Taṣḥīf* as a grammatical concept (best translated into English as "distortion") refers to the omittance (either intentionally or accidentally) of dots underneath or above Arabic letters which renders some letters indistinguishable from others, thus causing confusion about and/or changing the entire meaning of words and the sentences in which they are found. A more thorough explanation with examples, along with an analysis of the work itself, is given in the section "Ḥamza as Philologist."

14. Bashār b. Burd (d. 783) was a poet of Persian origin known for his poems which lauded the achievements of the Persians throughout history.

15. Al-Ḥamawī refers to *A'yād al-furs* as *A'yād Baghdād al-furs*, although this rendering doesn't seem to make much sense. Carl Brockelmann (see n. #18 below) states that *A'yād al-furs* is cited by al-Nuwayrī, but he actually attributes this book to 'Ali b. Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī (most likely the same 'Ali b. Ḥamza to whom al-Nadīm credits a recension of the *Diwan of 'Abu Nuwās*); see: Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah, 1923), 185-190.

The first six of these books are the only completely extant works of Ḥamza's which we have today (all edited and published as well). *Al-Muwāzana bayn al-ʿarabī wa'l-fārsīya* has survived in a fragmented state as a 100-page manuscript and was first investigated by Eugen Mittwoch in the early twentieth century.[17] The remaining works are presumably lost, although several of them have partially survived in quotes within other works.[18] A manuscript of Ḥamza's recension of the *Kitāb Naqd al-Shiʾr* (*Book on Poetic Criticism*) by Qudāma b. Jaʾfar (874-948) is located in the National Library of Tunisia, but it "cannot be considered one of Ḥamza's major achievements" as it contains no commentary, and he "did not go beyond adding a chapter division."[19] A collection of sayings by the famous scholar ʿAmr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ (776-869), supposedly compiled by Ḥamza, has also been recently published.[20] What appears most striking about Ḥamza is that by looking at his supposed bibliography, he seemed very much more concerned with poetry and philological matters than with the writing of history. He appears to have completed his main historical text, *Tāʾrīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyāʾ*, towards the end of his life around 960, so the majority of his scholarly career was probably spent in research of philology and Arabic poetry. Despite this, most scholars over the past century have chosen to

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16. Books 17-18 recorded in: Abū Rayhān al-Bīrūnī, *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*, ed. and trans. C. Eduard Sachau (London: W.H. Allen, 1879), 36.

17. U.M. Daudpota, "The Annals of Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī," *The Journal of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute* 21-24, (1932): 60. It is unclear to me if this manuscript is still in the Egyptian National Library and Archives (known previously as the Khedival Library), as the library's website was inaccessible during the duration of my research. Mittwoch's study is included in the literature review below.

18. For a list of extant works which quote from some of Ḥamza's lost works, see: Carl Brockelmann, *History of the Arabic Written Tradition*, vol. 1 supp., trans. Joep Lameer (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 219.

19. S.A. Bonebakker, "Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī's Recension of the *Kitāb Naqd Ash-Shiʾr* of Qudāma b. Jaʾfar," *Rivista Degli Studi Orientali* 51, no. 1-4 (1978): 99-101.

20. I have not included this in the bibliography above, as I do not know to what extent Ḥamza offers commentary or other contributions. Likewise, I have not seen it listed in any other primary or secondary sources on Ḥamza, so I imagine its discovery in manuscript form is quite recent; see: ʿAmr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Fuṣūl al-mukhtāra: min kutub Abī ʿUthmān ʿAmr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiz*, ed. Diyānā Mūsa Ruḥayyil (Amman: ʿArwiqa, 2013).

base their opinions of Ḥamza almost solely on *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'* with little to no input from the few [heavily outdated] investigations into Ḥamza's philological works. The following literature review will explore the extent to which Ḥamza's works have been researched to gather a better understanding of him and their suggestions for areas to further research, which I have attempted to do for some throughout the rest of this thesis.

Literature Review

Ḥamza remains a heavily cited historian by scholars for the information contained in *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'*. Thus, a complete survey and literature review of every work which has come into some kind of contact with Ḥamza would be overwhelmingly large and not conducive for a study such as this. With that being said, I have limited this literature review to works which have sought to extract some kind of conclusion about Ḥamza's beliefs and opinions specifically, especially in regard to claims of his anti-Arab sentiments. Given that the role of the *Shu'ūbiyya* and its own respective literature is an important part of this study as well, a short literature review on the *Shu'ūbiyya* is also given in a later section.

Although the *Shu'ūbiyya* movement seems to have been conceptualized earlier in orientalist scholarly circles, Ignaz Goldziher's fundamental book *Muhammedanische Studien* (1889-1890) was the first to associate Ḥamza as a primary actor within the "linguistic" branch of this supposed movement. In his subchapter specifically detailing shu'ūbite philologists, Goldziher singles out Ḥamza as being one of the most active opponents against Arabs and the Arabic language.[21] Goldziher argues that Ḥamza's inclination towards detailing Persian culture and focusing on Persian comparative linguistics in his philological works "put the Iranian past into the foreground of Muslim consciousness."[22] Not shying away of criticism towards Ḥamza's work as a philologist, he refers to his gathering of information on the Persian language and its dialects as "childish," especially for the (mistaken) assumption that Ḥamza referred to Syriac as a dialect of Persian.[23] Goldziher continues his argument under the assumption that Ḥamza's

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21. Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, vol. 1, trans. C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern, ed. S.M. Stern (Chicago: Aldine, 1967), 193.

22. Ibid., 210.

Kitāb al-Tanbīh 'alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf was a book of examples of the ways in which Arabs have changed the pronunciation of Persian geographical place names. He lastly dismisses his other philological works, such as the mostly-lost *Kitāb al-muwāzana bayn al-'arabī wa'l-'ajamī*, as similar in terms of research and therefore pure *Shu'ūbiyya* propaganda.[24]

Eugen Mittwoch's 1909 study on Ḥamza's literary contributions remains one of the most thorough and comprehensive studies about him to date. In his research, Mittwoch challenged Goldziher's view of Ḥamza belonging to the "linguistic shu'ūbite" movement of his day, claiming that Goldziher's notion that Ḥamza's dislike for the overwhelmingly large number of synonyms in the Arabic language is essentially not proof of any sort of hostility or direct bias against Arabs.[25] Likewise, he argued that Goldziher misunderstood Ḥamza's preoccupation and concern with the concept of *taṣḥīf* through only short extant quotes from Ḥamza's book,[26] claiming that Goldziher believed Ḥamza saw Arabs as "distorting" the Persian language.[27] He further posits that Ḥamza did not undertake in any "shu'ūbite tendencies" and was himself a student of Ibn Durayd, a prominent refuter of the *Shu'ūbiyya* whom Goldziher discusses in his own work as someone who would have theoretically targeted Ḥamza.[28] As progressive and highly evidenced as Mittwoch's study was, Ḥamza's reputation as "anti-Arab" and being completely biased towards Persians has persisted in both regular discourse and scholarly

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23. Ibid. Goldziher here is citing Ḥamza's *al-Tanbīh 'alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf*, which was still only known at the time through quotations by al-Ḥamawī.

24. Ibid. Here Goldziher bases this assumption about *al-Muwāzana* again from partial quotes by al-Ḥamawī.

25. Mittwoch, "Die literarische Tätigkeit Ḥamza al-Iṣbahānīs: ein Beitrag zur älteren arabischen Literaturgeschichte," *Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen an der Königlichen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin, Zweite Abteilung: Westasiatische Studien* 12, (1909): 140.

26. Ibid., 211.

27. Ibid., 134-135; see n. #13 above.

28. Ibid., 139; Goldziher, 209.

literature.[29] Where Mittwoch's study now falls short, however, is in the fact that several of Ḥamza's works have since been found, edited and published (therefore granting more material with which we can analyze Ḥamza through a similar lens) and its general acceptance of the existence of a *Shuʿūbiyya* "movement" which has recently been called into question. The Mittwoch-Goldziher dialogue here remained some of the only significant attempts which sought to contextualize or explore Ḥamza for almost a century. Two articles by Ḥusayn ʿAlī Maḥfūẓ appeared in the Iraqi journal *Sumer* in 1964 and 1965 respectively, but his claims about Ḥamza throughout both these works seem to not rely on any substantial evidence.[30] Thus, I will not be engaging with them here.

Parvaneh Pourshariati's research into the geographical terms and place names used for the Sasanian history section of Ḥamza's *Tāʾrīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyāʾ* serves as a more recent investigation into Ḥamza's life and what we can extract from the information he gives to us in this book. Here she is able to not only relay the events of Ḥamza's life from his own words, but this also serves as one of the first attempts to truly contextualize Ḥamza's opinions and literary reputation within a larger social context. Pourshariati notes the highly contentious and political nature of several different social movements occurring within Iran which "undermined the 'Abbasid Caliphate" such as the revolutionary movements of Bābak Khorramdin (d. 838) in the early ninth century.[31] She also refers to the Jewish revolts in Isfahan led by Abū ʿĪsā Eṣfahānī "shortly after this," but the limited available sources which speak of this revolt date it to greatly

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29. While the blame for this can certainly fall on the scholars themselves, it is not surprising considering that figures such as al-Thaʾālibī and al-Ḥamawī made similar claims which I address elsewhere in this paper.

30: See: Ḥusayn ʿAlī Maḥfūẓ, "Ḥamza b. al-Ḥasan al-Iṣfahānī: Sīratuhu wa āthāruhu wa arāʾuhu fī al-lughah wa al-tārīkh wa al-buldān," *Sumer* 19, (1963): 63-95; Maḥfūẓ, "Arāʾ Ḥamza b. al-Ḥasan al-Iṣfahānī fī al-lughah wa al-tārīkh wa al-buldān," *Sumer* 20, (1964): 121-166.

31. Pourshariati, "Ḥamza al-Isfahani," 115.

varying periods, some even before the overthrow of the Umayyads, so perhaps this evidence is

not as strong.[32] In regard to the previous literature, Pourshariati importantly does not cite

Mittwoch's study, but instead a short translated introduction of his included in the Persian

translation of *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'*.[33] While she notes Mittwoch's

disagreement with Goldziher's categorization of Ḥamza as a *shu'ūbī*, she herself leans more into

agreement with Goldziher while cautiously stating that "analogous aspects of Ḥamza's social

milieu must certainly be taken into account when investigating the charges hurled on him of

harboring *shu'ūbī* sentiments."[34] Pourshariati ultimately concludes that any debate about

Ḥamza's reputation as a *shu'ūbī* is "moot," yet seems to conflate (dangerously I would say)

Ḥamza's patronization of Persian culture as belonging to the *Shu'ūbiyya*.[35]

In his introduction to the edited edition of Ḥamza's *Kitāb al-amthāl al-ṣādira 'an buyūt

al-shi'r*, Aḥmad al-Ḍubayb similarly criticizes a conflation of an appreciation for Persian culture

with harboring *Shu'ūbiyya* sentiment.[36] Al-Ḍubayb speaks highly of Ḥamza's early contribution

to the field of philology and the anthologizing of Arabic poetry from a critical point in Islam's

history, an era which he refers to as "the height of Arab culture."[37] Importantly, he questions the

fundamental nature of the *Shu'ūbiyya* movement (although by no means attempting to deny its

existence) as to whether it advocated for Persian supremacy or simple equality between Arabs

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32. Ibid.; *Encyclopædia Iranica*, s.v. "ABŪ ʿĪSĀ EṢFAHĀNĪ."

