ON EARLY ISLAMIC HISTORIOGRAPHY: ABÜ ISMĀ'IL AL-AZDĪ AND HIS FUTUH AL-SHĀM

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The present paper examines the Futuh al-shām (Conquests of Syria) attributed to Abū Ismā'īl al-Azdi, in an attempt to establish its authenticity, date, and provenance. Several historical sources confirm the authorship of this work and demonstrate that al-Azdi’s reporting reflects little religious or regional favoritism. Identifying the origin of the material that comprises al-Azdi’s text highlights the similarity between the reports given by him and those attributed to other narrators of his time. Their common early source is likely to be Abū Mikhnaf al-Azdi (d. 157/774), an early narrator from Kūfā with proto-Shī‘ite sympathies.

THE FUTUH AL-SHĀM BY ABŪ ISMĀ’IL AL-AZDĪ is one of the earliest extant Arabic sources dealing with the Islamic conquest of Syria and is one of the few extant historical documents from the second/eighth century. It is, however, commonly ignored in most modern scholarship as a result of Michael J. de Goeje’s negative criticism of it, which dates back to 1864. In recent years, this state of affairs has started to change, though slowly, as a result of a study by Lawrence I. Conrad that reestablished some confidence in the Azdi text. Nevertheless, further research is needed to solve some of the puzzles that still pertain to this particularly valuable document.

The aim of the following study, therefore, is to examine this book in the light of newly found evidence, mainly sources that have not been checked by modern re-

——This paper is based on my dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts in History (American University of Beirut, 1996). I would like to thank my advisor, Tarif Khalidi, and the two readers, Nadia Maria El-Cheikh and Maher Jarrar, for their valuable comments and criticism. I also thank my classmate and friend Khalid Rouayheb, with whom I had many discussions regarding this paper. Certainly, mistakes remain my own responsibility.

1 M. J. de Goeje, Mémoire sur le Futouho’s-Sham attribué à Abou Ismail al-Baṣri, in Mémoires d’histoire et de géographie orientales, no. 2 (Leiden, 1864).


searchers or were not available to them. An investigation of the transmission of the Azdi text, as well as the evidence it provides, establishes its authenticity, date, and provenance. Azdi’s Futuh al-shām is, in fact, a late second/eighth century compilation based on a work having the same title by Abū Mikhnaf al-Azdi (d. 157/774) of Kūfā, and hence it depended originally on material that was in circulation in Kūfā.

AZDĪ AND HIS FUTUH AL-SHĀM

Abū Ismā’īl Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Azdi al-Baṣri is an obscure personality. His name is absent from the known biographical dictionaries. There is one ambiguous exception. In Kitāb al-thiqār by Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī (d. 354/965), a Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Azdi is mentioned as being a traditionist from Baṣra who transmitted hadiths from ʿĀsim ibn Hilāl al- qaṣī (d. ca. 185/797) and from ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn ʿAṭā’ al-Baṣrī (d. 204/819). Probably the same traditionist is the one mentioned in a chain of authorities (ismād) quoted in Hilyat al-awliyā’ by Abū Nuʿaym al-Īṣfahānī (d. 430/1039). There, he is cited as the informant of a certain Yaḥyā ibn ʿĪsā, who was also from Baṣra and who was alive in 214/829. One can, therefore, place the life

3 Ibn Ḥibbān, Kitāb al-thiqār (Haydarabad, 1973–83), IX: 84.
of Muhammad al-Azdi the traditionist in the late second/eighth and early third/ninth century.

The information found in the two dictionaries is, however, sparse. The Azdi of Futuh al-sham becomes familiar to compilers of histories and biographical dictionaries after the sixteenth/seventeenth century, but only as the author of a book entitled Futuh al-sham. Therefore, it is possible that the traditionist and the author of Futuh al-sham are different Aazdis.

The two surviving manuscripts of Azdi’s Futuh al-sham are now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, nos. Arabe 1664 and 1665. They comprise 82 and 149 folios, respectively. The first manuscript was copied in Jerusalem on 22 Dhu al-Hijja 613 (23 April 1217) by a Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghassani. The second, which is clearer than the first, was copied on 1 Dhu al-Qa‘da 764 (12 August 1363). Arabe 1664 refers to Azdi’s text under the title Kitab muhassaar futuh al-sham li-l-Waqidi (Synopsis of the Conquests of Syria by Waqidi) by Abū Isma‘īl Muhammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Azdi al-Baṣri. But this title does not appear in the other manuscript, and it seems that it was added later by one of the owners of that manuscript.

Azdi’s Futuh al-sham also exists today in two editions. The first was published in Calcutta in 1854 by William N. Lees, who edited the work, with the title Kitab futuh al-sham, on the basis of one slightly damaged manuscript found in India. A few pages at the beginning of that manuscript are missing or badly worm-eaten, as are another three pages in the body of the text, and few pages at the end of it. The second edition was published in Cairo in 1970 by ‘Abd al-Mun‘im ‘Āmir. ‘Āmir, not aware of the presence of the two manuscripts at the Bibliothèque Nationale, claimed to have found another manuscript in Damascus in a private library and to have based his new edition, entitled Ta‘rikh futuh al-sham, on it.  ‘Āmir described the manuscript he found as complete, compared to the incomplete one Lees had published. However, by comparing both editions, it is clear that ‘Āmir copied Lees’ text, concocting a few additions to make it appear different and more complete. Apparently, neither of the two manuscripts at the Bibliothèque Nationale seems to have been the one used by Lees, because they both contain the folios that are missing from his edition. In this study, Lees’ edition is used as a base, and the other two manuscripts are referred to only when necessary.

AZDI IN MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

The main problems concerning Azdi’s Futuh al-sham are first, the problem of authorship, that is, whether the work is really that of Azdi or of someone else; second, the problem of dating the material in it; and third, the problem of establishing the provenance of this material. One can add on the basis of these three problems a fourth, namely that if the text is originally that of Azdi, how can we know that its material retained its original form and was not subjected to changes and alterations over the years?

Lees emphasized the importance of the Futuh al-sham by saying that it is “one of the most valuable remains of Arabic history that has ever been published; . . . I am not aware that we have any complete work in original

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8 The worm-eaten part at the beginning of the text is reproduced by Lees at the end: see Kitab futuh al-sham, ed. William N. Lees (Calcutta, 1854), appendix, 1–3. Henceforth, Lees.
9 About the condition of the manuscript which Lees used, see Lees, preface, v–vii; and for the three missing pages in the body of the text, see Lees, 90 (n. 2), 120 (n. 2), 178 (n. 2).
11 About the manuscript ‘Āmir claimed to have found, see his introduction, 1–m.
12 After comparing both edited texts, I found them nearly identical in almost every respect. Both begin and end in the same manner; and curiously, the worm-eaten parts are in most cases identical in both texts. ‘Āmir also borrowed the footnotes and comments of Lees without acknowledgment. The differences, however, are mainly verbal; in a few instances lines or chains of authorities either are dropped from or added to ‘Āmir’s edition. ‘Āmir neglected to refer to the missing folios of Azdi’s manuscript, and interestingly enough, by comparing the mysterious additions that he makes in lieu of these missing folios with the respective passages in the two manuscripts of the Bibliothèque Nationale, it is obvious that they do not match: compare ‘Āmir, 102(4)–103(12) to Azdi (M1), 28b(12)–29a(9) and Azdi (M2), 52a(11)–53a(8); ‘Āmir, 137(2–8) to Azdi (M1), 38b(16)–39a(15) and Azdi (M2), 69b(1)–70a(10). Moreover, the addition in ‘Āmir, 257(13)–259(6), does not figure, on the one hand, in either of the two manuscripts and, on the other hand, is not even in accord with the preceding section in his edition. Thus it is clear that ‘Āmir copied the text of Lees. For general comments on ‘Āmir’s edition, see Akram D. al-‘Umari, Dirasat tārikhiyya (Medina, 1981), 70–71, 76–79; Conrad, 29–32.
that was written at so early a period as this fotoo.\textsuperscript{13} Since 1854, several other early Arabic compilations have been published. Even so, the work of Azdi remains one of the earliest works in the Futuh\textsuperscript{14} genre to have been preserved. Lees also faced the problem of not finding any notice for Azdi in the dictionaries available to him and resorted to analyzing the chains of authorities in the Azdi text for a possible dating of the period in which Azdi lived. The conclusion he came to was that Azdi died around 178/794, or slightly before that date.\textsuperscript{14}

Shortly after Lees' edition, and belying his expectation that it would throw light on some of the obscurities of early Islamic history, de Goeje published a censored criticism of the text in which he ruled out any possibility of dating it to the early Islamic period. De Goeje, who had in front of him Lees' edition only, argued that Azdi never existed, that his name was a corruption of the name of the famous traditionist Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muhammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870),\textsuperscript{15} and that Futuh\textsuperscript{16} al-shām was compiled at the time of the Crusades\textsuperscript{17} for the glorification of Islam and the heroes who made it triumphant.\textsuperscript{17}

The assertion by de Goeje that the text of Azdi is a mere forgery was based upon several wrong inferences. For instance, he identified Muhammad ibn Yūsuf, who is quoted in the Azdi text thirteen times, as “Mohammed ibn Josouf ibn Wākid ibn Othman Abou Abdollah ad-Dhahi ad-Farjābi (120–212), . . . et ce Mohammed ibn Jossouf est l'un des Schaikh's de Bokhārī.”\textsuperscript{18} But the Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf identified by de Goeje does not refer to the Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf of the Azdi text because the latter appears to be the informant of Abū Mīkhnaḥ al-Azdi (d. 157/774), who identified him as Abū Yūsuf Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Anṣārī from the tribe of al-Ḥarrith ibn al-Khazraj\textsuperscript{19} from Medina. It is not the purpose of this study, however, to go over all of de Goeje's arguments. Conrad has already shown most of them to be inaccurate and none are confirmed by the present paper.

