

## Ibn Nubātah al-Miṣrī (686–768/1287–1366): Life and Works Part I: The Life of Ibn Nubātah

### 1. “THE SOLITAIRE OF THE AGE”

“If anyone in our century tried to equal Ibn Nubātah in poetry, prose, or handwriting, he would attempt something impossible and aspire to something that will in no way occur.”<sup>1</sup> These are the words of the scholar Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, who was well acquainted with Ibn Nubātah. The historian Ibn Ḥabīb, another acquaintance of his, sums up Ibn Nubātah’s accomplishments as follows: *wa-bi-al-jumlah fa-kāna u’jūbat al-zamān wa-nādirat al-waqt wa-farīd al-awān* “On the whole, he was the wonder of the era, the prodigy of this time, the solitaire of the age.”<sup>2</sup> The hadith scholar Walī al-Dīn Ibn al-‘Irāqī boasted of Ibn Nubātah a generation later: “Ibn Nubātah distinguished himself in the field of *adab* and reached in it everything that can be desired; he surpassed his contemporaries, transcended the people of his epoch, and ended up peerless and as the solitary leader in the field. His poetry reached the acme of perfection, and I do not think that the whole eighth century produced sweeter poetry than his.”<sup>3</sup>

For al-Ṣafadī, however, Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī was the greatest poet of the age for perhaps two reasons. First, al-Ṣafadī’s style, characterized by his love for *jinās*, was more akin to that of al-Ḥillī than to that of Ibn Nubātah. Second, al-Ṣafadī’s relationship with Ibn Nubātah was a troubled one. On the one hand, al-Ṣafadī struggled throughout his life to escape the shadow of his master, Ibn Nubātah, who doubtlessly was the greater poet; on the other hand, al-Ṣafadī was a much more outgoing personality than the rather taciturn Ibn Nubātah and therefore gained more worldly success. In their relationship, periods of friendship alternated with periods of animosity. Nevertheless, al-Ṣafadī finds enthusiastic words for Ibn Nubātah. As a poet, al-Ṣafadī remarks, Ibn Nubātah “is unique in the elegance of his verse-making, the sweetness of his expressions, the excellence of his poetic compositions, the astonishing quality of his topics, the clarity of his language, and

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<sup>1</sup>Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘iyah al-Kubrā* (Beirut, 1420/1999), 5:111 (art. Ibn al-Zamlakānī).

<sup>2</sup>Badr al-Dīn Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh fī Ayyām al-Manṣūr wa-Banīh*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn (Cairo, 1976–86), 3:305.

<sup>3</sup>Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ibn al-‘Irāqī, *Al-Dhayl ‘alā al-‘Ibar fī Khabar Man ‘Abar*, ed. Ṣāliḥ Maḥdī ‘Abbās (Beirut, 1409/1989), 1:221.



the fluency in his writing.”<sup>4</sup> But al-Şafadī is even more impressed by Ibn Nubātah as a prose author: “But his prose constitutes the summit of eloquence. He followed the manner of [al-Qāḍī] al-Fāḍil and adopted his style, and he extinguished the light of Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir and left no favored position for him in the hearts of the people.”<sup>5</sup>

In al-Nawājī’s anthology *Ta’hīl al-Gharīb*, only two poets are granted honorific titles. Whereas Ibn al-Fāriḍ is the *Imām al-‘Ushshāq*, Ibn Nubātah is called the *Malik al-Shu‘arā’*, the *Malik al-Muta’addibīn*, and the *Imām al-Udabā’*, at the same time being an *‘Allāmah*.<sup>6</sup>

These are only five of many examples that attest to the fame that Ibn Nubātah enjoyed among his contemporaries and in following generations. Apart from the famous Sufi poets (Ibn al-Fāriḍ, Ibn ‘Arabī, ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī) there was no other Arabic poet between the time of al-Mutanabbī and the modern period who enjoyed a greater reputation than Ibn Nubātah. Even at the beginning of the nineteenth century, al-Shawkānī (1173–1250/1760–1832) characterized Ibn Nubātah as “the famous, excellent, and creative poet, who in all kinds of poetry surpassed his contemporaries, all those who came after them, and even most of those who lived before him.”<sup>7</sup>

It becomes quite clear that it is impossible to understand the literature and the culture of the Mamluk and the Ottoman periods without a thorough knowledge of the works of Ibn Nubātah. Unfortunately, however, Ibn Nubātah has fared worse than other Mamluk authors among twentieth-century scholars. During the whole of that century, only a single monograph that can claim scholarly standing was published.<sup>8</sup> Even now, most of Ibn Nubātah’s works remain in manuscript.

There are several reasons for this deplorable state of affairs. The most important is the wide-spread negative attitude towards Mamluk literature in the still mentally colonized Arab world.<sup>9</sup> Another reason is the fact that Ibn Nubātah is generally perceived exclusively as a poet. His achievements as a prose writer are largely either neglected or unknown. Many contemporary scholars are unable to appreciate the aesthetic qualities of the sophisticated prose style of *inshā’*, of which Ibn Nubātah was an acclaimed master. Some of Ibn Nubātah’s prose works

<sup>4</sup>Khalil ibn Aybak al-Şafadī, *Al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt*, ed. Helmut Ritter et al. (Wiesbaden, Beirut, 1962–), 1:311–12.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 312.

<sup>6</sup>Shams al-Dīn al-Nawājī, *Ta’hīl al-Gharīb*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad ‘Aṭā’ (Cairo, 2004), 78, 91, 116, 128, 171, 175, 183, etc.

<sup>7</sup>Al-Shawkānī, *Al-Badr al-Ṭālī bi-Maḥāsīn Man ba‘da al-Qarn al-Sābi‘* (Beirut, 1418/1998), 2:131.