33. See Appendix for this edition.

34. Pourshariati, 115.

35. Ibid., 117.

36. al-Ḍubayb (ed.), introduction, 33-34.

37. Ibid., 22.

and other races in the Islamic world.[38] While ultimately claiming Ḥamza to not be a *Shu'ūbī* himself, al-Ḍubayb recognizes that the nature of Ḥamza's works certainly benefitted the movement more than it could have harmed it.[39] Al-Ḍubayb claims that Ḥamza's works, especially those on philology, provoked a wider critical conversation about language during his lifetime and for centuries to follow, as opposed to him being a hostile figure towards Arabs or the Arabic language. [40] Identifying Ḥamza as an "encyclopedic" and "strictly scientific" scholar, al-Ḍubayb concludes that Ḥamza acted as a preservationist for Persian history and comparative linguistics in the wider Arabic literary corpus of his day and "has left to us a very rich Arabic legacy that deserves to be studied, pondered on and appreciated."[41]

A.C.S Peacock, in his essay focusing on several early Persian historians across the Islamic world, is quick to single out Ḥamza in his introduction as being "hostile to Arabs" in the writing of his *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'*.[42] He notes several qualities of Ḥamza's historical writing such as the centrality of Iran, the use of Zoroastrian sources, an attention to the construction of fire temples in the pre-Islamic period, and an astrological fixation on the waxing and waning of dynasties and their rulings (particularly of the Arabs) as evidence of being both hostile towards Arab rule and towards Islam by extension.[43] Furthermore, Peacock makes the far-reaching claim that Ḥamza may have been secretly a Zoroastrian, although without any evidence

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38. Ibid., 33.

39. Ibid., 33, 36.

40. Ibid., 32.

41. Ibid., 31-32, 37.

42. A.C.S. Peacock, "Early Persian Historians and the Heritage of Pre-Islamic Iran," in *Early Islamic Iran*, eds. Edmund Herzig and Sarah Stewart (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 60.

43. Ibid., 63-65.

to cite for this other than his infatuation with Persian culture and pre-Islamic history.[44] The larger amount of space taken up in Ḥamza's book towards some lands' rulers compared to others is used as evidence for those histories being what Ḥamza cared more about, with Peacock claiming that Ḥamza merely "allot[s] some space to Lakhmid, Ghassanid, Jewish and Islamic history and concludes with a brief account of the Buyids" while "disparagingly" titling the chapter on the Quraysh as 'the history of the kings of the Quraysh.'[45] Peacock concludes by analyzing Ḥamza's astrological predictions of the "collapse of the caliphate" and a defeat of the Arabs at the hands of invaders, which he ultimately links to prominent Zoroastrian apocalyptic literature of the Islamic period with similar predictions.[46]

Zychowicz-Coghill's study on the relationship between city-building in Late Antiquity and the remembrance of previous building dynasties later in the Islamic period presents a quasi-archaeological aspect to the nature of Ḥamza's scholarship. He places "Ḥamza and his [*Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'*] in the midst of a moment of Iranian political reassertion which looked to the Persian heritage in order to legitimate new Islamic political realities and relationships," and notes the consistent theme of city-building across several different histories such as those by Ḥamza, al-Ṭabarī and Abū Ḥanīfa Dīnawarī (d. 895).[47] While disagreeing with Peacock's claims of Ḥamza being a "crypto-Zoroastrian," he further rebuts Peacock's claims that

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44. Ibid., 62.

45. Ibid., 64; the interpretation that Ḥamza referring to the Quraysh (the tribe of the Prophet Muhammad) as kings is done so "disparagingly" does not hold up given that all ten people groups written about in the book are accompanied by this designation. This could be attributed to either a method of simplification on Ḥamza's part or perhaps also a distinctly Persian cultural outlook and notion of kingship and governance inherited from pre-Islamic times. For a case study on the latter which utilizes Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāmeh*, see: Farajollah Alighanbari, "Kingship and the Social Order: The *Siyāsat-namah* in Historical Perspective," PhD diss., (University of Utah, 2002), 77-94.

46. Ibid., 64-65. I address my disagreements with many of Peacock's claims in the section "Ḥamza as Historian."

47. Edward Zychowicz-Coghill, "Remembering the Ancient Iranian City from Late Antiquity to Islam: Hamza al-Isfahani and the Sasanian Book of Kings," in *Remembering and Forgetting the Ancient City*, eds. Javier Martínez Jiménez and Sam Ottewill-Soulsby (Oxford: Oxbow, 2022), 250, 263.

Ḥamza only allots a small portion of his history to the Arabs by offering a higher number of

pages about which Ḥamza wrote about them—even more so than of Persian history.[48] Where

Zychowicz-Coghill makes a very intriguing argument is in the role that the physical

infrastructure of Isfahan played in the development of historical inquiry in Ḥamza's lifetime. He

mentions two anecdotes of a partial collapse in the walls of the city which revealed ancient texts,

which allow us to inquire further about how those in Ḥamza's lifetime interacted with the past

themselves.[49] Along with his "top-down" historiographical style of writing, Zychowicz-Coghill

identifies Ḥamza as a sort of pseudo-Archaeologist in regard to his literary interactions with

ancient architecture and their linkage to the pre-Islamic history of Iran:

> Ḥamza had the status of an authority on the ancient past in Isfahan to whom such matters
> were brought. To maintain such a status, he had to render these obscure traces of the
> ancients meaningful, a task which required a hermeneutic key. The Sasanian tradition of
> knowledge of ancient Persia provided him with such a key. Ḥamza's remarkable story
> shows us how layers of reuse of an etiology of the ruins of Isfahan compounded that
> etiology into authoritative fact.[50]

All of these studies which I have presented here showcase the need for a new, thorough

and in-depth study of Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī which attempts to utilize all of his extant works to paint

a clearer picture of his thoughts and opinions. The reality is that, perhaps with the exception of

Goldziher and Mittwoch, most Western historians whose research encompasses that of early

Medieval Islam have chosen to focus solely on the *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'* in

their analyses of Ḥamza, which is now only one of five edited and published books (not

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48. Ibid., 251. Although I generally agree with Zychowicz-Coghill's own disagreements with Peacock's study, I address further my doubts about utilizing this kind of evidence to garner conclusions on Ḥamza's preferences or opinions in the section "Ḥamza as Historian."

49. Ibid., 267, 269. One of these accounts is mentioned by Ḥamza himself in the *Tārīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'* while another is mentioned by al-Nadīm in the *Fihrist*. It is not completely certain if these may be referring to the same event. See: Ḥamza b. al-Ḥasan al-Iṣfahānī, *Annalium Libri X*, vol. 2, ed. and trans. J.M.E. Gottwaldt (Leipzig: [Apud Leopoldum Voss. ?], 1848), 110; and al-Nadīm, 576-578.

50. Zychowicz-Coghill, 268.

including Ewald Wagner's 5-volume *Diwan des Abū Nuwās*),[51] and either rely on the outdated

arguments of Goldziher and Mittwoch without engaging themselves with Ḥamza's other works

or rather ignore them in their evaluations altogether. Despite there being only one extant

historiographical work of Ḥamza's, save for quotes from his lost *Tā'rīkh Iṣfahān* found in other

works, I am of the opinion that his philological works and his recension of the diwan of Abū

Nuwās can be just as beneficial to the historian seeking to better contextualize his beliefs,

thoughts and opinions. Instead, when taking all of these works into account and extracting what

we can know about Ḥamza from them, we begin to see a more complex picture which contains

the many facets of Ḥamza's multiple inherited identities.

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51. Although Wagner's edition of the *Diwān Abū Nuwās* is rightly credited to the poet, Ḥamza's recension was one of the most heavily used for this edition and contains many important commentaries by Ḥamza himself.

The World of Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī

On the eve of the Islamic conquests by the Rashidun caliphate, Isfahan was a large province (*satrap*) within the Sasanian Empire with several suburbs and towns surrounding the main city.[52] Isfahan seems to have already been a relatively ethnically and religiously diverse area, comprising of several different towns inhabited by Jews (*al-Yahudiyyah*), Armenian Christians and Zoroastrians —later to be supplemented with Arab Muslims and Iranian converts following the arrival of Islam and Arab settlers during the Umayyad period.[53] Jayy is reported to be the first town conquered by the armies of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and seems to have eventually been left in ruins and abandoned by Ḥamza's lifetime.[54] Both Jayy and al-Yahudiyyah were conquered following battles led by 'Abdallāh b. Warqā' al-Riyāḥī, both of which seem to have initially resisted the message of Islam.[55] Other areas of Isfahan were subdued much more peacefully by means of peace contracts in exchange for tax payments.[56] Persian armies at Isfahan also put up a fight against the Arab armies, sparked by an interesting interaction relayed by al-Ṭabarī in which an initial Muslim envoy is sent to the local ruler and intrusively decides to join him on his throne, while the Arab armies waited on the other side of the river.[57]

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52. A.K.S. Lambton and J. Sourdel-Thomine, "Isfahan (Iṣfahān)," in *Historic Cities of the Islamic World*, ed. C.E. Bosworth (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 167.

53. Ibid., 170; 'Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir al-Balādhurī, *The Origins of the Islamic State*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. Philip Khûri Ḥittti (New York: Columbia University, 1916), 485; Sebeos, *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. R.W. Thomson and James Howard-Johnston (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999) 40-41.

54. Abū Ishāk al-Fārisī al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Das Buch der Länder*, trans. A.D. Mordtmann (Hamburg: Rauhes Haus, 1845), 93. Iṣṭakhrī, a contemporary of Ḥamza's, reports of only the city of Isfahan and the town of *Yahudiyyah* existing.

55. al-Balādhurī, *The Origins of the Islamic State*, 486; here al-Balādhurī cites a chain of transmission leading back to Bashīr ibn Sa'd, a companion of the Prophet Muḥammad.

56. Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 14, *The Conquest of Iran: A.D. 641-643/A.H. 21-23*, ed. and trans. G. Rex Smith (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 9.

57. Ibid., 10-13.

The conquering of Isfahan was seen as a critical point in being able to take over the entirety of the declining Sasanian empire, with al-Hurmuzān advising the caliph ʿUmar: "Fars and Azerbaijan are the wings; Isfahan is the head. If you cut off one of the wings, the other one [can still] work. But, if you cut off the head, the wings collapse. Begin with the head!"[58] However, the situation in Isfahan seems to have stabilized quite quickly.[59] The Umayyads and later ʿAbbasids carved up their new empire into administrative provinces, with Isfahan found in the province of al-Jibāl (lit. "the mountains"). Isfahan, along with three other cities—Kermanshah, Hamadan and Rayy—became the "chief towns" of the province, with Rayy effectively operating as its capital into the tenth century.[60] What I believe to be very important in contextualizing the lifetime and world of Ḥamza is the contested nature of Isfahan's status throughout the late ninth and early tenth centuries. With an estimated birthdate of 893, he would have been born towards the end of the Dulafid autonomous governance before full governance of al-Jibal was returned to the caliphate in 897.[61] As a youth, he would have experienced the conflicts between the Saffarids and the ʿAbbasids, as Rayy and Isfahan stood at the frontier of the back and forth battle for territory between the two in the first decade of the tenth century.[62]

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58. Ibid., 10.