Because of de Goeje's criticism, Azdi's text has been generally ignored as if it did not exist—until, that is, Conrad published his analytical study. Arguing in favor of dating the text to the late second century or the early third century A.H. at the latest,\textsuperscript{20} Conrad concluded that Azdi was either a Syrian, from Ḥimṣ in particular, or lived in Ḥimṣ; that he died between 190 and 205 A.H.; and that his text is a Syrian account of the conquests of Syria.\textsuperscript{21} In addition to studying these chains of authorities, Conrad examined the text's use of certain terms that were applied in the early Islamic period but were replaced by other terms later on, such as the names of some cities. He also spotted echoes of early religious trends that were later eclipsed. Consequently, Conrad emphasized the importance of including Azdi's text in any study of the history of early Islamic Syria.\textsuperscript{22} Moreover, Conrad pointed to a possible link between accounts from Azdi's text and material transmitted on the authority of the famous Damascene traditionist Saʿīd ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Tanūkī (d. 167/783); on the basis of this he suggested a possibly now lost work by Saʿīd al-Tanūkī as a source for Azdi's text.\textsuperscript{23}

Thanks to Conrad's reappraisal, the Futuh\textsuperscript{24} al-shām is again being used.\textsuperscript{24} Walter Kaegi, stressing the fact that the Azdi text needs further study, argued that some of Azdi's statements "have more of a ring of authenticity than scholars have previously assumed," and that "the author or one of his sources possessed some very specific and accurate information concerning the reign of Heraclius."\textsuperscript{25} In modern Arab scholarship, Azdi and his Futuh\textsuperscript{26} al-shām appear in a few studies that accept its authenticity unquestionably.\textsuperscript{26} It suffices to mention Iḥsān ʿAbbās who briefly compared similar passages from the Azdi text and from the section on the conquests of Syria in the Futuh of Muḥammad ibn Aʿtham al-Kūfī (d. fourth/fifth century). On the basis of this comparison, ʿAbbās noted that Azdi's Futuh\textsuperscript{27} al-shām must be older than Ibn Aʿtham's, since the former's narration and chains of authorities approximate the style of the compilers of the second and early third century in which period the text of Azdi should be placed.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{13} Lees, preface, vii.
\textsuperscript{14} Lees, preface, v.
\textsuperscript{15} De Goeje, 14–15.
\textsuperscript{16} De Goeje, 38–39.
\textsuperscript{17} De Goeje, 22–23.
\textsuperscript{18} De Goeje, 15.
\textsuperscript{19} Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulāk, ed. M. J. de Goeje et al. (Leiden, 1879–1901), I: 3233 and II: 525.
\textsuperscript{20} Conrad, 33–48.
\textsuperscript{21} Conrad, 48–55.
\textsuperscript{22} Conrad, 59.
\textsuperscript{23} Conrad, 50, 59.
\textsuperscript{25} Kaegi, 11–12.
\textsuperscript{27} Iḥsān ʿAbbās, Taʾrīkh bilād al-shām min qabīl al-islām hāttā bīdāyat al-ʿaṣr al-imāmī, 600–661 (Amman, 1990), 22–23.
THE AUTHENTICITY OF AZDĪ’S FUTŪḤ AL-SHĀM

The attribution of Futūḥ al-shām to Azdī is made mainly in biographical dictionaries. But it is also found in works of history, belles-lettres, and in the indices of books. The sources that explicitly attribute this work to him are: Fahrasat of Ibn Khayr al-Iṣbīlī (d. 575/1179),28 Ghazawāt of Ibn Ḥubaysih (d. 584/1188),29 Taʿrīkh al-īslām of Dhaḥābī (d. 748/1348),30 al-Iṣbāʿa and Taḥdīhīb of Ibn Ḥajr al-Ṣaqālānī (d. 852/1448),31 and al-Flān of Sakhwā’i (d. 902/1497).32 Of these sources, only Ibn Khayr provides information concerning the transmission of the text from Azdī to him.33 Ibn Ḥubaysih, by contrast, included the entire text of Azdī in his Ghazawāt. But he did not indicate how the text of Azdī got to him and it seems likely that he knew it through the same transmission as that cited by Ibn Khayr. Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), similarly, quotes in his Muḥḍarāt a few long passages from the Azdī text but without mentioning the title of the book.34 Azdī is also identified by Dhaḥābī and Ibn Ḥajr as the author of a Futūḥ al-shām in many biographical notices of informants on whose authority Azdī transmitted accounts of the conquests. In other biographical notices cited by Dhaḥābī and Ibn Ḥajr, individuals are identified only as being mentioned in the text of Azdī. However, neither Dhaḥābī nor Ibn Ḥajr devoted to Azdī a biography in any of their several biographical dictionaries.35 Most of the sources mentioned above, which are from Syria, Egypt, and Spain, speak of a work entitled Futūḥ al-shām attributed to Abū Ismāʿīl al-Azdī. Two chains of authorities, one stated in the text of Azdī and the other cited by Ibn Khayr, are said to have passed down the text. The first is almost identical in the two manuscripts and in the two edited versions.36 Accordingly, the following complete chain37 can be reconstructed out of four almost identical ones:

Abū Ismāʿīl Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Azdī al-Baṣrī
al-Ḥusayn ibn Ziyād al-Raḍī38
Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Walīd ibn Ḥaḥmād al-Raḍī
Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn ʿAḥmad ibn Ishāq39 al-Bağhdādī
Abū al-ʿAbbās Muʿātir ibn ʿĀḥmad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Khaṣṣāḥb
Abū Ishāq ʿIbrāhīm ibn Saʿīd ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥabbāl al-Nuʿmānī al-Tujībī40
Abū al-Ḥusayn41 ʿAbd Allâh ibn Muhammad ibn Musābbīḥ al-Muqīṣī42
Abū ʿṬāhir ʿĀḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn ʿAḥmad al-Sīlaḍī al-Iṣfahānī
A pupil of Sīlaḍī

According to this chain, the person who transmitted Futūḥ al-shām from Azdī was al-Ḥusayn ibn Ziyād al-Raḍī. The name in this form does not appear in any of the known biographical dictionaries. However, in Ṭūsī’s Fihrist of Shiʿite scholars, a certain al-Ḥusayn ibn Ziyād

33 Ibn Khayr, 238.
36 Azdī (M1), 1a(2–7); Azdī (M2), 4a(3–15); Lees, 35–36; ʿĀmir, 1.
37 This chain of authorities derives mainly from Azdī (M2) because it is the most complete and correct. The differences with the other chains of authorities are indicated below.
38 The name of al-Ḥusayn was completely dropped here from Azdī (M1). This is certainly a scribal error, since with the exception of this case, the name appears continuously in the chains of authorities within this same manuscript.
40 Tujībī after a quarter in old Cairo: Samʿānī, al-Ansāb, ed. ʿʿAbd Allāh Bārdūlī (Beirut, 1988), I: 448. In Lees’ and ʿĀmir’s editions, it appears as al-Yuḥfī, which has no meaning and must be a scribal error: see Lees, 36; ʿĀmir, 1.
41 Abū al-Ḥasan only in Azdī (M2), f. 4a(9).
42 Al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn Musābbīḥ al-Muqīṣī in ʿĀmir’s edition, which is definitely a mistake: ʿĀmir, 1.
is identified as the author of a hadith compilation entitled Kitāb al-ruṣā’il (the Book of Foster Relationship), which, according to Tūsī, was transmitted from al-Ḥusayn ibn Ziyād by al-Walīd ibn Ḥammād.43 So, having al-Walīd ibn Ḥammād appear as the transmitter of al-Ḥusayn's book would mean that this al-Ḥusayn is the same person mentioned in the chain of the Azdī text. According to Tūsī, too, al-Ḥusayn was known to have transmitted hadiths from the Shi‘īite imām Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā (d. 203/818).44 Al-Ḥusayn is mentioned as well by Kashshī,45 and by Ibn Ḥajar, who identified him as al-Ḥusayn ibn Ziyād al-Kūfī.46 Therefore, it can be said that al-Ḥusayn was an ‘Alīd (Shi‘īite) from Kūfā and was known to have been active between the late second/eighth and mid-third/ninth century. As for the nisba al-Ramlī47 attached to his name, it may refer to his possible residence in Ramla, Palestine, sometime in the third/ninth century. What is peculiar in the case of al-Ḥusayn and al-Walīd is that Kūfīs did engage in trade with Ramla in olive oil. That the profession of al-Walīd ibn Ḥammād was selling olive oil is evident from the epithet al-Zayyāt (oil seller) attached to his name. Thus, it is possible to suppose that al-Ḥusayn, who was nicknamed al-Simsār (the broker), was also engaged in this kind of trade, and that he resided in Ramla for some time for the sake of buying olive oil and transporting it to Kūfā.48

