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## al-Azraqī, Abū l-Walīd Muḥammad

Webb, P.A.; Fleet, K.; Krämer, G; Matringe, D.; Nawas, J.; Stewart, D.

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genre of comedy (Konduk) by (co-)writing scripts for *Lükiüs hayat* (“The luxurious life”, 1976, directed by Yücel Uçanoğlu, b. 1934), *Şoför Memet* (“Driver Memet”, 1977, directed by Sırrı Gültekin, 1924–2008), and two *Şaban* comedies (1985), and by continuing to play amiable characters, including three more appearances as Güdük Necmi in the less successful *Hababam* sequels 6–8 (2003–5). He became one of the most-loved figures in Turkish cinema and received Honorary Awards at the film festivals in Antalya (2011), where he was celebrated in an illustrated biography by Sekmeç (Sekmeçö *Komediye adanmış bir ömür*), and in Istanbul (2012), where he was lauded by renowned film critic and historian Ağâh Özgüç (1932–2022) as “an ever-smiling, inviting, amiable, warm, and joyous character who harbours a rock-hard core. He is a tough man, so cunning! But he would always live with that ‘smiling mask,’ a reflection of his inner world” (Özgüç).

After spending more than seventy years on stage and on screen, Akçatepe died in Istanbul on 31 March 2017 at the age of 79.

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KEREM KAYI

## al-Azraqī, Abū l-Walīd MuḤammad

**Abū l-Walīd MuḤammad** b. ‘Abdallāh b. Aḥmad **al-Azraqī** was a third/ninth-century Meccan historian who compiled the earliest extant history of Mecca and its sanctum.

#### 1. ORIGINS AND LINEAGE OF THE FAMILY

His family claimed that their name derived from their ancestor al-Azraq b. ‘Amr, a contemporary of MuḤammad and a Ghassānid nobleman from Syria, whom the Prophet settled in Mecca (al-Sam‘ānī,

1:184). The historian al-Azraqī is accordingly identified as al-Ghassānī (Ibn al-Nadīm, 1:344; al-Fāsī, 2:49) and, once, as al-Muzayqī (al-Baghdādī, 1:11), a reference to the Ghassānids' ancestor Muzayqiyā' b. Mā' al-Samā'. The family's lineage claim is, however, debatable. Various authorities identify the family's ancestor instead as al-Azraq b. 'Uqba, a Byzantine slave (who possibly worked as a smith; al-Balādhurī, 1/2:1193) reportedly owned by al-Ḥārith b. Kalada al-Thaqafī in al-Ṭā'if at the dawn of Islam. When Muḥammad besieged al-Ṭā'if in 8/630, al-Azraq fled to the Muslims, converted and became a client (*mawālī*) of the Umayyad clan (al-Wāqidī, 3:931–2; al-Ṭabarī, 11:508; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, 4:1863–4; Ibn Ḥajar, 1:199). Al-Azraq then married into the Umayyads, transforming his descendants into a notable family and compelling them to forge a Ghassānid lineage to present themselves as “Arabs” (al-Balādhurī, 1/2:917; al-Ṭabarī, 11:508).

There are further uncertainties surrounding the family's lineage and relations, including a claim that they posed initially as Arabs by alleging descent from the Taghlib and later switched to assert Ghassānid descent as a result of Umayyad-era politics (Ibn Sa'd, 3:18, who is followed by Fück, but Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, 4:1863, casts doubt on the basis of this story). Whilst the family's exact origins remain unclear, they were well established by the third/ninth century; the historian al-Azraqī himself avows his Ghassanid lineage and describes the family home in Mecca, prominently located adjacent to the Holy Sanctum (al-Azraqī 2:247), and his grandfather, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad (d. c.222/837), had been a reputable *ḥadīth* narrator who studied

under al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/820) (al-Subkī, 2:64; al-Fāsī, *al-Iqd*, 3:176–8).