59. Patricia Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 31-32.

60. Guy Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate: Mesopotamia, Persia, and Central Asia from the Moslem Conquest to the Time of Timur* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), 186; a hand-drawn map included in a manuscript of the *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī maʿrifat al-aqālīm* of al-Muqaddasī (a contemporary of Ḥamza) along with an additional rendition with English translation can be found in: Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Muqaddasī, *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions*, trans. Basil Anthony Collins (Reading: The Centre for Muslim Contribution to Civilization, 1994), 342, 453.

61. C.E. Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties: A Chronological and Genealogical Manual* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 153.

62. Michael Richard Bonner, "The Waning of Empire, 861–945," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 1, *The Formation of the Islamic World, Sixth to Eleventh Centuries*, ed. Chase F. Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 336.

Both these cities also came under brief Sāmānid rule as well during this same decade, although it seems they remained largely independent before being ceded back to the ʿAbbasids.[63] Between his stays in Baghdad and Isfahan, he would have witnessed the rise of the Buyids, a Shiʾa ruling dynasty from the north of Iran, in the 930s. As the rise of the Buyids essentially presented one of the greatest challenges to the ʿAbbasid caliphate's existence, this period also brought forth an unfortunate rise in poverty and starvation amongst the fighting for control of both western Iran and the caliphal capital of Baghdad.[64] Ḥamza himself recounts a famine in Isfahan in 936 which killed 200,000 people, and other sources recount famines during this time in Baghdad as well.[65] The status of Isfahan also seemed to be in constant struggle according to the geographer Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Muqaddasī (945-991), who writes in his *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī maʿrifat al-aqālīm* (*Best Divisions in the Knowledge of the Regions*) that Isfahan was consistenly being pulled back and forth between being a part of al-Jibāl and of Fārs.[66]

The following two subsections will review two social phenomena of the Early Islamic periods in Iran, the *Khurramiyya* and the *Shuʾūbiyya*. In the first subsection, on the *Khurramiyya*, I seek to analyze its possible influence on Ḥamza—or at least the society of Isfahan and other cities of al-Jibāl province more generally into the tenth century. In the second subsection, on the *Shuʾūbiyya*, I will give a brief literature review on the subject due to its contested state and then

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63. Richard N. Frye (ed.), "The Sāmānids," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 4, *The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 139-140.

64. Maryam Kamali, *Social Change in Medieval Iran 132-628 AH (750-1231 AD): The Perspectives of Persian Historiography* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2023), 157-158.

65. al-Iṣfahānī, *Annalium Libri X*, 148; Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Miskawayh, *The Eclipse of the ʿAbbasid Caliphate: Classical Writings of the Medieval Islamic World*, vol. 5, ed. and trans. D.S. Margoliouth and H.F. Amedroz (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1921), 9.

66. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Muqaddasī, *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions*, trans. Basil Anthony Collins (Reading: The Centre for Muslim Contribution to Civilization, 1994), 344; although Muqaddasī wrote this work in c. 985, it would not be too irrational to assume that this frontier-style struggle was taking place for decades by this point—especially during the rise of the Buyids in the 930s.

seek to contextualize Ḥamza within the findings of some of the more recent literature put forth about the movement.

The Khurramiyya

The integration of Arab Muslims into Isfahan and surrounding cities was probably much more easily acclimatable, as it was already a religiously and ethnically diverse region, similarly to the province of Khuzestan lying southward.[67] Most of the "rural Zoroastrians" who rebelled against the new Muslim rulers eventually fled north to Daylam, a mountainous region on the Caspian which became a haven for anti-caliphal factions. Likewise, interesting expressions of both Zoroastrianism and Islam—the two often mixed in some way—would begin to flourish for a brief period there and in Azerbaijan.[68] This would ultimately culminate in the formation of the *Khurramiyya* movement, a quasi-Zoroastrian religious movement which gained most of its notoriety due to the revolts of Bābak-e Khorramdin against the 'Abbasid Caliphate between 816 and 837.[69] Our main obstacle in analyzing the potential influence of Bābak's movement through Ḥamza's lifetime is that our only information on the *Khurramiyya* comes from pro-'Abbasid sources which vehemently villainize the movement.[70] Richard N. Frye best points this bias out by claiming that

> many of the sources, such as Shahristani, Baghdadi, Ibn Hazm and others, who write
> about sects and religions, like to make neat divisions and put those rebellions, which

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67. Jamsheed K. Choksy, *Conflict and Cooperation: Zoroastrian Subalterns and Muslim Elites in Medieval Iranian Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 32.

68. Ibid.

69. Crone, *The Nativist Prophets*, 279-280.

70. Farhad Daftary, "Sectarian and National Movements in Iran, Khurasan and Transoxiana During Umayyad and Early 'Abbasid Times," in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia, Part One: The Historical, Social and Economic Setting*, vol. 4, *The Age of Achievement: A.D. 750 to the End of the Fifteenth Century*, eds. M.S. Asimov and C.E. Bosworth, (Paris: UNESCO, 1998), 50-51.

basically had an anti-'Abbasid bias, into the most pernicious category—one which would be an anti-Islamic movement with the prime aim of overthrowing Islam and re-establishing the religion of Zoroaster as the ruling religion. Yet, after the establishment of the 'Abbasid caliphate, can anyone have believed seriously that the Zoroastrianism of the Sasanian state could be restored as the ruling religion in the eastern part of the caliphate? The great difficulty…in studying the religious situation in the early 'Abbasid period is the tendency to regard both Islam and especially Zoroastrianism as essentially monolithic.[71]

As mentioned previously in the literature review, Pourshariati proposed that a better analysis of Ḥamza could be accomplished by investigating such social movements as the *Khurramiyya* and their lasting influence.[72] While the study of such social movements is certainly important, it seems that the *Khurramiyya* movement's support in particular was not as large in al-Jibāl, for instance, as Pourshariati implies. Although we have sources which state that some citizens of Isfahan joined to fight in the revolt with Babak, this was also at the very peak of conversions to Islam within Isfahan and probably throughout Iran entirely.[73] It seems to me unlikely that an already religiously diverse and urbanized city, which had already experienced numerous conquests and revolutions between the Rashidun, Umayyad and 'Abbasid caliphates in under less than two centuries, would have thrown much support behind what has mostly been constituted as a revolt of rural semi-Mazdakites.[74] Several scholars agree that this movement is perhaps not as influential or important as it may be deemed by others or appear in our biased and

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71. Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia: The Arabs in the East* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1975), 131.

72. See note 25.

73. Richard W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 23; Bertold Spuler, *Iran in the Early Islamic Period: Politics, Culture, Administration and Public Life between the Arab and the Seljuk Conquests, 633-1055*, ed. Robert G. Hoyland, trans. Gwendolin Goldbloom and Berenike Walburg (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 57-60.

74. B.S. Amoretti, "Sects and Heresies," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 4, 506; Mazdakism was a distinct expression of Zoroastrianism which first developed in the third century CE but gained prominence and its subsequent nomenclature during the reign of the Sasanian king Kavad I (r. 498-531) by a priest named Mazdak (d. 524 or 528), who was later executed for subversion and heresy. Mazdakism has been likened to a sort of "pre-modern communism," and its egalitarian ideals found their way into the syncretic religious expressions of the *Khuramiyya*; see: Crone, *Nativist Prophets*, 439.

critical primary sources.[75] Thus, I am of the opinion that the *Khurramiyya* or any other rural Zoroastrian-inspired social movement would not have had any kind of long-lasting influence up to Ḥamza's lifetime. Exploring activities more in depth of other groups which were active closer to or during Ḥamza's lifetime, such as the Kharijites, Mu'tazilites and even the Shi'a, would likely be a more fruitful avenue for investigating Ḥamza's possible influences which come across as unorthodox. Such an investigation is beyond the scope of this paper, but I mention my previous point so as to dispel, in part with other evidence, the idea that Ḥamza was any sort of "crypto-" or secret Zoroastrian.

The Shu'ūbiyya

The study of the *Shu'ūbiyya* in the Early Islamic and early Medieval period of Islam has been a source of contention and fierce debate in regard to the actual nature and goals of the "movement." It has been depicted in the scholarly literature as a socio-political movement, a literary movement, a linguistic movement, a nationalist movement, or a combination of some or all of these attributes. The *Encyclopedia of Islam*, in its most simple definition, describes the *Shu'ūbiyya* as "a movement within the early Muslim society which denied any privileged position of the Arabs," but as we shall see, the literature on the subject has taken this definition to much greater degrees based on a slim amount of evidence to support its significance or actual self-proclaimed existence.[76] I will begin with a brief literature review here on the scholarly views and interpretations of this phenomenon leading up to the more recent scholarship put forth by

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75. Choksy, *Conflict and Cooperation*, 33; Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia*, 130-132.

76. *Encyclopedia of Islam*, s.v. "AL-SHU'ŪBIYYA."

Sarah Bowen Savant, whose arguments I use as a theoretical basis for my own contextualization of Ḥamza.[77]

As previously mentioned in the literature review section, Ignaz Goldziher's *Muhammedanische Studien* was not only a pioneer work in the field of Islamic Studies but also in the detailed conceptualization of the *Shuʾūbiyya* as an important social movement in early Islamic society. He argued that the Shuʾūbiyya "represented in its most modest expression the teaching of the full equality of the ʿ*Ajam* (non-Arab people) with the Arabs, and in more daring formulations attempted even to assert Arab inferiority in the face of Persian superiority."[78] Goldziher attributes the rise of Persian influence under the ʿAbbasids which peaked "a certain religious romanticism in Persian families," ultimately giving rise to a sense of Persian nationalism.[79] He personally names Ḥamza as being a "leader" of the linguistic branch of the movement who sought to claim a sense of linguistic superiority of Persian over Arabic.[80] Besides the (misinterpreted) quotes from some of Ḥamza's works, Goldziher also makes use of poetry written by Persians which sought to degrade the Bedouin origins of the Arab race while noting that our evidence of the movements "has survived only in rare traces and relics"—a very important factor to consider when analyzing the *Shuʾūbiyya*.[81]

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77. It's important to note that a similar egalitarian movement developed in al-Andalus during the eleventh century which also sparked refutational literature referring to its adherents as *al-Shuʾūbiyya*. This literature review will only be exploring scholarly works on the phenomenon as expressed in the area of the Islamic world inhabited primarily by Persians up through the tenth century. (e.g., Iraq, Iran, and Central Asia).

78. Goldziher, 137.

79. Ibid., 139; Larsson, "Ignaz Goldziher on the *Shuʾūbiyya*," 367.

80. Goldziher, 194-195. Ḥamza's attempts to reconcile the historical philologies of Persian and Arabic are analyzed here in the section "Ḥamza as Philologist."