Al-Walīd ibn Ḥammād al-Ramlī transmitted the text of Azdī from al-Ḥusayn ibn Ziyād, probably in Ramla, as mentioned before. Abū al-‘Abbās al-Walīd ibn Ḥammād al-Ramlī al-Zayyāt was an average traditionist. He is said to have studied hadith in Damascus with Hishām ibn ʿAmrū al-Dimashqī (d. 245/859). A few known traditionists, like Abū Bishr al-Dulābī (d. 310/923) and Abū al-Qāsim al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971), transmitted hadiths from him.49 Al-Walīd is said to have compiled a book entitled Kitāb faḍā’il bayt al-maqdis (the Book on the Merits of Jerusalem).50 He died around the year 300/912.51

Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Ahmad al-Baghdādī, according to the chain above, is said to have copied the text of Azdī from an oral transmission by al-Walīd ibn Ḥammād in Sha’bān 286 (August 899). Abū al-Ḥasan, known as Ibn al-Maqābūrī al-Bazzāz, was originally from the town of Wāṣīt, in Iraq, and moved to live in Baghdad, where he studied hadith with scholars like Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Shādhān al-Jahwārī (d. 286/899). Later, he came to reside for sometime in Ramla, and is said to have been in Damascus around the year 341/952, where he was also active in hadith circles, and later moved to Cairo.52

In Cairo, Abū al-ʿAbbās Munir ibn Ahmad al-Khashšāb al-Miṣrī (d. 412/1022)53 copied the text of Azdī from Abū al-Ḥasan al-Baghdādī, who was reading the text to his pupils in his house in 343/954. Abū Ishaq Ibrāhīm ibn Saʿīd al-Ḥabbāl al-Tujibī al-Miṣrī (d. 482/1098) copied the text from Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Khashšāb also in Cairo. He is said to have studied hadith with the latter, and to have met and studied hadith with ʿAbd al-Ghānī ibn Saʿīd al-Miṣrī (d. 409/1018) in 407/1016. This Abū Ishaq al-Tujibī is known to have been a bookseller and to have died at the age of ninety.54 From him, Abū al-Ḥusayn Ahmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Musabbiḥ al-Muqrī55 copied

45 I could not locate the biography of al-Ḥusayn in Kashshī’s Rījāl. The reference to al-Ḥusayn’s name in Kashshī’s work is taken from Ibn Ḥajar.
47 The nisba al-Ramlī is commonly accepted as referring to the town of Ramla in Palestine.
48 Ibn ʿAsākir, VI: 40. Samʿānī (III: 91) cites the name of a certain Abū Zakāriyyā Yahyā ibn ʿĪsā ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ramlī (d. 202/817) and said about him that he was from Kūfā and had resided in Ramla where he engaged in buying olive oil and sending it to Kūfā; see also ʿAbd Allāh Mukhlīṣ, Miʿḍhanat al-jāmī’ al-abyaḍ fī al-ramla (Beirut, n.d.), 8.
49 Ṭabarānī, al-Muʿjam al-awsaf, ed. Muḥammad S. Ismā’īl (Amman, 1999), VI: 419–21, where al-Walīd is quoted for fourteen hadith.
52 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, XI: 322; Ibn ʿAsākir, XLII: 229–30; see also n. 39 above.
53 Dhillahī, Siyar, XVII: 267; Ḥanbali, Shadharāt al-dhahab fi akḥābūr man dhahab (Cairo, 1350 A.H., III: 197.
55 No biographical notice for Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Muqrī could be found in the known biographical dictionaries. Silafi mentioned him in his Muʿjam al-safar, citing the names of all his teachers: see Silafi, Muʿjam al-safar, ed. Sher Muḥammad Zaman (Islamabad, 1988), 12–13.
the text of Azdí in Cairo, as well. Abū al-Ḥusayn was known as Ibn al-Qābila (son of the mid-wife) and was, according to Silaфи (d. 576/1180), one of the prominent reciters of the Qur’ān in the mosque of ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ in al-Fuṣṭāt.  

Abū Ṭāhir Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-ʾIṣfahānī al-Silaфи copied the text from Abū al-Ḥusayn in Cairo in Dhū al-Ḥijja 515 (February 1122). Silaфи was born around the year 475/1074 in ʾIṣfahān. He traveled throughout the Muslim world for the sake of studying ḥadīth and other religious sciences. For that purpose, he lived in Damascus for two years (509–11/1115–17), after which he moved to Alexandria towards the end of 511/early 1118 and resided there until his death in 576/1180. 55 It is through this Silaфи that all known extant copies of Azdí’s Futūḥ al-ṣāḥib were transmitted. 56

The manuscript Lees used was copied from Silaфи by a pupil whose name is not stated anywhere in the manuscript. 57 But the place and date of the transmission are known: Alexandria, in the month of Muharram 573 (July 1177). 58 The damage to the first and last pages of the manuscript makes it impossible to identify this pupil or to determine if it was transmitted from him to other people. The manuscript, however, seems now to have been lost. 59

Manuscript Arabe 1665 was copied by another pupil of Silaфи called Abū al-Faḍl Jaʿfar ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥamadānī al-Iṣkandarānī. Abū al- Faḍl was born in 546/1151 and is said to have been engaged in circles of learning in Alexandria, Cairo, and Damascus, where he died in 636/1238. 60 A certain Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥassānī copied the text of Azdí from the text of Abū al- Faḍl in Jerusalem in Dhū al-Ḥijja 613 (March 1217). This copy of the Azdí text passed into the possession of Nūr al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Masʿūd al-Mawsīlī (d. 704/1304). Abū al- Ḥasan al-Mawsīlī was active in circles of learning in Cairo, Aleppo, and Damascus, where he is said to have resided. 61 The other samāʿ (oral certification) written on the first and last folios of this manuscript records the names of the people who owned it at different times after Abū al-Ḥasan al-Mawsīlī.

Manuscript Arabe 1665 was copied from Silaфи by a third pupil of his, called Abū al-Maymūn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn ʿAtīq ibn Hībat Allāh ibn Wardān al-ʿĀmirī al- ʾMiṣrī (d. 626/1229), 62 in Alexandria during a series of lectures, the last of which was on Sunday 14 Rabīʿ I 1574 (30 August 1178). Subsequently, it was copied by Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al- Faḍl Yūṣuf ibn ʿAbd al-Muʿtī ibn Mānsūr ibn Najā al-Iṣkandarānī al-Makhḥīli 63 in Cairo also during a series of lectures, the last of which was on Saturday 14 Ramadān 635 (30 April 1238). 64 This Jamāl al-Dīn (568/1172–672/1273) was known to have met Silaфи and received from him an ijāza (license). 65 This manuscript was transmitted from Abū al- Faḍl al-Makhḥīli to a person who must have transmitted it in turn to others, as inferred by a date of transmission at the end of the manuscript: 1 Dhū al-Qaʿda 764 (12 August 1363). 66 But no names are mentioned. There are also some samāʿ recorded at the end of this manuscript which indicate some of the people who later owned it.