## 2. AL-AZRAQĪ'S TEXT

Al-Azraqī the historian is remembered solely for his history of Mecca, known to later writers under at least three names: *Akhbār Makka* (Ibn al-Athīr, 1:47; al-Sam'ānī, 1:184; al-Fāsī, *al-Iqd*, 2:49), *Tārīkh Makka* (al-Maqrīzī; Ḥājjī Khalīfa, 1:306; al-Ṣafadī, 19:152; al-Subkī, 2:64; al-Fāsī, *al-Iqd*, 3:176), and *Kūtāb Makka wa-akhbār-hā wa-jibāl-hā wa-awdiyat-hā* (“The Book of Mecca. Its history, mountains, and valleys”) (Ibn al-Nadīm, 1:344; al-Baghdādī, 1:11). Ḥājjī Khalīfa considers it the “first book compiled about Mecca,” but that is inaccurate: histories of Mecca are ascribed to three earlier historians, the Medinan al-Wāqidī (d. 207/822) and the Iraqī Abū 'Ubayda (d. c.209/824–5) and al-Madā'inī (d. c.228/843), as well as an Iraqī historian contemporary with al-Azraqī, 'Umar b. Shabba (d. 262/878) (Ibn al-Nadīm, 1:151, 308, 326, 346). These earlier books are, however, lost.

Al-Azraqī's text begins with Mecca's ancient past: the mythic stories of its founding at the beginning of Creation, the pilgrimages made by prophets from Adam to Ishmael, the Quraysh's conversion of the sanctum into a pagan centre, and the Quraysh's rebuilding of the Kaaba during Muḥammad's youth (al-Azraqī, 1:31–164). Al-Azraqī then describes the Kaaba in great architectural detail, recounts its reconstructions and modifications during the Muslim era, and discusses juridical matters concerning the *ṭawāf* (circumambulation; 1:165–351, 2:3–22). The remainder of the book centres on the history and architecture of Mecca's other ritual sites radiating from the Kaaba

(2:23–209) and topographic information on Mecca’s cemetery, water supply, and urban layout (2:209–302).

The narratives of Meccan history are reported primarily from al-Azraqī’s grandfather, the jurist Aḥmad b. Muḥammad noted above, who compiled a vast number of anecdotes ascribed to prominent early narrators, including Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 110/728 or 114/732), Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna (d. c.196/811), Muḥammad b. Ishāq (d. c.150/767), al-Wāqidī, Muslim b. Khālid al-Zanjī (d. c.180/796–7), and Mujāhid b. Jabr (d. between 100/718 and 104/722). The extant book is largely a recension of al-Azraqī’s grandfather’s material, with additions gathered from later narrators: in the historical section and discussion of the Kaaba, there are approximately 325 distinct anecdotes, of which al-Azraqī’s grandfather collected 246 (75 percent). For topographical and architectural details, however, al-Azraqī tends to dispense with his grandfather’s material and supplies his own direct observations (for example, al-Azraqī, 2:81–106) or cites alternative informants (for example, al-Azraqī, 2:214–20).

Al-Azraqī transmitted the book to Abū Muḥammad Ishāq b. Aḥmad al-Khuzā‘ī (d. 308/920–1), who made additions but added his name as the authority, in an apparently careful effort to distinguish his new material from al-Azraqī’s original. Ishāq al-Khuzā‘ī transmitted his recension to his grand-nephew Abū l-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Nāfi‘ al-Khuzā‘ī (d. c.350/961), who made only three evident additions; this is the form of the book that survives today.

Nothing else is known of al-Azraqī’s life, including the date of his death. Because he and his grandfather shared the same tekonym, Abū l-Walīd, later sources

sometimes confused the two (al-Fāsī, *al-Iqd*, 2:49–50): Ḥājji Khalīfa (also known as Kātib Çelebi, d. 1067/1657) and al-Baghdādī (d. 1920) report al-Azraqī’s death in 223/838 or 224/839, which accords with his grandfather’s death (Ḥājji Khalīfa, 1:306; al-Baghdādī, 1:11). Al-Azraqī actually lived into the 240s/c.860: Wüstenfeld, the first modern editor of his history, posits his death shortly after 244/858, whereas al-Fāsī (d. 832/1429), the Meccan historian and biographer, states that he survived at least until 247/861, given a reference to the caliph al-Mustanşir (r. 247–8/861–2) in his work (al-Fāsī, *al-Iqd*, 2:49). Malḥas, the most recent modern editor of the history, endorses al-Fāsī’s proposal (Malḥas, 13).