81. Ibid., 148-150; here Goldziher quotes two poems by Sahl b. Hārūn and Abū Saʾīd al-Rustamī respectively.

H.A.R. Gibb was one of the first prominent scholars to refute some of Goldziher's theories about the nature of the *Shu'ūbiyya*, mainly disagreeing with the degree of support given to them by the 'Abbasids during their anti-Umayyad revolt as well as the actual origin of Arab-Persian conflict during this period. He disagrees with the idea that a sense of "Persian nationalism" would have risen up only after the 'Abbasids, noting the evidence that the literary tradition of pre-Islamic Iran was already underway during the Umayyad period, and that the preference for Sasanian scribal traditions was not an 'Abbasid phenomenon either.[82] He further warns of the implication by scholars towards a sense of "Persian nationalism" existing many centuries before the rise of modern nation-states, instead arguing that the scribal class of 'Abbasid caliphate in Iraq, which was made up considerably of Persians, saw Arabic as merely "an instrument" for use and not a significant source of entertainment—thus igniting a large preference for traditionally Persian stories and sentiments.[83] Gibb also importantly notes the role of "a new urban society in Iraq" whose economic development played a possible role in rising ethnic tensions:

> This new urban society was a mixed society of Arabs and non-Arabs—mainly Persians and Aramaeans, the latter also more or less Persianized—who were engaged in trade and commerce, had attained a certain degree of wealth, and showed an increasing interest in literature. It was no longer the old Arab society, whose manners, ideas, and poetic traditions were foreign to its life, its habits, its interests, and even its speech. To most of its members the subjects discussed in the circles of Arabic scholars seemed to bear no relation to their own situation; the philologists were antiquaries, their disputes boring (*mumill*). They looked for something more attractive and less heavy, and they found it

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82. H.A.R. Gibb, "The Social Significance of the Shuubiya," in *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, ed. Stanford J. Shaw and William R. Polk (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), 63. The latter claim has recently been challenged, quite convincingly, by Sarah Bowen Savant in regard to the role that Iranian cultural memory plays in the development of literary accounts regarding the establishment of Umayyad administrative procedures; see: Sarah Bowen Savant, *The New Muslims of Post-Conquest Iran: Tradition, Memory, and Conversion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 95-102.

83. Gibb, "The Social Significance of the Shuubiya," 63-64.

partly in the new poetry and the *ghazal*, and partly in the literary productions of the secretarial school.[84]

Patricia Crone contextualizes the *Shu'ūbiyya* by viewing it as a response and development of "tenth-century post-colonialism." She agrees with Gibb that it manifested itself purely as a literary movement, but one that actively "attacked" the Arabs nonetheless.[85] Crone posits the roots of the movement being in the subsequent rise of "assimilated natives" (Iranians) in the aftermath of the 'Abbasid revolution in 750.[86] The substantial evidence for her argument lies in a parallel comparison with modern colonialism, such as the British colonization of India. She compares the "assimilated native" Iranian who converted to Islam to the British Indian subject who took up "progressive" and "modern" views of the West and/or converted to Christianity—as "they did not thereby become a full member of British society...whatever his degree of assimilation. Similarly, a native who adopted the culture of the Arabs, including the monotheistic religion which the Arabs saw as their distinguishing feature...did not thereby become a full member of Arab society. Rather, he became a *mawlā* (client)."[87] She ultimately attributes the spiteful literature produced by Shu'ūbīs as stemming from inter-generational anger and resentment towards the Arabs once these non-Arabs had achieved their own advancement in 'Abbasid society. Whereas religious scholars tended to view the Arabs favorably for bringing the message of Islam to lands beyond the Arab Peninsula, the Shu'ūbī writers felt conflicted in owing their religious identities to the Arabs who had treated their ancestors so poorly.[88]They

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84. Ibid., 64.

85. Patricia Crone, "Post-Colonialism in Tenth-Century Islam," *Der Islam* 83, no. 1 (2006): 14.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid., 15.

88. Ibid., 16.

even saw themselves as *better* Muslims than their Arab counterparts and tended to resort to heavily polemic literary works. Most importantly, however, they did not have any intention of "restoring the Persian Empire," as may be suggested by other scholars relying on strictly nationalistic interpretations, but instead sought to evaluate their own place within the new structure to which they belonged as equals to Arabs according to Islamic law.[89]

Sarah Bowen Savant's analysis of the actual nature of the *Shu'ūbiyya* presents a major shift from the previous literature, as she states that there is no evidence to support it as being any sort of endonymic movement given that "we do not...have the name of a single self-proclaimed Shu'ūbī."[90] It is this "slimness of evidence" which begs the question of how such a movement can still garner so much scholarly literature. Savant feels that many have "forged ahead anyway," resorting to claims that any such self-proclamations were obviously lost and only the refutations survived due to Shu'ūbīs being the "losers in a cultural battle."[91] However—and I'm sure Savant would perhaps agree with this—it doesn't seem at all that the *Shu'ūbiyya* were any sort of losers, as they were in fact the fast-rising class of influential poets and scholars. As Savant proposes, the "citation of sources is highly selective and disregards the silence in our sources about Shuʿūbism," and importantly that neither al-Nadīm nor al-Hamawī themselves refer to Ḥamza as a Shu'ūbī.[92] Most importantly for our study on Ḥamza in particular, Savant states that

> the ideological content of Shuʿūbism as described in the sources is noticeably narrow. The biographers say that the Shuʿūbīs said things that insulted Arabs, and consequently they draw a very close connection between *Shuʿūbiyya* and anti-Arab bias. Contrary to Gibb, they do not indicate that the Shuʿūbīs promoted Persian culture, even when the person in question did indeed do so, nor do they characterize Shuʿūbism as a cultural

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89. Ibid., 16-17.

90. Savant, "Naming Shuʿūbīs," in *Essays in Islamic Philology, History, and Philosophy*, eds. Alireza Korangy, Wheeler M. Thackston, Roy P. Mottahedeh, and William Granara (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2016), 169.

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid., 172.

phenomenon in any meaningful way, such as by attributing to it an agenda, proponents, and a public profile.[93]

I find Savant's analysis of the *Shu'ūbiyya* the most convincing, as it seems that we simply do not have any evidence to support an endonymic movement. This is very important for the contextualization of Ḥamza, as he had been branded as the leader of the "linguistic branch" by Goldziher many years ago. In her translation of ʿAbd Allāh b. Muslim b. Qutayba's (828-889) *Faḍl al-ʿArab wa-l-tanbīh ʿalá ʿulūmihā* (*The Excellence of the Arabs and the Awareness of Their Areas of Knowledge*), one of the most prolific refutations of the *Shu'ūbiyya* during its supposed peak in the ninth century, Savant opts for the translation of "bigot" for *Shu'ūbiyya*, owing that "lexicographers repeat the statement that a 'bigot' [Shu'ūbī] is someone who belittles the significance of the Arabs and who does not see them as having precedence over others."[94] But now we must observe from an even more zoomed-out viewpoint—where does Ḥamza now fit into the narrative if such a movement did not exist as we previously thought? Although preliminary in nature, an inquiry into Ḥamza's own usage of the term in one of his works, *al-Tanbīh ʿalá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf*, may allow us to further rethink the context of *Shu'ūbiyya* in the tenth century. Thus, the next section will function as an analysis of Ḥamza's work in order to extract any predispositions we may find from Ḥamza while keeping Savant's findings in mind.

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93. Ibid., 173.

94. Savant (trans.), introduction to *The Excellence of the Arabs*, by ʿAbd Allāh b. Muslim b. Qutayba (New York: New York University Press, 2019), xxii.

Ḥamza as Philologist

As it seems, Ḥamza was very much interested in the relationship between the Persian and Arabic languages, especially with loan words from one to the other. Scholars have noted that most of these claims by Ḥamza, especially regarding words which he claims to have entered Arabic from Persian, are quite far-fetched and frankly incorrect in their proposed etymologies.[95] As mentioned previously, the majority of Ḥamza's works pertained to such philological matters rather than historical ones, even though the majority of modern scholarship regarding Ḥamza has sought to analyze him primarily through his historiographical works. What little Western scholarship has made use of Ḥamza's philological works has usually sought to claim that Ḥamza viewed the Persian language as somewhat superior to Arabic due to proposing the aforementioned far-fetched etymologies.[96] This section will serve as an analysis of one of Ḥamza's philological works, *al-Tanbīh ʿalá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf*, in order to contextualize him better, as well as contextualizing the work itself, from a different angle than perhaps done previously.

Taṣḥīf, best translated into English as "distortion," is a phenomenon which can take place when one writes with the Arabic *abjad*, itself a system in which short vowels are of course spoken but not written (although special diacritics marks exist and *are* written when deemed necessary). Without the diacritic marks denoting short vowels, the past-tense verb *kataba* (كَتَبَ – *he wrote*) and plural noun *kutub* (كُتُب – *books*), for example, are written exactly the same (كتب). The shifting of short vowels which might produce a different word and/or meaning than intended is one example of *taṣḥīf*, and this phenomenon could be either intentional (perhaps for comical or poetic reasons) or non-intentional. Another way in which *taṣḥīf* manifests itself is by the

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95. Encyclopedia of Islam, s.v. "ḤAMZA AL-IṢFAHĀNĪ."

96. Pourshariati, 117; Peacock, "Early Persian Historians," 63.

omittance or incorrect placement of dots above or underneath letters which differentiate them

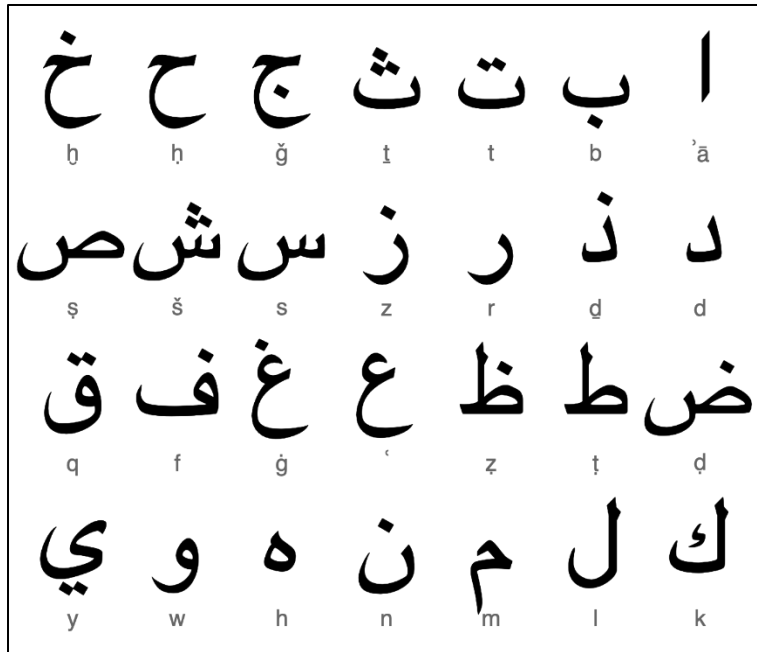from each other (see Figure 1). The earliest writings in Arabic neither wrote short vowels nor the

Figure 1. The Arabic abjad. Note that the placement of dots is the main differentiator between many different letters. (Public Domain)

necessary dots to distinguish many letters from one another, leading to lots of ambiguity and

debate about the correct renditions of older Arabic works—most especially concerning poetry,

hadith and verses from the Qur'ān.[97] Although the process of standardizing Arabic orthography

had been completed by around 786, this latter example of *taṣḥīf* seems to still have been a

problem even by Ḥamza's lifetime in the tenth century.[98] It is for this reason that he wrote a book

entitled *al-Tanbīh 'alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf* (*Warning on the Occurrence of Distortion*).