Beside Egypt, the Futūḥ al-ṣāḥib of Azdí was also known in Spain. As mentioned earlier, Ibn Khayr al- ʾIṣbīlī stated that the Azdí text reached him through the following chain of authorities:

\[
\text{Azdí} \quad \text{[al- Ḥusayn ibn Ziyād]} \]

56 Silaфи, 13. Silaфи transmitted from Abū al- Ḥusayn al-Muqrī an account which has the following chain of authorities: Silaфи from Abū al- Ḥusayn Ahmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Musāḥib ibn Ḥamza al-Muqrī in Cairo from Abū ʾĪṣāq Ṭibrīḥ ibn Saʿīd ibn ʿAbd al- Lāh al- Ṭujbī . . . : Silaфи, 12. These names also appear in this order in the chain of authorities that passed down the text of Azdí.
58 De Goeje argued that the chain of authorities cited in Lees’ edition is “fictitious”, basically because he could not identify any of the men who were mentioned in it: de Goeje, 19–22.
59 Lees, preface, vi. ʿUmarī identified this pupil as Abū Ṭāhir Ahmad ibn Muḥammad al-ʾIṣfahānī. In fact, ʿUmarī, probably unintentionally, read wrongly the words of Lees, and the name he gave to Sila필’s pupil is that of Sila필: ʿUmarī, 71.
60 Lees, 35–36.
61 I could not establish where this manuscript now is. De Goeje indicated (p. 39) that it is in Berlin. However, it seems to have been misplaced or lost, since Sezgin does not mention it in the entry on Azdí: Fuat Sezgin, Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums (Leiden, 1967), I: 292–93.
63 Ṣafādī, XXII: 194.
64 Azdí (M1), fs. 1a and 83a.
65 Dḥahābi, ʿSiyar, XXII: 314.
66 Al-Makhḥīli after the town of Makhḥī in the region of Burqā in modern-day Libya, from which Jamāl al-Dīn’s family originally came: Dḥahābi, ʿSiyar, XXIII: 116–17; Yāqūt, Muʿjam al-Buldān (Beirut, n.d.), V: 73 (Makhḥī). In the manuscript, it reads al-Mahāli, a scribal error.
67 Azdí (M2), f. 4a(7).
68 Dḥahābi, ʿSiyar, XXIII: 116–18.
69 Azdí (M2), f. 149a2–4.
70 It is probable that Ibn Khayr unintentionally dropped the name of al- Ḥusayn ibn Ziyād from this chain of authorities.
Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Walid ibn Ḥammād (d. ca. 300/912)

Abū al-Ḥasan al-Muʿaddi

Abū Muḥammad al-Nuḥḥās al-Miṣrī (d. 416/1025)

Ḥakam ibn Muḥammad al-Judhami al-Qurtubi (d. 447/1055)

Abū ʿAli al-Ghassāni al-Qurtubi (d. 498/1105)

Abū Bakr al-Ishbili (d. 580/1184)

Ibn Khayr (d. 575/1179)

In addition to the allusion to the Azdī text by Ibn Khayr, the work was reproduced almost in its entirety in Ibn Ḥubaysh's Ghazawāt. It is very likely that Ibn Ḥubaysh, being also from Spain, knew the copy referred to by Ibn Khayr. It is equally possible that Ibn Ḥubaysh copied the text of Azdī in Egypt from Šilāfī, because the latter was one of his teachers.37 None of these possibilities can be verified, however, because Ibn Ḥubaysh did not mention how the text of Azdī reached him.

A third chain of authorities through which the text of Azdī was possibly transmitted is found in Ibn ʿAsākir’s Taʾrīkh. Ibn ʿAsākir quotes one passage from Azdī, but without attributing any work to him. This material has the following chain of authorities:

Azdī

al-Ḥusayn ibn Ziyād

al-Walid ibn Ḥammād (d. ca. 300/912)

Abū Bishr al-Dūlābī (d. 310/923)

Ibn Khayr (d. 575/1179)

37 Ali ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿIṣḥāq. He is the same person identified in a pervious chain of authorities: see n. 39 above.


39 Ḥanbali, III: 275.


41 Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ṭāhir. He is said to have made the pilgrimage to Mecca, taught in Cairo, Aleppo, and Baṣra, and to have settled in Būḥāṣ, in modern-day Algeria, where he died in 580/1184: Ṣafāḍī, II: 113–14.

42 Concerning this chain of authorities, see Ibn Khayr, 238.


44 Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Warrāq: ʾAlī ʿAlī, II: 511–12; and Ṣafāḍī, II: 36.

45 Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Rāshīq al-Miṣrī (d. 370/980)

Abū ʿUmar al-Rāḥmān ibn Muhammad al-Miṣrī and Abū Muḥammad Abū Allāh ibn Abī al-Ḥasan al-Miṣrī

Rashā ibn Naẓīf al-Dimashqī (d. 444/1052)

Abū al-Qāsim al-Nasīb al-Dimashqī (d. 508/1114) and Abū al-Wahlsh al-Muṣrī al-Dimashqī (d. 508/1115)

Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571/1176)

Based on these three chains of authorities, it is possible to say that the work of Azdī was transmitted from al-Walid ibn Ḥammād by at least two scholars, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Baghdādī and Abū Bishr al-Dūlābī. Both traditionists were known to have come to Syria for the sake of learning hadith and other religious sciences. They carried the work to Cairo in the second half of the third century A.H. Abū al-Ḥasan al-Baghdādī copied the text from al-Walid ibn Ḥammād in Shaʿbān 286 (August 899), as mentioned earlier; whereas, in the case of Abū Bishr al-Dūlābī, it may be argued that he copied the text of Azdī from al-Walid ibn Ḥammād sometime before 260/874, when he moved to Cairo.85

The indications of the availability of Azdī’s Futūḥ al-shām in more than one region suggest that the text was older than the sixth/seventh century, when it was transmitted in Alexandria by Šilāfī to at least three of his pupils on different occasions. But it is undeniable that a wide interest in the Azdī text really developed only during the period of the Crusades. The survival of the text, thus, seems to have resulted from the reemerging interest in Futūḥ literature at that time. This explains why the text is absent from all prior historical sources. During the time in the Crusades at least three manuscripts of Azdī’s Futūḥ al-shām were copied from Šilāfī (d. 576/1180) in Alexandria. It was then that the text was quoted in other compilations—quoted in its entirety in Ghazawāt of Ibn Ḥubaysh (d. 584/1188), and partially in Muḥāḍarāt of Ibn al-Ḥarib (d. 638/1240). There is, moreover, no reason to doubt that Azdī existed, for his text was transmitted through more than one chain of authorities,
all of which, nevertheless, originated from a single earlier chain as follows:

Azdi  
al-Ḥusayn ibn Ziyād  
al-Walid ibn Hammād

The important point is the ascription of a similar contemporary text to Saʿid ibn al-Faḍl and, as will be observed in the following section, the ascription of the same material to still more compilers from the same period as Azdi.

DATE AND PROVENANCE OF AZDI’S FUTŪH AL-SHĀM

As mentioned in the previous section, Ibn Ḥubaysḫ used the text of Azdi in his Ghazawāt. It is obvious that the differences in the Ghazawāt version are not significant, and that most of the missing pages in Lees’ edition can be reproduced also from the text of Ibn Ḥubaysḫ. Ibn Ḥubaysḫ, however, dropped almost all chains of authorities, stating only the first informant in each account, which is the case throughout his work; but only in four instances are the informants different from those given in the Azdi text.87

The importance of Ibn Ḥubaysḫ’s Ghazawāt stems from his reference to this material as having been taken from two Futūḥ al-shām books and not one only.88 In addition to Azdi, he cited the name of a Saʿid ibn al-Faḍl, who is identified by Ibn Ḥubaysḫ as another author of a work having the same title as Azdi’s.89 Abū ʿUthmān Saʿīd ibn al-Faḍl was a native of Baṣrā and was known to have transmitted hadiths from the traditionist ʿĀṣim ibn Sulaymān al-Ahwāl (d. 142/759). He resided for some time in Damascus, where he was active in hadith circles, and returned to Baṣrā, where he died sometime around 185/801.90 Saʿīd’s name is also mentioned in a chain of authorities given by Ibn Ḥubaysḫ that is identical to the chain of authorities for the same account in the Azdi text, except that the name of Saʿīd replaces that of Azdi.91

For Ibn Ḥubaysḫ, the texts of Saʿīd and Azdi seem identical, as he gives no indication of any differences between them. The fact that the material that constitutes the text of Azdi is ascribed by Ibn Ḥubaysḫ to two authors suggests that this material might have been taken, by both Azdi and Saʿīd, from a common source; or that one of the two depended on the other. But because Ibn Ḥubaysḫ did not state how the texts of Azdi and Saʿīd were transmitted to him, the possibility that their texts were based on an older compilation needs at this level further supporting evidence.

Ibn ʿAsākir’s Taʾrikh, which only recently has been consulted seriously in studies of Islamic historiography, holds the key to the problem of dating the contents of the Azdi text. The biographical importance of Ibn ʿAsākir’s work lies in his citation of the chains of authorities that transmitted almost every single piece of information from its original, assumed informant to him. Ibn ʿAsākir’s use of this technique enables us, for example, to follow the variation of a certain account through the various chains of authorities that transmitted it, which may in turn determine to what extent each narrator adhered to the original version of the account, and whether or not he altered or introduced additions to it.