### 3. RECEPTION OF AL-AZRAQĪ’S WORK

Al-Azraqī’s history was apparently well respected: al-Sam‘ānī praises it as “extremely well compiled” (1:184), and al-Azraqī is identified in bibliographical sources as simply Şāhib Akhbār (or Ta’rīkh) Makka, which suggests that readers across the pre-modern Middle East were familiar with his text as a classic resource for Meccan history (al-Subkī, 2:64; Ibn al-Athīr, 1:47; al-Fāsī, *al-Iqd*, 3:176). A near contemporary of al-Azraqī, Muḥammad b. Ishāq al-Fākihī (d. after 275/889), also wrote a history of Mecca: in places it has different material from al-Azraqī’s, but al-Fākihī was clearly aware of al-Azraqī’s text and copied freely from it without acknowledging his fellow Meccan’s earlier compilation. Al-Azraqī’s text was epitomised at least three times: by the Egyptian Taqī al-Dīn al-Armantī (d. 722/1322) (al-Şafadī, 19:152); by the Baghdadi/Egyptian Ibn al-Kirmānī

(d. 833/1430) (Ḥājjī Khalīfa, 1:306; Ibn al-Kirmānī); and by the Meccan Sa'd al-Dīn Sa'd Allāh b. 'Umar al-Isfarā'inī (d. c.762/1361), who incorporated part of al-Azraqī's text in his *Ẓubdat al-a'māl* ("The cream of the crop") (al-Isfarā'inī ascribes *Tārīkh Makka* to al-Azraqī's grandfather, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad; Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, MS WE 1096, fol. 2a).

Notwithstanding the positive appraisals and broad awareness of al-Azraqī's text, subsequent authors for some reason quote it only infrequently. The geographical compendia of al-Bakrī (d. 487/1094) and Yāqūt (d. 626/1229) cite al-Azraqī sparingly, for information about Meccan topography (al-Bakrī, 2:657, 664, 663; Yāqūt, 4:12, 5:190, 298, 305), and al-Wakī's (d. 306/918) *Kitāb al-tarīq* does not include al-Azraqī amongst his sources about Mecca (al-Qāḍī Wakī, 228–67). Even texts focused on Meccan history generally exhibit limited reliance on al-Azraqī: al-Fāsi does use al-Azraqī (alongside al-Fākihī) as a main source in the *Shifā' al-gharām* ("Answers to burning questions about Mecca"), but al-Qurashī's (d. 922/1516) *Ghāyat al-marām* ("Everything one wants to know about Mecca's rulers") cites al-Azraqī only twenty-five times over some four hundred pages on Mecca's Muslim-era political history; his last citations of al-Azraqī are for the year 241/855–6 (al-Qurashī, 1:424–5). Al-Maqrīzī's (d. 845/1442) history of the Kaaba gives precedence to 'Umar b. Shabba's history of Mecca (al-Maqrīzī, 37, 60); al-Maqrīzī cites repeatedly from al-Azraqī only for the history of the period between Ishmael and the pagan Quraysh (al-Maqrīzī, 100–26); elsewhere, he cites al-Azraqī just twice, as a minority opinion (al-Maqrīzī, 147, 153).

For modern readers, al-Azraqī's text (along with al-Fākihī's) represents the most valuable source of early Muslim narratives on Mecca's history, and, given the number of citations from al-Azraqī's grandfather, the text provides unique insight into Mecca's history and significance as imagined by the Meccan people at the end of the second/eighth century. Al-Azraqī's eyewitness accounts of the sanctum are also invaluable for scholars of 'Abbāsid art, architecture, and architectural terminology (Grabar).

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PETER WEBB