Al-Tanbīh 'alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf was first analyzed by Ignaz Goldziher from its

fragmented quotes in al-Hamawi's *Mu'jam al-buldān*, from which Goldziher mistook the [then

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97. Khalil I.H. Semaan, "A Linguistic View of the Development of the Arabic Writing System," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 61, (1967): 29-33.

98. Yousry Elseadawy, "Arabic Scribal Practices in the 3rd-4th/9th-10th Centuries: Normative Sources and Manuscript Evidence," PhD diss., (Freie Universität Berlin, 2022), 154-192.

lost] book to be about how Arabs had "distorted" the geographical place names of the Persians.[99]

It is with these conclusions that Goldziher ultimately named Ḥamza specifically as being at the

forefront of the "linguistic *Shu'ūbiyya* movement." Eugen Mittwoch later refuted this claim, but

the entire book itself was still not available to him at the time for a more thorough analysis.[100] It

would not be until 1967 and 1968 that two editions of *al-Tanbīh 'alá ḥudūth al-taṣhīf* were

finally edited and published in Baghdad and Beirut respectively, followed by a second edition in

1992 of the Beirut edition.[101] However, the book has not been used in any significant scholarship

on Ḥamza, to my knowledge, even since these publications. The following will serve as a short

summary the book by giving examples of the kinds of *taṣhīf* which Ḥamza encounters and

documents in this work as well as analyzing a small but significant passage in which Ḥamza

himself references the *Shu'ūbiyya*.

From the beginning of his work, Ḥamza lays out the seriousness, in his eyes, of

distortion.[102] He begins by noting that all are susceptible to the performance and effects—both

negative and positive—of committing distortion when either writing and/or speaking the Arabic

language. Judges, scholars, scribes, Qur'ān reciters and all the like are not safe from the

occurrence of distortion. He immediately begins his work with an example of how, due to

accidental distortion in a judge's ruling, a man's nose was cut off when it was not actually

ordered to be.[103] Ḥamza also relays a story in which several men in a city were castrated due to

an accidental drop of ink from the caliph's pen changing '*aḥiṣ* (أحص – *count*) to '*akhṣi* (أخص –

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99. Goldziher, 210.

100. Mittwoch, "Die literarische Tätigkeit Ḥamza al-Iṣbahānīs," 140.

101. See Appendix.

102. My use of the word "distortion" from here on solely refers to the concept of *taṣhīf*.

103. al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Tanbīḥ 'alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf*, 2nd ed., ed. Muḥammad 'As'ad Ṭalis (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1992), 2.

castrate).[104] He claims to have heard only one positive story relating to distortion, in which a woman expressing her disgruntlements to the caliph accidentally distorted a word, and this resulted in the caliph granting her and her family lots of money.[105] He even references a story of the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik incorrectly reciting an verse from the Qur'ān due to distortion.[106] Although Ḥamza does seem to emphasize that the distortion of both the Qur'ān and Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad are serious dangers to be corrected and avoided, the majority of his work aims to present the incorrect transmissions of early Arabic poetry over time. In his second chapter, he lists twenty-five different scholars and their incorrect transmissions of popular couplets. A student of Ibn Durayd during his time in Baghdad, he makes use of his teacher's works and direct claims, such as Arabic having sounds which are not found in other surrounding languages, like Persian or Syriac, and that the abjad must be modified to accommodate these sounds.[107] Ḥamza also mentions a direct claim from his teacher that al-Jāḥiẓ made a "huge distortion" while trying to be funny in front of the caliph's housemaids.[108]

One contextual aspect of the writing of *al-Tanbīḥ ʿalá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf* which has perhaps been previously overlooked was the ongoing rivalry between two prominent grammarian schools, that of Baṣra and Kūfa (located in Iraq). Both Baṣra and Kūfa were originally

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104. Ibid., 10.

105. Ibid., 13-15.

106. Ibid., 5; Ḥamza gives no direct source for this story, but it could have its roots in 'Abbasid propaganda against the Umayyads, which sought to undermine their religious legitimacy among other things, some two centuries earlier.

107. Ibid., 16; Ḥamza mentions several letters created to accommodate Persian sounds such as *ch* (چ). Although it is known that Ḥamza spoke Persian as his native language, it seems that New Persian (written in the Arabic script) was in much more rapid development and use in the eastern regions such as Khurasan at this time. This does however beg to question to what extent Persian writings from the east under the Samanids were making their way into the west under the 'Abbasids and eventually the Buyids; see: Frye, "The New Persian Renaissance in Western Iran," in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A. R. Gibb*, ed. George Makdisi (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 225-231.

108. al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Tanbīḥ ʿalá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf*, 91-92.

established as garrison towns in the seventh century upon the conquering of Iraq by the Rashidun Caliphate and subsequently grew to become important cities, alongside Baghdad, for scholars of Arabic grammar and philology among other fields. It is important to note that Ibn Durayd was a prominent grammarian of the Baṣra school, and that most of the scholars whom Ḥamza presents as distorting Arabic poems belonged to the Kūfa school.[109] Some of these scholars whom Ḥamza mentions and corrects are Muḥammad b. Ziyād b. al-'Arābī (760-846), 'Abu al-Ḥasan al-Ṭusī, Ya'qūb b. al-Sikkīt (d. 857 or 861) and al-Kisā'ī (a fellow Persian; d. 795) to name a few.[110] Thus we could infer that Ḥamza himself belonged to (or was at least partial to) the Baṣra school, and that *al-Tanbīḥ 'alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf* could have been a work whose goal was not only to warn scholars about the occurrence and prominence of distortion but to furthermore discredit the reliability of scholars from Kūfa and their transmissions of Arabic poetry.

What may be most important for our purposes, however, is that within *al-Tanbīḥ 'alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf*, Ḥamza himself mentions the *Shu'ūbiyya*. Within his long list of poems which had been distorted by scholars, he cites the following verse from a poem of the pre-Islamic Arab poet Maymūn b. Qays al-A'sha (570-625):

<div dir="rtl">

هذا النّهَارُ بَدَا لَهَا مِنْ هَمِّهَا، مَا بَالُهَا بِاللَّيْلِ زَالَ زَوَالُهَا

</div>

(hadhā an-nahāru badā lahā min hammahā / mā bāluhā bi'l-layli zāla zawāluhā)

This day brought her cares;
    What she feared at night came to an end.[111]

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109. Although al-Jāḥiẓ, mentioned previously, was from Baṣra and defended it extensively against claims from Kufans who criticized it, it does not seem that in regard to grammar he associated himself to either school exclusively; see: Kōjirō Nakamura, "Ibn Maḍā's Criticism of Arabic Grammarians," *Orient* 10, (1974): ff. 9.

110. al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Tanbīḥ 'alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf*, 85-90; birth and death dates for al-Ṭusī are not known, but he is mentioned in the *Fihrist*; see: b. al-Nadīm, 156.

111. Translation by Arthur Wormhoudt. For the full poem in Arabic and English, see: Maymūn b. Qays al-A'sha, *Selections from the Diwan of Maimun ibn Qais called al 'Asha,* ed. and trans. Arthur Wormhoudt (Oskaloosa: William Penn College, 1984), poem no. 22.

In regard to the verse, Ḥamza says the following:

واعترض بعض الشعوبية على نحوي في إعراب هذا البيت فقال: لم ينصب / زُوالَها /، وكان الصواب أن يقول
/ زُوالُها / بالرفع فقال، لأنه أراد "أزال الله زوالها" فقال: فينبغي أن تقول على هذا القياس: مات زيدا بمعنى أمات الله
زيدا، ثم قال لقد كذب شاعركم حيث يقول: «إنما النحو قياس يتّبع».

Some of the *Shu'ūbiyya* objected to a grammarian's parsing of this verse, saying: "It
should not be construed as *zuwālahā* [in the accusative case], but rather it should be
zuwāluhā [in the nominative case]." They argued this because they meant "Allah caused
[her fears'] disappearance." They added: "By the same token, you should say: 'Zayd died'
[*māta zaydan*] meaning 'Allah caused Zayd's death.'" Then they said, "Your poet has lied
when he says: 'Indeed, grammar is just an analogy to follow.'"[112]

This mention of the *Shu'ūbiyya* is the only such occurrence in the entirety of the book,

easily lost amongst the many more examples given by Ḥamza in his work. I have yet to find this

direct quote from him addressed in any scholarly literature about Ḥamza or the *Shu'ūbiyya*.

Thus, I was quite puzzled upon my own discovery of it.[113] As partial as I am to the work of Sarah

Bowen Savant and her own analysis about the nature of the *Shu'ūbiyya*, I find that this quote

presents more of an obstacle than one that clears up their exact nature. It does not seem that the

word "bigots" could as easily be used as a translation for *shu'ūbiyya* as it is so in Savant's

translation of Ibn Qutayba's *Excellence of the Arabs*, especially considering that the *Shu'ūbiyya*

to whom Ḥamza refers were actually correct in their rendition of this particular verse by al-

A'sha.[114] What remains perplexing is that the *Shu'ūbiyya*—whether one regards them as pro-

Persianists by Goldziher's analysis or simply uncultured "bigots" according to Savant's—were

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112. al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Tanbīḥ 'alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf*, 108. The nuances in the difference between using accusative
zuwālahā versus nominative *zuwāluhā* make offering two separate English translations difficult. Essentially, the
former emphasizes the absence of the protagonist's fears by being the direct recipient of the transitive verb *zāl* (to
disappear; to vanish), whereas the latter implies a sense of curiosity or wonderment as to why her fears have
vanished from the protagonist. Many thanks to Abdulelah Almasar for help with the translation of this quote.

113. Unfortunately, this discovery was made quite in my research process, and so the following analysis is quite
preliminary in nature.

114. The editor of *al-Tanbīḥ 'alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf* also maintains in the footnotes that this rendition is correct.

involving themselves in something as relatively mundane as arguments over correct grammatical structures in the recitation of Arabic poetry. Although poetry was and continues to be a very important field which Arabs themselves took very seriously, these sort of ventures by the *Shu'ūbiyya* certainly differ from their usual association with overtly political and/or subversive undertakings at the expense of Arab contribution.[115] In other words, why would the *Shu'ūbiyya* even care so much about the correct recitation and transmission of Arabic poetry if it seems that their main purpose was promoting egalitarianism across the Islamic world?[116]

In connection with the earlier suggestion that *al-Tanbīḥ 'alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf* was perhaps written amongst the rivalry of the grammarian schools of Baṣra and Kūfa, it seems that such syntactical analysis and interpretation as given by the *Shu'ūbiyya* in the example mentioned by Ḥamza was in fact a topic of continuous debate among grammarians of both these cities, such as Abū 'Ali al-Fārisī (901-987) a Baṣran grammarian who himself had a grammatical debate over this very same concept with the Buyid king 'Aḍud al-Dawla b. Būya (936-983).[117] If this is the case, then could this mean the *Shu'ūbiyya*—as opposed to being a fringe group on the outs with Arab culture—were actually very much involved in the scholarly circles of both Baṣra and Kūfa's respective schools of grammar? But then where does this leave Ḥamza's own opinions of them and the question of his supposed association with them? A preliminary reading would suggest that the way in which Ḥamza presents them is as being an entity *separate* from himself and not monolithic in thought or ideology. However, other evidence may be able to point us in an additional direction.