There is no reference to Azdi’s Futūḥ al-shām in Ibn ʿAsākir’s Taʾrikh. The name of Abū ʿIsmāʾil Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿAsīrī is mentioned, however, in the chain of authorities for one account in the biographical notice for Adham ibn Miḥrīz al-Ḥāilibī,92 an informant quoted in the Azdi text. The same account is also found in the Azdi text with the same chain of authorities,93 where only two words, whose omission does not change the meaning, are dropped. Furthermore, Ibn ʿAsākir included fifty-nine accounts that are almost identical to accounts found in the Azdi text but quoted from narrators other than Azdi. These fifty-nine accounts are found in biographical notices for individuals who either transmitted them or were mentioned in them. The narrators to whom Ibn ʿAsākir ascribed these same accounts are Abū Mīkhnaʿf al-Azdi (d. 157/774), ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Qudāmī (d. after 200/815), and Abū Ḥudhayfa al-Bukhrāʾī (d. 206/821). They, with the exception of Abū Ḥudhayfa, quoted their material from the same informants as those cited for the same accounts by Azdi. Abū Mīkhnaʿf is quoted for seven, Qudāmī for twenty-four, and Abū Ḥudhayfa for twenty-eight. Most are not reproduced in their entirety

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86 This point goes against one of the conclusions of de Goeje. According to him, Azdi’s text was fabricated in the period of the Crusades to promote the call for the jihad, and could not have been transmitted from Sīlafī: de Goeje, 19–22 and 38–39.
87 For these four cases, compare Ibn Ḥubaysḫ, I: 158, 238, 247, and II: 6 to Lees, 20, 151–52, 166, and 45, respectively.
88 Ibn Ḥubaysḫ, I: 195, 238, 303 and 324. The title Kitāb futūḥ al-shām is mentioned twice by Ibn Ḥubaysḫ but without naming its author, and in both cases, he states, “ra’i’a ilā (back to) kitāb futūḥ al-shām”: Ibn Ḥubaysḫ, I: 184 and 202.
89 Ibn Ḥubaysḫ, I: 195.
91 Compare Ibn Ḥubaysḫ, I: 190 to Lees, 65.
93 Lees, 132.
by Ibn ʿAsākir, who in such cases quoted part of the account and then made a note indicating that the material in question has a continuation.94

The first narrator is Abū Mikhnaf Lūṭ ibn Yaḥyā al-Azdi. He was an ʿAlid (Shiʿite) from Kūfa and was famous for his transmission of historical accounts; but his reputation as a scholar of hadith was very poor. He is described in Sunnite biographical dictionaries as mattrūk al-ḥadith (i.e., his hadith transmission was disregarded as being unreliable), and that he used to transmit material from unknown people—a charge almost equal to forgoing the material.95 In the Shiʿite biographical dictionaries, however, Abū Mikhnaf is highly esteemed as a narrator and is recognized as an authority on historical accounts in Kūfa.96 The Shiʿite compilers did not comment on the soundness of his hadith transmission. He died in 157/774, and is said to have left several books, of which a Futūḥ al-shām was one.97

Abū Mikhnaf was the subject of a study by Ursula Sezgin, who examined what survived of Abū Mikhnaf’s books in later compilations, basically in Baladhurī’s Anṣāb and Ţabarī’s Taʾrīkh.98 She argued that Abū Mikhnaf was not a prose writer99 but rather a collector who used to take reports from a variety of religio-political sources, rarely correcting the inaccuracies in them, and that his material is in general reliable.100 Sezgin also maintained that although the accounts Abū Mikhnaf reported generally sympathize with Shiʿites, his work is not as sectarian as the writings of other Shiʿite scholars.101

The accounts of Abū Mikhnaf reached Ibn ʿAsākir through the following chain of authorities:

Abū Mikhnaf (d. 157/774)  
Zur’a ibn al-Ṣafar  
Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz102  
ʿAbd al-Salām ibn ʿAbdāb ibn al-Ḥāḏramī al-Ḥimṣī103  
Abū al-Qāsim al-Qādī al-Ḥimṣī (d. 324/935)104  
Abū Ẓalīl al-Unlūkī al-Ḥimṣī105  
Abū al-Muʾammar al-Unlūkī al-Ḥimṣī (d. 431/1040)106  
Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Qādī al-Dimashqī (d. 482/1090)107  
Abū al-Qāsim al-Ṣaffār al-Dimashqī (d. 543/1148)108  
Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571/1176)109

The second narrator is Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh ibn RABIʿ Al-Qudāmī. He came from the town of Misṣīṣa, in southeastern Anatolia, and was known to have transmitted hadiths from the famous jurist Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/795). His reputation as a traditionist, however, was extremely poor and he was accused of forging hadiths, especially on the authority of Mālik. Ibn ʿAsākir attributed to Qudāmī a work on Futūḥ al-shām.110 He died after the year 200/815.111 The accounts of Qudāmī reached Ibn ʿAsākir through the following chain of authorities:

94 Ibn ʿAsākir generally resorted to brevity when quoting long accounts, especially if used for biographical purposes. For example, parts of one account given in the history of Damascus are used in four separate biographical entries: Ibn ʿAsākir, II: 152–58 is found in XI: 316–17; XLVI: 56, 107–8; and XLIX: 364.


97 Ibn al-Nadīm, al-Fihrist, ed. ʿRīdā Ṭuǧādād (Beirut, 1988), 105; Yāqūt, Muʾjam al-ʿudabāʾ (Caïro, 1938), XVII: 42.

98 Ursula Sezgin, Aḥmad ibn Mīḥnaib: Ein Beitrag zur Historiographie der umayyadischen Zeit (Leiden, 1971). Julius Wellhausen also, although very briefly, analyzed Abū Mikhnaf’s historical transmission in Das arabische Reich und sein Sturz (Berlin, 1902), iii–v.

99 U. Sezgin, 91.

100 U. Sezgin, 90.

101 U. Sezgin, 93–94.

102 No biographical notice for either Abū ʿAbd Allāh or Zur’a could be found.

103 Ibn ʿAsākir, XXXVI: 209.


109 For this chain of authorities, see Ibn ʿAsākir, II: 119. It should be pointed out that the editor of the Beirut edition here misread some names. Therefore, I refer the reader to the partial edition by Šalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjīd (Damascus: al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmi al-ʿAragī, 1951), I: 503.

110 Ibn ʿAsākir, XLVI: 106.

The third narrator is Abū Ḫudhayfa Isḥāq ibn Bishr al-Bukhārī. He was born in the town of Balkh and moved to Bukhāra, in central Asia. He was known to have transmitted from famous hadith and maghāzī scholars of the second/eighth century, such as the jurist Malik ibn Anas and Ibn Ḥishāq (d. 150/767). Abū Ḫudhayfa is said to have visited Baghdad at the time of the ʿAbbāsīd caliph ʿAbd Allāh al-Rashīd (r. 170–93/786–809) and was engaged in the transmission of hadith and other genres of scholarship there. Although famous for his great ability at memorization, his reputation as a traditionist and as a narrator was very poor. He was accused of being a liar, and of dropping the names of his informants and claiming instead to have heard his informants’ informants. In the Shiʿite biographical dictionaries, however, Abū Ḫudhayfa is recognized as trustworthy. He is said to have composed several works of history, including a Kitāb al-futūḥ that had a section on the conquests of Syria (al-Shām). These works were presumably transmitted by his pupil Ismāʿīl ibn ʿIsā al-ʿAṭṭār al-Baghdādī (d. 232/847). Abū Ḫudhayfa died in Bukhāra in 206/821. The accounts of Abū Ḫudhayfa reached Ibn ʿAsākir through the following chain of authorities:

Abū Ḫudhayfa (d. 206/821)

Ismāʿīl ibn ʿIsā al-ʿAṭṭār al-Baghdādī (d. 232/847)

al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī al-Qaṭṭān al-Baghdādī (d. 298/910)

Abū ʿAli ibn al-Ṣawwāf al-Baghdādī (d. 359/970)

Abū al-Ḥasan ibn al-Hammāmī al-Baghdādī (d. 417/1026)

Abū ʿAli ibn al-Muṣlima al-Baghdādī (d. 479/1086)

Abū al-Qāsim ibn al-Samarqandī al-Dimashqī (d. 536/1142)

Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571/1176)

From the history of the transmission of the works of these three narrators, the following can be deduced:

Parts of Abū Mikkhāf’s Futūḥ al-shām were in circulation in ʿIrāq in the third and fourth centuries A. H. Abū al-Muʿammār al-Ḥimṣī made them known in Damascus in the early fifth century when Ibn ʿAsākir was informed about them.