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115. Gibb, 66.

116. I myself do not frankly have an answer to this, but I feel it may indicate that much more research is needed in regard to the tenth-century context of the word *shu'ūbiyya* itself.

117. Abū 'Ali al-Fārisī, *al-Masā'il al-ḥalabīyāt*, ed. Ḥasan Hindāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Manāra, 1987), 274; *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, s.v. "Abū 'Alī al-Fārisī."

As mentioned previously, Savant's article points out that neither of the biographical

dictionaries of al-Nadīm nor al-Hamawī refer to Ḥamza as a *Shu'ūbī*.[118] It is only that of 'Alī b.

Yūsuf al-Qifṭī (1172-1248) which associates Ḥamza with the *Shu'ūbiyya*. However, it is

important to note that al-Qifṭī states that Ḥamza was merely attributed, or perhaps accused, of

affiliation with the *Shu'ūbiyya* and otherwise praises him and his works:

الفاضل الكامل، المصنف المطلع، الكثير الروايات. كان عالما فى كل فنّ، وصنّف فى ذلك، وتصانيفه فى الأدب
جميلة، وفوائده الغامضة جمة، وله كتاب الموازنة بين العربى والعجميّ؛ وهو كتاب جليل، دلّ على اطلاعه على
اللغة وأصولها، لم يأت أحد بمثله، صنّفه للملك عضد الدولة فنّاخسرو بن بويه، وكان ينسب إلى الشّعوبية، وأنه
يتعصّب على الأمة العربية. وله كتاب تاريخ أصبهان، وهو من الكتب المفيدة العجيبة الوضع، الكثيرة الغرائب.
ولكثرة تصانيفه وخوضه فى كل نوع من أنواع العلم سماه جهلة أصبهان «بائع الهذيان». وما الأمر والله كما قالوا،
ومن جهل شيئا عاداه.

> The honorable, the concise, the knowledgeable author, the prolific narrator. He was
> knowledgeable in every field and his literary works are beautiful and abundant in hidden
> merits. He has a book called *Characteristics and Comparisons Between Arabic and the
> 'Ajami* which is a grand book, indicating his knowledge of the language and its
> principles. No one has produced anything similar to it. He authored it for the [Buyid]
> king 'Aḍud al-Dawla b. Būya, and he was attributed to the *Shu'ūbiyya*, and it was said
> that he was biased against the Arab nation. He also has a book, *Chronology of Isfahan*,
> which is one of the extraordinary, valuable books, with many wonders. Due to the
> abundance of his works and his delving into every type of knowledge, the ignorant
> people of Isfahan called him "The Peddler of Delusions." Indeed, as is said: whoever is
> ignorant of something opposes it.[119]

As it seems from the final claim of this entry by al-Qifṭī, there were even some "ignorant

people" in Ḥamza's hometown of Isfahan, presumably fellow Persians, who did not think so

highly of his work. This claim comes across as quite striking considering that Ḥamza was

supposedly famous in his hometown during his lifetime due to his knowledge of the Persian

language and of the history of the Persians. If such claims are true, it might turn out in fact that

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118. Savant, "Naming Shuʿūbīs," 172.

119. 'Alī b. Yūsuf al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāh 'alā anbāh al-nuḥāh*, vol. 1, ed. Muḥammad 'Abū al-Faḍl 'Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1986) 370-371. I find al-Qifṭī's praise of Ḥamza interesting considering Franz Rosenthal's entry for Ḥamza in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* states that al-Qifṭī himself refers to Ḥamza as a "Persian nationalist with strong prejudices against the Arabs." It seems more to me that al-Qifṭī is simply restating an accusation rather than making one; see: *Encyclopedia of Islam*, s.v. "ḤAMZA AL-IṢFAHĀNĪ."

Ḥamza's works were not as appreciated by his own people as one would perhaps expect. Lastly, *al-Tanbīḥ ʿalá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf* frankly contains no anti-Arab sentiments at all. What could be construed as the closest thing is his belief that the inventors of the Arabic script did not pay attention to the confusion it may cause people due to it being an *abjad* and having similarly looking letters before the addition of diacritics and dots to differentiate between them, but this is really only one small critique which, to me, does not imply any sense of anti-Arabness but rather only serves as a small critique of the *abjad*'s creators from centuries before Ḥamza's own lifetime. Not to mention that he also claims a similar issue existed in the Pahlavi (Middle Persian) script as well, and that the Arabic word *taṣḥif* ultimately derived from Persian because of this.[120] What cannot be mistaken above all else is Ḥamza's admiration for Arabic poetry and the attention to detail which he undertook to ensure the correct transmission of the Arabic language. I would ultimately argue that Ḥamza represented a middle-ground in early Medieval Islamic society, one that attempted to embrace—despite pulls from either side—both his inherited Persian identity rooted in the backdropped "idea of Iran" of his day and the learned Arabic identity which was granted to him through means of both an education from a young age and the continuing integration of a wider Islamic society. It very well may have only been upon the rise of the Buyid Dynasty in western Iran and Ḥamza's subsequent patronage of ʿAḍud al-Dawla that such accusations of being a *shuʿūbī* were made towards him.

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120. al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Tanbīḥ ʿalá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf*, 24-27; here Ḥamza interestingly quotes from Aristotle's theory of correspondence; see: Aristotle, "On Interpretation," in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), 40-61.

Ḥamza as Historian

Despite the *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'* being the most analyzed source of

Ḥamza's by modern scholars, it remains only one of three historical works written by him (but

the only extant one remaining) among his large corpus of primarily philological and cultural

books. His other two historical works, *Tā'rīkh Iṣbahān* and *Iṣbahan wa-'akhbāruhā*, were both

histories on his hometown of Isfahan. Despite Elton L. Daniel suggesting that the *Tā'rīkh*

Iṣbahān was "probably the more important work" in comparison to *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ*

wa'l-anbiyā',[121] it most likely followed the same style of historiography as the latter, which

heavily focused on a relatively simple and sequential list of chronologies for ten different

"kingdoms" of the [known] world.[122] Thus, *Tā'rīkh Iṣbahān* was probably a simple

chronological work of the rulers of Isfahan from the beginning of time up to Ḥamza's lifetime

which also broke this history into periods based on the ethnic groups of its rulers. I would argue

instead that a book such as *Iṣbahan wa-'akhbāruhā* would be a much more detailed narrative of

the history of Isfahan, and such a work could have probably contained much of Ḥamza's own

personal thoughts of his own city's history. I base this argument simply on the titles of these

respective works which can give us such insight into how the histories were presented to readers.

The Arabic term *tā'rīkh* refers to a focus on chronology, whereas *akhbār* (sg. *khabar*) implies a

more narrative-based retelling of history.[123]

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121. *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, s.v. "Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī."

122. I use "kingdom" in quotes when referring to the ten subjects of the *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa-al-anbiya'* because only some of them would be considered actual monarchies per se while others are simply tribes.

123. *Kitāb al-akhbār al-ṭiwāl* (*The Long Narratives*) by Abū Ḥanīfa Dīnawarī (d. 895) is a great example of the *akhbār* style of Arabic historiography. In the modern sense, *akhbār* is used to mean "news," but is derived from the same root as the verb *khabara* ("to experience"). The term *tārīkh* was adopted into Persian as a much more general term for "history."

The treatment of the pre-Islamic past of Iran by Muslim historians in the Early Islamic and Medieval periods presents a fascinating realm of research due to the wide array of sources, writing styles and attitudes which contained therein. What has intrigued scholars most in this field is the way in which early Muslim Iranians attempted to reconcile their own pre-Islamic histories and mythologies with their newly inherited Abrahamic-based ones. This process usually involved a large deal of syncretism and reasoning on the part of the historian. Al-Ṭabarī, one of the most formidable historians of the 'Abbasid period, was one of the first to tell the history of the world from a syncretized Islamic and Iranian perspective, often using the mythological and historical chronologies of Iran as a reference point from which the Qur'anic chronologies could be placed in time and space.[124] A great example of this syncretism is al-Ṭabarī's origination of Zoroaster, who he reports to have originally been a servant close to the Biblical prophet Jeremiah before being exiled to Azerbaijan:

> It was in the time of Bishtāsb that Zoroaster, whom the Zoroastrians consider their prophet, appeared. Some scholars from among the People of the Book in Palestine assert that Zoroaster was a servant of one of the prophet Jeremiah's disciples, and that he was close to the latter and favored by him. But he betrayed his master and slandered him. The master invoked wrath, and the man thus became a leper. He reached [Azerbaijan] where he started the Zoroastrian faith.[125]

Not only do such passages make a chronological base in time by means of Persian kings, but they attempt to integrate a Persian lineage with that of the *ahl al-kitāb* (Christians and Jews – lit.

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124. Michael Whitby, "Al-Ṭabarī: The Period before Jesus," in *Al-Ṭabarī: A Medieval Muslim Historian and His Work*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 2008), 18-24.

125. al-Ṭabarī, *History*, vol. 4, *The Ancient Kingdoms*, trans. Moshe Perlmann (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 46-47; Perlmann notes that Zoroaster seems to have been conflated with Baruch ben Naria, an attested scribe of Jeremiah's, in Syriac and Arabic sources.

"people of the book") and ultimately insert the Persians into the chronology leading to the

eventual founding of Islam in the seventh century.[126]

As more and more scholars of Persian origin began to rise in prominence based on their

scholarly accomplishments, this style of historiographical writing became very common among

many other historians during the "Iranian Intermezzo" of the ninth and tenth centuries.[127] A

student of al-Ṭabarī during his time in Baghdad, albeit probably very briefly, Ḥamza naturally

also used such a base in the *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'* some decades later.[128]

However, Ḥamza's chronographic style of writing does not leave much room for such fanciful

syncretism. Very much focused on the correction of dates given in previous books, the *Tā'rīkh*

sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā' instead gives each "kingdom's" chronology of rulers sequentially

in chapters without almost any weaving between them. He usually opts to give a contemporary

Persian monarch when listing the rulers of another "kingdom," for example:

> I read in a certain history of Yemen, that Dhū'l 'Avād reigned during the time of Shāpur
> [III] b. Ardashīr [II], and after him Dhū'l 'Avād, during the time of Hormizd b. Shāpur,
> they were in control of the affairs of four kings and their sister Abdhām. Dhū'l 'Avād
> reigned for sixty-three years. ... After Abraha, Sahban b. Mokhrith, during the time of
> Yazdegerd [I], the father of Bahrām Gūr (Bahrām V); and during the same time, Mondzir
> b. 'Amr lived amongst the Lakhmids and the death of Bahrām occurred a few days before
> the death of Mondzir: Sahban, the son of Mokhrith, was appointed over Yemen
> throughout all the days when Yazdegerd [I] and his son Bahrām Gūr reigned. Then the

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126. The ever-present scholarly debate as to who exactly is referred to in the Qur'ān as "people of the book" is not of much importance to us here, but the general consensus is that it refers to Christians and Jews. However, there has also been a significant amount of acceptance for Zoroastrians being included in this category as well; see: Fred M. Donner, "Early Muslims and Peoples of the Book," in *Routledge Handbook on Early Islam*, ed. Herbert Berg (London: Routledge, 2017), 181-182.