Qudāmī’s Futūḥ al-shām was known in the region of Miṣṣiṣa, in southeastern Anatolia, starting in the third

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112 No biographical notice for him could be found. His father, Ibrāhīm ibn Mahdī, was originally from Baghdad and moved to Miṣṣiṣa, where he died in 225/840: al-Khaṭṭīb al-Baghdādī, VI: 178.

113 No biographical notice for him could be found.


118 See n. 82 above.

119 See n. 83 above.

120 ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad: Ibn ʿAsākir, XXVII: 41–42; Ṣafādī, XVII: 44.


century. Abū Muhammad al-Ba‘labakkī introduced it some time in the fourth century in Damascus where Ibn ʻAdīk became acquainted with it.

Abū Hudhayfa’s Kitāb al-futūḥ was in circulation in Baghdad. There Abū al-Qāsim al-Samarqandi was introduced to it in the late fifth century, and it was transmitted from him by Ibn ʻAdīk in Damascus in the early sixth century.

Of these three narrators, each of whom was known to have composed a work on the conquest of Syria, Abū Mikhnaf was the earliest. The possibility that Abūdī had based his work on that of Abū Mikhnaf is founded on the fact that Abūdī states in his own Futūḥ al-shām that he had heard a certain account from his father.133 The same account is reproduced three times in Ibn ʻAdīk’s Ta‘rikh, one from Abū Mikhnaf, who claimed to have heard it from his father as well.134 The remaining part of the chain of authorities in both texts is the same. It seems far from being a simple coincidence that both Abūdī and Abū Mikhnaf would transmit, each from his father, the same account with the same chain of authorities. Another indication of family connection is Abū Mikhnaf’s claim of transmission from his maternal grandfather, “Abū al-Malik ibn Nawfal ibn Munāšiq (d. 145/762) of Medina.135 Abūdī too claims to have transmitted directly from “Abū al-Malik. One report on the authority of “Abū al-Malik is quoted by both Abūdī and Abū Mikhnaf.136

In addition, there are four reports from Abū Mikhnaf that are identical to reports in Abūdī, including their chains of authorities;137 two reports that are almost identical save that no informants of Abū Mikhnaf were quoted;138 and three allusions to material in Abū Mikhnaf that appears in Abūdī as well.139 Furthermore, when one checks the informants of Abū Mikhnaf, as quoted in Tabarī’s Ta‘rikh, and compares them to the most important mentioned by Abūdī as his, it is apparent that they are the same. Yet, it is obvious that Abū Mikhnaf was well informed as to the specific identities of his informants and was able to offer information about them not found in any other source. Abūdī mentioned them only by name. The informants of Abū Mikhnaf, as can be established from the chains of authorities quoted in Tabarī’s Ta‘rikh, and those of Abūdī that are common to both, and the numbers of accounts transmitted from each are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mihkaf</th>
<th>'Adīk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 'Abd Allāh ibn ʻAbd al-Raḥmān al-Māznī</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ʻAbd al-Malik ibn Nawfal ibn Musāhiq</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ʻAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Yazīd ibn Jābir</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Abū Ḥaḍram al-ʻAdī</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Abū Jannāb al-Kalbi</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Abū al-Mughaffil</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Abū al-Muhannā al-Kalbi</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Al-ʻAjīb ibn ʻAbd Allāh</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. ʻAmir ibn Mālik Abū Ṭayyiba al-Qaynī</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Farwā ibn Lāqīt al-ʻAdī</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Ḥamza ibn ʻAlī ibn Muḥfīz</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Al-ʻHārith ibn Kaʿb al-ʻAdī</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Muhammad ibn Yūsuf al-Khazrajī</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Al-Mujājīl ibn Saʿīd al-Hamadānī</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Naḍīr ibn ʻAṣ̱īlī</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Al-Qāsim ibn al-Walīd</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Qudāma ibn Ḥazīm ibn Sufyān</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Saʿd Abū Mūjahīd al-Ţāʿī</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Al-Šaqʿab ibn Zuhayr</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Suqayf ibn Bishr al-ʻIjīlī</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Yaḥyā ibn Ḥānī al-Murādī</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This list shows that, although they were at least one generation apart, both Abū Mikhnaf and Abūdī had access to the same informants. The possibility that Abūdī depended on Abū Mikhnaf without acknowledging him seems obvious.

Qudāmī, like Abūdī, must have depended on Abū Mikhnaf as well. First, some of the informants from whom he transmitted were also the informants of Abū Mikhnaf. But Qudāmī died after 200/815, and he could not have met the informants of Abū Mikhnaf, who died in 157/774. It is very probable that he used Abū Mikhnaf’s Futūḥ al-shām, possibly among other sources, as a reference for his own work, and that he neglected to indicate his sources and instead cited their informants directly. This possibility is supported by a passage in Ibn ʻAdīk’s Ta‘rikh, where the chain of authorities for an account, transmitted by Ibn ʻAdīk from Qudāmī, is given in the following way:

Al-ʻNaḍīr ibn ʻAṣ̱īlī told me on the authority of Ṣālim ibn Rabī‘a, he said: he (Ṣālim) told me while we were in the army of Muṣ‘ab ibn al-Zubayr.140

Ibn ʻAdīk adds that the same account was also transmitted by Abū Mikhnaf, and that he suspects that Qudāmī had taken it from Abū Mikhnaf, whose name was

133 Lees, 203–5.
134 Ibn ʻAdīk, XV: 321.
135 See no. 24 in the regional informants list.
136 Compare Ibn ʻAdīk, XXIV: 394 to Lees, 43.
138 Compare Ibn ʻAdīk, XLI: 131 to Lees, 125; and Yaqūt, Muṣjam al-baladān, II: 303 to Lees, 131–32.
139 Compare Ibn ʻAdīk, XV: 185 to Lees, 31–33; Ibn ʻAdīk, XLIX: 360 to Lees, 79; and Ibn ʻAdīk, XX: 40 to Lees, 118–19.
dropped. The same chain of authorities was in fact used by Abū Mikhna. In Ṭabari’s Taʾrīkh, Abū Mikhna is quoted for two accounts which he transmitted on the authority of al-Nadr ibn Ṣāliḥ ibn Sālīm ibn Rabīʿa, where al-Nadr had stated that he had met Sālim during the emirate of Muṣʿab ibn al-Zubayr (d. 71/690) and that he had asked him about previous events that Sālim had witnessed.

Another indication of Qudāmī’s dependence on Abū Mikhna’s Futūḥ al-shām is the fact that both Abū Mikhna and Qudāmī transmitted from an informant by the name of Saʿd ibn Mujahīd al-Ṭāʾī. Curiously enough, the correct name of this informant, as can be verified in the biographical dictionaries and other historical works, is Saʿd Abū Mujahīd, and not Saʿd ibn Mujahīd. Only Abū Mikhna and Qudāmī give the name in this form, which indicates that the latter copied the name without verification as it appeared in Abū Mikhna’s work. The two examples discussed above could not have been the result of simple coincidence and the argument that Qudāmī used Abū Mikhna’s Futūḥ al-shām as one of his sources seems reasonable.

As for Abū Ḥudhayfa, the accounts dealing with the conquests of Syria transmitted on his authority by Ibn ʿAsākir are almost identical to those in the Azdī text. But Abū Ḥudhayfa, in the few instances where he cited his informants, mostly quoted from the famous Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767) and from Saʿd ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Ṭanūkhī al-Dimashqī (d. 167/783). It seems that he was also acquainted with the book of Abū Mikhna, for he quoted one account from him.

The accounts of Abū Ḥudhayfa that are identical to those in Azdī’s text are twenty-eight in number. Some of them have almost identical chains of authorities. Therefore, it is possible to say that Abū Ḥudhayfa had access to the same material as Azdī, but through a different line of transmission. Accordingly, I am inclined to argue that this material must have constituted a corpus known to narrators in Medina like Ibn Iṣṭāq, to narrators in Kūfah like Abū Mikhna, and to narrators in Damascus like Saʿd ibn al-Ṭanūkhī. These three are roughly of the same generation—they died in 150/767, 157/774, and 167/783, respectively. But they were from different geographical regions. The existence of no significant difference among their otherwise similar accounts may imply that the corpus in question can be dated to the early second/eighth century. This assumption, however, seems quite implausible. On the other hand, the possibility that Abū Ḥudhayfa forged the chains of authorities for the accounts of the conquests of Syria which he claimed to have transmitted from these narrators seems much more probable. Given his poor reputation in learned circles, this could very likely have been the case.