127. The "Iranian Intermezzo" is a term coined by Vladimir Minorsky which refers to the period c. 821-999 with the rise of mainly autonomous Iranian dynasties from the Ṭāhirids to the Sāmānids underneath the 'Abbasid caliphal structure; see: V. Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian History* (London: Taylor's Foreign Press, 1953), 110-116.

128. Ḥamza first visited Baghdad in 920/921, and al-Ṭabarī reportedly died in 922/923, but 'Abu Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī reports that Ḥamza was a student of al-Ṭabarī's; see: Mittwoch, "Die literarische Tätigkeit Ḥamza al-Iṣbahānīs," 115.

kingdom was transferred to Sabakh b. Abraha b. Sabakh, during the time of Yazdegerd [II] b. Bahrām Gūr; and both kings reigned simultaneously for fifteen years.[129]

This systematic separation is not without reason though. As noted before, Ḥamza lived in a day of constant social upheaval, seeing possibly at least four or five different governments attempt and succeed to take Isfahan within his lifetime. The temporary nature of ruling kingdoms was certainly not lost on Ḥamza, and he notes this as one of his reasons for writing the *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'* in the first place: "I will mention hereafter the tracts of the great nations throughout the whole world of the earth, as well as the seats of the lesser, which dwell among them, so that the authority which they have variously exercised, and the ends of the reigns of others whose age has ceased, the fortune of another people rising may be known."[130] Perhaps to Ḥamza, it only made sense to divide the entire world's history based on the rise and fall of its many "kingdoms" and utilize his infatuation with astrology to explain it all.

Ḥamza and the Restrictions of His Sources

A.C.S. Peacock's study on the *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'* presents itself as a prime example of the problematic nature of conflating Ḥamza's writing on Persian history and culture as harboring anti-Arab sentiments. He makes the claim that Ḥamza maintains a "special concern" with the construction of fire temples in Iran's pre-Islamic period and uses this as

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129. al-Iṣfahānī, *Annalium Libri X*, 104-105; demarcations in brackets of specific Persian monarchs are my own. This synchronization was noticed very early on in some of the earliest European works of scholarship on Ḥamza; see: Antoine-Isaac Silverstre de Sacy, "Mémoire ou l'on examine l'autorité des synchronismes établis par Ḥamza Isfahani entre les rois de Perse, d'une part, et, de l'autre, les rois arabes du Yémen et de Hira," *Mémoires de l'Institut national de France* 10, (1833): 1-29; the dates and names which Ḥamza uses in his chapter on the Himyarite kingdom of Yemen seem to be confused, but for al-Ṭabarī's account, which could have been one of Ḥamza's sources based on the given details, see: al-Ṭabarī, *History*, vol. 5, *The Sāsānids, the Byzantines, the Lakhmids, and Yemen*, trans. C.E. Bosworth (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 121-126. Likewise, Ḥamza refers to a "Hormizd b. Shāpur" (presumably referring to a son of Shāpur III), but Shāpur III's son and successor was Bahrām IV, the brother and predecessor of Yazdegerd I.

130. al-Iṣfahānī, *Annalium Libri X*, 1-2.

evidence for a pro-Zoroastrian and anti-Muslim (and thus anti-Arab) leaning by Ḥamza.[131]

Peacock likewise uses the number of page allocations to each of the ten different "kingdoms"

about which he writes as evidence for favoring one over the other.[132] As mentioned in the

literature review previously, Zychowicz-Coghill points out Peacock's incorrect number of pages

dedicated to the "kings of the Quraysh" in the book's tenth chapter, but this also still presents a

problem if we are seeking to analyze Ḥamza's opinions and sentiments towards his subjects. I

argue that page length alone is frankly a very weak evidence base for two important reasons.

First, of the three extant manuscripts of the *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'*, only one of

them can be positively dated, and only to the fifteenth century at that.[133] The unfortunate nature

of hand-copied manuscripts is that they leave lots of room for the possibility of either omission

or addition of information to the original author's work.[134] Second, I believe Ḥamza, like many

historians purely focused on chronology over narrative, to be at the mercy of the sources allotted

to him.[135] This would explain the "obsession" with fire temples, as the Sasanian records would of

course laud their construction as an honorable kingly duty for the people.[136] The question of

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131. Peacock, "Early Persian Historians," 63.

132. Ibid., 64.

133. Brockelmann, 219; Leiden University Libraries, *Tawārīkh Sinī Mulūk al-Arḍ wa'l-Anbiyā', Or. 767*, University of Leiden Libraries Catalogue, WorldCat, accessed March 10, 2024, https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/permalink/31UKB_LEU/18s393l/alma9939282090302711; Shiva Mihan, "The Romantic Sufi: An Early Copy of the Divan of Kamal Khujandi Copied by Jaʿfar Tabrizi," Asian and African Studies (Blog), *The British Library* (September 18, 2023): https://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2023/09/the-romantic-sufi.html.

134. Marcus Walsh, "Theories of Text, Editorial Theory, and Textual Criticism," in *The Book: A Global History*, eds. Michael F. Suarez and H.R. Woudhuysen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 258-259.

135. Although writing in different languages and essentially under different dynasties, similar arguments have been made about Abul-Qāsem Ferdowsī's *Shāhnāmeh*; see: Dick Davis, "The Problem of Ferdowsi's Sources," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116, no. 1 (1996): 48-57. Due to the poetic nature of the *Shāhnāmeh*, it would seem that Ferdowsi possessed a little more creative freedom with the use of his sources.

136. Kurosh Salehi and Arezou Nazar, "A Description of Fire Temples of Ancient Iran from the Perspective of Islamic Historians," *Folia Orientalia* 55, (2018): 414.

sources is a significant factor that must be taken into consideration before jumping to

conclusions of which ethnicity of the ten written about Ḥamza had any bias towards—what are

the sources which Ḥamza had available to him, and how does this affect how much he may write

about a particular "kingdom."

Luckily for us, Ḥamza tells us in detail which books on the pre-Islamic Persian kings he

uses and also why they pose problems to the historian of even his own day. He lists seven books

by the following authors: Ibn al-Muqaffa, Muhammad b. al-Jahm al-Barmaki, Zadawayh b.

Shahawayh al-Isfahani, Muhammad b. Bahram b. Mityar al-Isfahani, Hisham b. Qasim al-

Isfahani, Bahram b. Mardanshah, and a book "taken from the library of Ma'mūn."[137] Ḥamza

states that there is much confusion across all the books he consulted as to the dates and lengths of

many kings' reigns. He quotes the astrologist Abu Ma'shar (d. 886) who says "this kind of

corruption afflicts a nation's history only when it has been eroded by the passage of time and its

days have been long. So when that history is copied from one book to another, or from one

language to another, errors creep in due to additions and omissions."[138] Thus, Ḥamza made it his

goal to correct the dates once and for all and establish an authoritative chronology.

The fact that there already appears to be many books focusing on the pre-Islamic history

of Iran's kings by Ḥamza's lifetime, and even more so that several of them were produced by

fellow natives of Isfahan,[139] certainly explains why his chapter on Iran's pre-Islamic history

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137. al-Iṣfahānī, English translation of chapter one of *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'*, in Robert G. Hoyland (ed., trans.), *The 'History of the Kings of the Persians' in Three Arabic Chronicles: The Transmission of the Iranian Past from Late Antiquity to Early Islam* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018), 26-27.

138. Ibid., 28.

139. Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila has written the most recent authoritative work regarding the *Khwadāynāmag*, the Middle Persian text which supposedly served as the basis for the later Arabic and Persian texts regarding Iran's pre-Islamic history. The actual nature of its existence (as being one single authoritative book or several books of a sort of tradition, etc.) is still highly debated by scholars. Hämeen-Anttila argues against referring to a "*Khwadāynāmag*

would be more lengthy than other chapters. Take for example chapter four, which focuses on the

history of the Egyptians (Copts). Ḥamza can merely allot only a paragraph to their chronology—

not because of any bias or lack of interest, but simply due to a lack of sources. His sole citation is

an astronomical table from the *Almagest* of Claudius Ptolemy (c. 100-170) and writes:

> In the most ancient times, the Egyptians had kings who were called Pharaohs, just as the
> Nimrods of the Nabataeans and the Ptolemies of the Greeks, but these all perished, and
> their deeds were consigned to oblivion as much as their monuments were destroyed.
> There is nothing left of them, neither a narrative to be handed down, nor a history to be
> read.[140]

We can essentially apply the same reasoning as to why the fifth chapter, dealing with the

history of the Israelites, would be relatively longer than other chapters as well. Ḥamza utilized

the help of a Jewish man living in Baghdad by the name of Ṣidqīyā "who claimed that he could

recite the books of the Torah by heart." [141] Ḥamza even gives us the names of the twelve books of

the Hebrew Bible which he utilizes to build the chronology of the Israelites. He also cites another

"book by a chronicler (*ba'ḍ ruwāt al-siyar*)" which even makes mention of Cyrus the Great, who

had at this point not been remembered in the Iranian cultural memory. Ḥamza simply gives his

Hebrew name, Koresh (Old Persian *Kūrush*), but notes that the Jews did conflate him with the

Persian king Bahman b. Isfandiyar. Yet, Ḥamza disagrees with this based on his own compiled

chronological data.[142] I believe it is important here to note Ḥamza's unwillingness to accept such

tradition," but instead refers to it as "a Middle Persian work, written, as it would seem, in the sixth century and later
lost without trace in the original language," and states that it is critical for scholars not to confuse or conflate this
book with the wider corpus of "Persian national history" in general; see: Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, *Khwadāynāmag:
The Middle Persian Book of Kings* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 2-9.

140. al-Iṣfahānī, *Annalium Libri X,* 63-64.

141. al-Iṣfahānī, English translation of chapter five of *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'*, in Camilla Adang,
"The Chronology of the Israelites according to Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 32,
(2006): 291-293; five of the books listed, according to Adang, are either uncanonical or not completely known based
on the given Arabic names.

142. Ibid., 294-295; Touraj Daryaee, "On Forgetting Cyrus and Remembering the Achaemenids in Late Antique
Iran," in *Cyrus the Great: Life and Lore*, ed. M. Rahim Shayegan (Boston: Ilex Foundation, 2018), 226-227.

a noble deed as freeing the Jews from exile by a Persian king without the chronological data to support it.

Conclusion

This paper has served as a new attempt at contextualizing Ḥamza through at least two of his works, whereas previous scholarship has usually chosen to rely on one—most commonly *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'*. I have proposed that the "centrality of Iran" in the work is both, A, not unique to Ḥamza, and B, not as pronounced as other scholars have claimed it to be. I would instead further argue that, with the ever-rising number of Persian scholars and readers in Ḥamza's day—especially those being first-generation Muslims—Iranians perhaps made up a significant percentage of his readership. Savant has similarly argued for this phenomenon as well, claiming "as time passed and the composition of reading publics changed to include more Iranians, works began to take greater account of them."[143] Furthermore, the infatuation with subsequent rising and falling of states also seems to be a large pattern in Perso-Islamicate historiography entirely, seen in works such as *al-Akhbar al-tiwal* by Dīnawarī, Bal'amī's translation of al-Ṭabarī's histories, and even Ghaznavid-era works such as the *Shāhnāmeh* of Ferdowsī and the *Tā'rīkh Mas'udi* by Beyhaqi.[144] However, while this work does yield some useful information to better understand Ḥamza's predispositions and ideas, it is highly evidenced by his bibliography of both extant and lost works that history was not his primary field of scholarship but rather philological and literary matters (poetry in particular).

Although I have only utilized one of the four extant philological works by Ḥamza for this paper, it has appeared nonetheless that—within *al-Tanbīh 'alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf* at least—that Ḥamza did not harbor any anti-Arab sentiment and was highly engaged in the active scholarly

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143. Savant, *The New Muslims*, 108.

144. Julie Scott Meisami, "The Past in Service of the Present: Two Views of History in Medieval Persia," *Poetics Today* 14, no. 2 (1993): 272; Peacock, *Medieval Islamic Historiography and Political Legitimacy: Bal'amī's Tārīkhnāma* (London: Routledge, 2007), 114-123; Bonner, *Al-Dīnawarī's Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl: An Historiographical Study of Sasanian Iran* (Bures-sur-Yvette: Groupe pour l'étude de la civilisation du Moyen-Orient, 2015), 34-39.

community of Baghdad and perhaps Baṣra as well. It has instead been through the previous scholarship on Ḥamza that such ideas have not only come to fruition but also maintained their place for over a century. The conception of the *Shuʿūbiyya* in the early literature of modern Islamic studies and the need to place a name and a figure as part of a proposed "movement" or "party"—despite, as Savant reiterates, "the slimness of its evidential base"—has led to Ḥamza being unfairly attributed populist and anti-Arab sentiments without any further substantial evidence.[145] Furthermore, a conflation between the *Shuʿūbiyya* and an appreciation for Persian culture, by Ḥamza or others, has seriously misconstrued both Ḥamza and any deeper meaning as to what the *Shuʿūbiyya* could have ultimately been in its tenth-century context. As stated before, Ḥamza was clearly a passionate linguist and philologist, and he was very concerned with the correct usage of Arabic. I would argue that, as a born-and-raised Muslim of Iranian origin who grew up in a city where the vestiges of the pre-Islamic Iranian history were certainly found in the Zoroastrian priests still present and influential in his day,[146] Ḥamza attempted to reconcile the two facets of his own identity, and his main outlet for doing so was through undertaking linguistic and cultural comparison between Arabs and Persians.

Furthermore, the inheritance of both identities which are thought to be "polarizing" in the context of Early and Medieval Islam—Arab and ʿ*Ajam*—is not a situation unique to Ḥamza in this period. Two scholars previously mentioned in this thesis, ʿAbu Ali al-Fārisī and Ibn Qutayba also found themselves as inheritors of both the Arabs and the ʿ*Ajam*. The former in terms of both ethnicity (being half-Persian and half-Arab) and education and the latter similarly to Ḥamza (ethnically Persian with an education firmly rooted in the Arabic literary and cultural tradition).

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145. Savant, "Naming Shuʿūbīs," 168.

146. Frye, "Die Wiedergeburt Persiens um die Jahrtausendwende," *Der Islam* 35, (1960): 42-51.

Ibn Qutayba obviously espoused the superiority of the Arabs over his own people while those such as Ḥamza tried to find ways to balance these identities. This can ignite a larger investigation into the rise of non-Arabs specifically entering such fields as Arabic philology and literary criticism, especially during the waning of the ‘Abbasid Caliphate’s influence. It seems that the ‘*Ajam* not only saw themselves as inheritors of their non-Arab ethnicity but also to the literary heritage of the Arabs through the connection that is the importance of the Arabic language in Islam, and further garnered a sense of authority in its canonization during the Early Islamic and Medieval periods.

In light of my previous statements, more in-depth analyses of Ḥamza’s other published works will only bring to fruition more knowledge of him. It is critical that scholars take advantage of these publications, as it will not only shed more light on Ḥamza himself but also on the scholarly activities of the mid-tenth century under the ‘Abbasids and during a critical time in their history. Although Mittwoch did some brief analyses of *al-Muwāzana bayn al-‘arabī wa’l-fārsīya* in 1909 from the manuscript in Cairo, there have not been to my knowledge any other attempts. This work would seem to me a very strong source of information for Ḥamza’s stances on both Arabic and Persian, even if the manuscript is fragmented. It would furthermore be very lucrative to search through its text for any mentions of the *Shu’ūbiyya*. My argument that *al-Tanbīh ‘alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf* could be a work seeking to discredit the reliability of grammarians of the Kūfa school certainly deserves its own treatment and would require from the researcher an extensive knowledge of the workings of Arabic poetry as well as further investigation into the works of scholars from both the aforementioned schools of grammar.

Aside from these proposals, a comparative historiography of Ḥamza and other contemporaries could also allow us to better understand his predispositions and writing styles.

Popular historical accounts such as those of Alexander the Great could certainly be analyzed through the eyes of Ḥamza and perhaps compared with those of Dīnawarī and Tha'ālibī—more importantly due to these three figures writing their histories across three different styles: *tā'rīkh* (chronological/annalistic), *akhbar* (narrative-based) and *siyar* (deed-focused and biographical), respectively. Such inquiries dealing with Ḥamza's historical works would also certainly need to take into consideration the remaining fragments of quotes from his lost works cited by other scholars, such as in 'Abu Nu'aym al-Isfahānī's (948-1038) *Dhikr Akhbār Iṣfahān* (*Memorial of the Chronicles of Isfahan*) and Mufaḍal b. Sa'd al-Māfarrūkhī's *Kitāb maḥāsin Iṣfahān* (*The Beauties of Isfahan*).[147]

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147. Jürgen Paul, "The Histories of Isfahan: Mafarrukhi's *Kitāb Maḥāsin Iṣfahān*," *Iranian Studies* 33, no. 1-2 (2000): 117-118. Al-Māfarrūkhī's birth and death dates are unknown, but his work on Isfahan was probably composed between 1072 and 1092; see: ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF ISLAM, s.v. "al-Māfarrūkhī."

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Appendix

The following is a list of published editions of the two works by Ḥamza which I have engaged with in this thesis, namely *Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'* and *al-Tanbīh ‘alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf*. The former especially has been dealt with much more extensively under various titles, so I wanted to document its publication and any translations (partial or in full) as much as possible. All of the following entries have been compiled here either from my own obtainment of them or from reliable library database information and are all arranged by year of publication.

al-Tanbīh ‘alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf

Kitāb al-tanbīh ‘alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf. Egypt: al-Maṭb'aa al-Salafiyya, 1935.

> A facsimile reproduction of a manuscript formerly owned by ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Maymanī, whose name is stamped on several leaves therein.

*al-Tanbīh ‘alá ḥudūth al-*taṣḥīf. Edited by Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Yāsīn. Baghdad: Maktabat al-Nahḍah, 1967.

al-Tanbīh ‘alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf. Edited by Muḥammad ‘As'ad Ṭalis. Damascus: Majma' al-Lugha al-‘Arabiyya, 1968.

> Second edition published by Dār Ṣādir in Beirut, 1992.

al-Tanbīh ‘alá ḥudūth al-taṣḥīf. Aleppo: al-Majd, 1999.

> Editor not listed in publication to my knowledge.

Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'

Historia imperii vetustissimi Joctanidarum in Arabia felice. Edited and translated by Albert Schultens. Harderwijk: Apud Ioannem van Kasteel, 1786.

> Bilingual Arabic text and Latin translation of chapter eight, spanning pages 18-45 (Arabic on even pages, Latin on odd pages). Additionally includes similar texts by Abū al-Fidā, al-Nuwayrī, al-Ṭabarī and al-Mas'ūdī. Small selections of Schultens's initial translations first appeared in 1775 in an appendix to Johann Gottfried Eichhorn's *Monumenta antiquissimae historiae Arabum*.

Historia praecipuorum Arabum regnorum rerumque ab iis gestarum ante Islamismum: e codicibus manuscriptis Arabicis. Edited and translated by Jens Lassen Rasmussen. Copenhagen: J.F. Schultz, 1817.

Arabic text and Latin translation of chapters six, seven, nine, and the first two parts of chapter ten. Refers to the larger work as *Tā'rīkh al-Umam*.

Hamsae Ispahanensis annalium caput quartum. Edited and translated by J.M.E. Gottwaldt. Wrocław: n.p., 1836.

Arabic text and Latin translation of chapter four.

Ḥamzae Ispahanensis annalium libri X. Edited and translated by J.M.E. Gottwaldt. 2 vols. Saint Petersburg/Leipzig: [Apud Leopoldum Voss?], 1844-1848.

Two-volume publication with the first volume containing the Arabic text and the second containing a Latin translation. Several on-demand reprints (folio scan reproductions) exist under several different independent publishers. I am currently working on my own retyped edition to be published in the summer of 2024 by Siyavash Books.

Tārīkh mulūk al-arḍ. Edited by Mawlawī Kabīr al-Dīn Aḥmad. Kolkata: Mazhar al-Ajaib, 1866.

Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'. Berlin: Kawiani, 1921/1922.

Editor not listed in publication. Some sources cite this as the "second edition" of Gottwaldt's *Annalium Libri X*. It was instead edited based on Gottwaldt's transcription of the manuscript with some corrections and is not actually titled as such.

Daudpota, U.M. "The Annals of Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī*." The Journal of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute* 21-24, (1932): 58-120.

English translation of chapter one, spanning pages 63-110. Also includes a chart of Ḥamza's calculations for the dates of Nowruz from the Hijra up until his lifetime (originally laid out in text in the book's tenth chapter), spanning pages 111-120. Also published in standalone book form by J.J. Modi in Bombay, 1932. Some library databases list a reprint by Taylor & Francis in 2013, but I have been unable to locate any actual existence of this.

Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'. Beirut: Dar Maktabat al-Hayah, 1961.

Editor not listed in publication to my knowledge. Reprinted in 1985 and 1990.

Tārikh-i payāmbarān va šāhān. Translated by Ja'far Sha'ār. Tehran: Bonyād-i Farhang-i Irān, 1967.

>Persian translation commissioned and published by the Iranian Culture Foundation. Second edition published by Amir Kabir Press in Tehran, 1988 or 1989. This is the only other full-length translation of the work besides Gottwaldt's Latin translation.

Adang, Camilla. "The Chronology of the Israelites according to Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī." *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 32, (2006): 286-310.

>English translation of chapter five, spanning pages 291-301, along with Adang's analyzation of the work itself.

Tā'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'. Edited by Jawād al-Tibrizī. Beirut: Dar al-Warrak, 2017.

The 'History of the Kings of the Persians' in Three Arabic Chronicles: The Transmission of the Iranian Past from Late Antiquity to Early Islam. Edited and translated by Robert G. Hoyland. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018.

>English translation of chapter one, spanning pages 26-78. Additionally includes translations of similar works by al-Mas'ūdī and al-Ya'qūbī.