The conclusion that can be drawn therefore about these different Futūḥ compilations of Abū Mikhna, Azdī, Saʿīd ibn al-Fadl, and Qudāmī is that they came from and were known in Iraq, Anatolia, Syria, Egypt and Spain through different transmissions. It is clear that the only common link between all of them is either at the level of Abū Mikhna, as already argued, or at the level of his informants. In other words, either Azdī, Saʿīd ibn al-Fadl, and Qudāmī depended on the text of Abū Mikhna, or they, including Abū Mikhna, used the same source(s). But the latter assumption is unlikely, given that Abū Mikhna was a generation older than the other narrators, and that these narrators, given their death dates around the end of the second century, could not have met informants who lived in the early second century. The fact that this material remained almost identical despite being transmitted by various narrators and in various regions suggests that these narrators, as they transmitted this material, adhered to the original version of Abū Mikhna without any radical editing. The possibility that any one of them tampered with the material in question seems unlikely in view of the fact that there are no major differences in their content.

One last remark should be made before moving to discuss the informants quoted by Azdī. The material about the conquests of Syria found in Kitāb al-futūḥ of Ibn Aʿtham al-Kūfī might also have been based on the work of Abū Mikhna. This material is similar to, though more detailed than Azdī’s. The problem of this similarity was discussed by Iḥsān ʿAbbās, who assumed that either Ibn Aʿtham quoted Azdī or that they both quoted from the same source. The former assumption can still be held as a possibility. One can also argue, in light of the fact that Ibn Aʿtham was from Kūfah, that, as in the case of Azdī, he based his material concerning the conquests of Syria on the work of Abū Mikhna, but without acknowledging it.

The extent to which Azdī depended on Abū Mikhna cannot be determined fully without the existence of the lat-

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141 Ibn ʿAsākir, XX: 40.
142 Ṭabari, II: 18 and 39.
143 Ṭabari, II: 18.
145 The name in Azdī is Saʿīd, not Saʿd.
147 Ibn ʿAsākir, LXV: 67–69; Lees, 86–89.
149 ʿAbbās, 22.
ter's work. It is also impossible to establish if Azdí added material to the texts he collected from other sources. Yet, since all significant informants who were quoted by Azdí were the informants of Abū Mikhnaf, as shown above, it is unlikely that Azdí added a substantial number of accounts to the original text of Abū Mikhnaf.

The total number of accounts in Azdí's Futūḥ al-shām is one hundred and twenty-two,150 nine of which have nothing to do with the conquests of Syria.151 The remaining ninety-three cover most of the details of the conquests, from the preparations in Medina until the capture of Jerusalem. The informants who were quoted in the Azdí text number forty-one; ten of them cannot be identified.152 The thirty-one who are identifiable are quoted for eighty-eight out of the one hundred and two accounts. Fifteen from Kūfa transmitted twenty-nine accounts, seven from Syria transmitted twenty-eight, six from Medina transmitted twenty-six, and three from Baṣra transmitted five. Almost all of these informants died between 120/738 and 160/777. Therefore, it is possible to say that the material in the Azdí text originated from three geographical regions: Iraq (especially Kūfa), Syria, and Medina. Such a wide variety might be taken to imply that most of the chains of authorities, and subsequently most of the material forming the Azdí text, were forged. However, there is no concrete basis for this assumption.

The following list shows the informants of Azdí who could be identified and who were also the informants of Abū Mikhnaf:

Informants from Kūfa

1. Abū Jannāb Yahyā ibn Abī Ḥayya al-Kalbī (d. ca. 147/764), an ʿAlid.153

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150 This figure is based on the number of chains of authorities that are present in Lees' edition. Besides that edition, the two manuscripts and Ibn ʿAsākir's Taʾrikh and Ibn Hubaysh's Ghazzawāt were used for additional checking of the accounts and chains of authorities.

151 These nine accounts deal with the conquests of Iraq or incidents that took place during the journey of the caliph ʿUmar on his way back from Syria to Medina: see Lees, 45–61, 236–44.


158 Taḥbīr, II: 948–49, 962.

159 Taḥbīr, II: 564; see also Ibn Saʿd, al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā (Beirut, 1958), VI: 216.

160 Lees, 125–30, 131–32.

161 Ṭūsī, Riǧāl, 87; Tustari, III: 32; and Ibn Ḥājar, Līsān, II: 156.


164 Ibn Abī Ḥātim, VIII: 477; and Dhahabi, al-Dāʾifā ʿal-matrūkin, II: 402.
that participated in the conquests of Sijistān, placed by Tabari in the year 23/644. Al-Naḍir was later engaged with Mutarrif ibn al-Mughira, whose army was fighting that of al-Ḥajjāj in the region around Madā‘īn in Iraq in 77/697. He is said to have resided in Kūfa after the defeat of Mutarrif.


10. Qudāma ibn Ḥāzim ibn Sufyān al-Khāṭṭā‘ī. His name and the chain of authority in the Azdī text where he is mentioned varies in the two manuscripts and in Lees’ edition: Qudāma from Jābir from Sufyān; Qudāma ibn Ḥāzim from Sufyān; and Qudāma ibn Jābir from Sufyān. Qudāma was quoted by Abū Mikhna‘f when reporting on the fight between Shabīb ibn Qays al-Khāṭṭā‘ī (d. 77/696) and the Umayyad army in the region of Kūfa in 76/695. A legend, as it appears in Tabari’s Ta’rīkh, is Qudāma ibn Ḥāzim ibn Sufyān, which is also the case in Ibn ‘Asakir’s Ta’rīkh.


12. Al-Ṣa‘q’ab ibn Zuhayr al-Azdī al-Kabīrī (d. ca. 135/752). Abū Mīkhna‘f identified him as the descendant of Kabīr ibn al-Dawl from the Azdī.

13. Suqayf ibn Bishr al-Jīlī. His name is cited in Tabari’s Ta’rīkh as Sayyf.

14. Yahyā ibn Sa‘d al-Azdī. He was the father of Abū Mīkhna‘f. Azdī claimed to have heard an account from his father. The same account is transmitted in Ibn ‘Asakir’s Ta’rīkh from Abū Mīkhna‘f on the authority of his father. It seems certain that Abū Mīkhna‘f’s version was the original and that Azdī referred to Abū Mīkhna‘f’s father, not his own.

15. Yahyā ibn Ḥānī ibn ʿUrwa al-Murādī (d. ca. 125/743), a known traditionist.

Informants from Syria


17. Abū Ḥafṣ al-Azdī.

18. Abū Jaḥdām al-Azdī. He was in the army of al-Ḥajjāj that was fighting a rebel group in Dayr al-Jamā‘īn in Iraq in 83/702.

19. Abū al-Khazraj al-Ghassānī: His name is given by Ibn ‘Asḳākîr as Abū al-Jarrāḥ—probably the result of a punctuation problem. He came originally from a place near the town of Buṣrā, south of Damascus, as can be inferred from the Azdī text as well as his biography in Ibn ‘Asḳākîr’s Ta’rīkh, and he witnessed the conquests of Syria. There is a problem in the chain of authorities where Abū al-Khazraj was quoted by Azdī. It reads as if Azdī transmitted directly from him, which could not have been the case. It must read as it appears in Ibn ‘Asḳākîr’s Ta’rīkh: al-Musayyab ibn al-Zubayr from Abū al-Khazraj (or al-Jarrāḥ).

20. Abū Ṭayyība.[183] Amr ibn Mālik al-Qaynī. He was recruited while a young boy to the army of ʿUbayd al-Ālāh ibn Ziyād (d. 67/686), who was fighting a rebel pro-ʿAlīd army under al-Mukhtar ibn Abī ʿUbayd al-Thaqafī (d. 67/687) in Iraq 66/685.

165 Tabari, I: 3357.
167 Azdī (M1), f. 9a(5); Azdī (M2), f. 17a(1); and Lees, 20, respectively. ‘Āmīr follows Lees: ‘Āmīr, 25.
168 In Tabari’s Ta’rīkh, it reads as follows: “Abū Mīkhna‘f said that Qudāma ibn Ḥāzim ibn Sufyān al-Khāṭṭā‘ī told him that a group of them were killed that day”: Tabari, II: 938.
171 Azdī (M1), f. 9a(5); Azdī (M2), f. 17a(1); and Lees, 20, respectively. ‘Āmīr follows Lees: ‘Āmīr, 25.
173 Azdī (M1), f. 9a(5); Azdī (M2), f. 17a(1); and Lees, 20, respectively. ‘Āmīr follows Lees: ‘Āmīr, 25.
174 In Tabari’s Ta’rīkh, it reads as follows: “Abū Mīkhna‘f said that Qudāma ibn Ḥāzim ibn Sufyān al-Khāṭṭā‘ī told him that a group of them were killed that day”: Tabari, II: 938.
175 Ibn ‘Asākīr, LXVIII: 32–33.
177 Birādharī, Anṣāb al-asḥāf, IV, pt. 1, ed. İhsan Ababbas (Wiesbaden, 1979), 519.
179 Lees, 203–5.
21. ʿAmr ibn Miḥṣan ibn Sūrāqa ibn ʿAbd al-Aʿlā ibn Surāqa al-Azdī. He fought with Muʿāwiyah at the battle of Sīffīn (37/657).185
22. Yazid ibn Yazid ibn Jābīr al-Azdī (d. ca. 133/750), a famous traditionist.186

Informants from Medina

23. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī ʿAmra al-Anṣārī al-Māzīnī.187 His first name only is given by Azdī in a context of authority where ʿAbd Allāh is quoted as transmitting from his father.188 The full name is cited by Abū Mikhnaḍ in Ṭabarī’s Taʾrīkh.189
24. ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Nawfāl ibn Musāḥīq al-ʿĀmirī (d. ca. 145/762),190 a known traditionalist, Abū Mikhnaḍ’s maternal grandfather.191
26. Hishām ibn ʿUrwa ibn al-Zybaṭ al-Asadī (d. ca. 145/762). He is said to have frequented Kūfa at the time when the caliph al-Maṣūr was residing there. He died either in Baghdad or in Kūfa.193
27. Muḥammad ibn ʿUṣūf ibn Thābit al-Khazrajī, Abū ʿUṣūf al-Anṣārī.194
28. ʿUbayd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib (d. 58/678 or 87/706).195

Informants from Baṣra

29. Abū al-Muthannā al-Kalbī. He was quoted by Abū Mikhnaḍ as transmitting from a relative of his from Baṣra, which suggests that he himself was from Baṣra.196
30. ʿAṭāʾ ibn ʿAjlān al-Hanafī (d. ca. 135/752).197
31. Mālik ibn Qusaym ibn Zuhayr al-Māzīnī al-Tamīmī. His father was from Baṣra and died during the emirate of al-Hajjāj over Iraq or after the year 80/699.198

As mentioned above, fifteen informants out of the thirty-one identified were from Kūfa. As for the Syrians, the most frequently quoted either resided for some time in Kūfa, as in the case of Abū Jahlām al-Azdī (fourteen accounts) and ʿAmr ibn Mālik al-Qaynī (four accounts);199 were known to have visited it, as in the case of Yazid ibn Yazid ibn Jābīr (five accounts); or were known to have been Abū Mikhnaḍ’s informants, as in the case of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Yazid ibn Jābīr (two accounts).200 Of the Medinan informants, ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Nawfāl (nine accounts) was Abū Mikhnaḍ’s maternal grandfather,201 and Hishām ibn ʿUrwa (one account) is said to have frequented Kūfa at the time of ʿAbdāsīd caliph al-Maṣūr (r. 136–58/754–75). One may conclude from this that Azdī’s text was based largely on material that was in circulation in Kūfa (sixty-four accounts).

Accordingly, the view that the Azdī text is of Syrian provenance, as Conrad maintains, needs to be revised. Conrad suspected that Saʿīd ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Tanūkhī al-Dimahṣī (d. 167/783) had a role in passing down some of the material that Azdī used.202 As mentioned already, Abū Ḥudhayfah transmitted on the authority of Saʿīd al-Tanūkhī some of the accounts which are almost identical to those of Azdī. However, there is no way to ascertain that Abū Ḥudhayfah was actually quoting Saʿīd al-Tanūkhī.

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187 Ibn Abī Hāṭim, V: 96.
188 Lees, 45–52.
189 Ṭabarī, I: 3101.
191 Ibn ʿAsikīr, XXIV: 394.
194 Ṭabarī, I: 3233, 3402–3.
196 Tabarî, II: 517.
199 See nos. 18 and 20 in the regional informants list.
201 See no. 24 in the regional informants list.
202 Conrad, 50, 59.
Given his poor reputation in scholarly circles, it is likely that he tampered with the chains of authorities and replaced Abū Mikhnaf’s name with that of the highly acclaimed and trustworthy traditionist Sa‘īd al-Tanūkhī. Moreover, the link in the material of Azdī to Abū Mikhnaf of Kūfā can be proven much more convincingly, as we have seen.

Alternately, if we assume that Sa‘īd al-Tanūkhī actually had a role in transmitting the accounts Abū Ḥudhayfa quoted from him, it should be noted that he did not mention his informants by name, unlike Abū Mikhnaf and Azdī. In Ibn ʿAsākir, for instance, Sa‘īd al-Tanūkhī is quoted, through the intermediary of Abū Ḥudhayfa, for three reports that are almost identical to reports in Azdī.203 In the three instances, Sa‘īd al-Tanūkhī identified his informants as *qudamā* ṣa‘īd al-shām (men long established in Syria); whereas in the Azdī text these informants and their chains of authorities are as follows:

Rāshid ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Azdī (two accounts).204

| al-Muhājir ibn Sayfī al-ʿUḍhrī |
| al-Ṣaqʿab ibn Zuhayr |
| Sahl ibn ʿAlī al- Ḍārī |
| Thābit (al-Bunānī al-Bāṣrī) |
| Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf |

Only Rāshid ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Azdī could be connected to Syria, as he had participated in its conquests,205 whereas all the others were either from Iraq (al-Ṣaqʿab and Muhājir were from Kūfā, and Thābit from Başrā), or from Medina (Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf and Sahl ibn ʿAlī). Although Sa‘īd al-Tanūkhī could have had his material from non-Syrian informants, his reference to these ambiguous informants as “men long established in Syria” suggests a tampering with the chains of authorities. But even if one accepts his reliability, the presence of these accounts and their transmission by non-Syrian informants prior to his time would suggest that there was more than one source for them. This would dismiss altogether the argument that Sa‘īd al-Tanūkhī was a source for the Azdī text or at the least some of the Azdī accounts.

Another point made by Conrad in favor of the text’s Syrian provenance is its pro-Ḥimṣī character.207 In fact, the Azdī text does highlight the role of men from Ḥimṣ in battles during the conquest of Syria. The most relevant account in this respect fits very well in the *Awāzīl* genre, naming the first army commander to reach Ḥimṣ, the first to kill an unbeliever in Ḥimṣ, the first to be born in Ḥimṣ, the first to receive money from the state-treasury, and the first to frequent the kutṭāb (*Qurʾān* and scribal teachers) in Ḥimṣ.208 Ironically enough, it was transmitted from Adham ibn Miḥriz al-Ḥimṣī—who features in some of these firsts—by Farwa ibn Lajīt al-Azdī, an Azdī from Kūfā.209 Moreover, an abridged form of the same account appears in Yaqūt’s *Muʿjam al-buldān* and is quoted there from Abū Mikhnaf,210 which also supports the dependence of Azdī on Abū Mikhnaf. If one accepts that showing a preference for Ḥimṣ would suggest a link to Ḥimṣ, then we should expect that both Abū Mikhnaf and Farwa ibn Lajīt were from Ḥimṣ, or at least pro-Ḥimṣī. This, however, is clearly not the case since Farwa and Abū Mikhnaf were both pro-ʿAlīds from Kūfā. Therefore, if the Azdī text includes material in favor of Ḥimṣ, it does not necessarily mean that its provenance was Ḥimṣ or Syria.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on these arguments, I believe that the text of Azdī was compiled some time in the late second/eighth century, and was based on the *Futūḥ al-shām* of Abū Mikhnaf (d. 157/774) of Kūfā. Moreover, the material that constitutes Azdī’s text was not unique to Azdī. It was known to other compilers of his generation, Sa‘īd ibn al-Fadl al-Baṣrī, al-Qudāmī al-Miṣṣīṣī, and Abū Ḥudhayfa al-Bukhārī. The fact that this material survived in an almost identical form strongly suggests that these narrators kept it as they were introduced to it and without editing it significantly. Accordingly, Azdī’s *Futūḥ al-shām* is one of the oldest historical sources for the conquests of Syria that has survived until modern times.

Moreover, Azdī’s source, Abū Mikhnaf, was an ʿAlīd from Kūfā. Most of the informants who were quoted by

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204 Lees, 190–91, 194–96.
207 Conrad, 52–53.
208 Lees, 131–32.
209 See no. 4 in the regional informants list.
Azdi, and who were also the informants of Abū Mikhnaf, were either 'Alids from Kūfa or resided for some time there. The *Futūḥ al-shām* was transmitted from Azdi by al-Ḥusayn ibn Ziyād, also an 'Alid from Kūfa. Therefore, it is possible that Azdi, originally from Baṣra, lived in Kūfa were he was introduced to the *Futūḥ al-shām* of Abū Mikhnaf, and he based his own *Futūḥ al-shām* on it. Azdi, therefore, should be placed in the generation that followed Abū Mikhnaf, and, as such, his death may be set at around 190/806. Whether he had 'Alid sympathies remains an open question. In any case, Azdi's *Futūḥ al-shām* represents a Kūfī narration of the conquest of Syria that implies no direct religious or political biases on his part.