<sup>8</sup>Umar Mūsā Bāshā, *Ibn Nubātah al-Miṣrī: Amīr Shu‘arā’ al-Mashriq* (Cairo, 1963, 3rd ed., 1992).

<sup>9</sup>See my article “Mamluk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 9, no. 2 (2005): 105–32.



are among the most important *inshā'* works of pre-modern Islam, but they have yet to be edited.

For an appreciation of Ibn Nubātah as a poet, the edition of his *Dīwān*<sup>10</sup> has done as much harm as good. The *Dīwān Ibn Nubātah*, edited by a certain Muḥammad al-Qalqīlī, was published in Cairo in 1323/1905. From then on, readers took it for granted that this book represented the *Dīwān* of Ibn Nubātah and contained all his poetry in its original form. Nobody, including myself, ever questioned the philological basis of this “edition.” A closer examination, however, reveals that this *Dīwān* is only a distorted version of a questionable collection of Ibn Nubātah’s poetry made by his pupil al-Bashtakī. All studies of Ibn Nubātah’s poetry are based on this source, and the confidence that was placed in this “edition” made it seem superfluous to direct any efforts towards an edition of the poetic collections assembled by Ibn Nubātah himself. Thus, we must realize that we still lack a proper foundation for the study of Ibn Nubātah’s poetry.

The purpose of this article is to provide a basis for further research about Ibn Nubātah and the literary culture of the Mamluk period. It will list all the works of Ibn Nubātah known so far and try to elucidate their purpose, their biographical context, and their place in the literary culture of the epoch. Though I have used a fair number of manuscripts and library catalogues for this study, it cannot claim to be exhaustive. I will start with a chart that gives preliminary information on the titles of Ibn Nubātah’s works, their character, and the date of their composition. A survey of the main sources for Ibn Nubātah’s life is then given in the same section. A rather detailed chronology of Ibn Nubātah’s life follows. Section 4 presents Ibn Nubātah’s known autograph manuscripts. Section 5 will demonstrate the way Ibn Nubātah constantly revised his own works. As a consequence of Ibn Nubātah’s consideration of his own œuvre as a “work in progress,” the necessity for establishing a sound philological basis becomes even more obvious. A reconstruction of the history of Ibn Nubātah’s *Dīwān* will be the subject of the following section. Section 7 deals with all known works of Ibn Nubātah and those erroneously ascribed to him. They will be treated in the sequence given in the chart below. Due to its length, this article will appear in three parts over subsequent issues of *Mamlūk Studies Review*.

## 2. SOURCES

The main sources for Ibn Nubātah’s life are his own works. They reveal his social relationships and his place in the network of *udabā'* and ulama (and, to a lesser extent, *umarā'*) that shaped intellectual life in Syria and Cairo during the greater part of the eighth/fourteenth century. The known works of Ibn Nubātah are listed

<sup>10</sup>I use the word *Dīwān*, starting with a capital letter, if the word refers to a “collection of poetry,” in contrast to *dīwān* (= *dīwān al-inshā'*) in the sense of “state chancellery.”



in the following chart. For easier reference, I assign a number to each. This number is also used throughout the article, where it is added in square brackets whenever one of these titles is mentioned (with the exception of the *Dīwān*).

In the chart, titles that are lost (or not yet found) are marked with an asterisk. If the content of the book can be reconstructed more or less by means of other sources, the asterisk is put in brackets. The chart demonstrates that it is not sufficient to characterize Ibn Nubātah only as a poet, since a great part of his oeuvre consists of prose. His own compilations of poetry and prose anthologies of past and contemporary authors make up another important part of his oeuvre. Ibn Nubātah wrote in several genres, covering the wide spectrum of *adab* literature. The only exception is theory, a field that seems not to have aroused his interest.

THE WORKS OF IBN NUBĀTAH			own poetry	own prose	others' poetry	others' prose
No.	Title	Date				
1a	<i>Dīwān al-Aṣl</i>	several versions	■			
1b	al-Bashtakī: <i>Dīwān Ibn Nubātah</i>	773	■			
1c	Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī: <i>Ziyādāt ʿalā Dīwān Ibn Nubātah</i>	800 and shortly after	■			
2	<i>Maṭlaʿ al-Fawāʿid wa-Majmaʿ al-Farāʿid</i>	718	■	■	■	■
3	<i>Sajʿ al-Muṭawwaq</i>	719	■	■	■	■
4	<i>Sarḥ al-ʿUyūn fī Sharḥ Risālat Ibn Zaydūn</i>	between 719 and 730			■	■
5	<i>Muntakhab al-Ḥadīyah min al-Madāʾih al-Muʿayyadiyah</i>	shortly after 719	■			
6	<i>al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī</i>	around 725	■			
7	<i>Farāʿid al-Sulūk fī Masāʾid al-Mulūk</i>	around 728	■			
8	(*) <i>al-Muntakhab al-Manṣūri</i>	before 732	■			
9	Examination of the <i>kuttāb</i> (letter to al-Shihāb Maḥmūd)	725 or shortly before		■		
10	<i>al-Mufākharah bayna al-Sayf wa-al-Qalam</i>	729		■		
11	Collection of letters (Esc. 548)	around 729		■		
12	<i>Zahr al-Manthūr</i>	730		■		
13	<i>Ijāzah</i> for al-Ṣafadī	730		■		
14	<i>Taqriḥ</i> for Badr al-Dīn Ibn Ḥabīb	730		■		
15	* <i>Ibrāz al-Akhbār</i> (?)	before 730		?		
16	<i>Ḥaḥīrat al-Uns ilā Ḥaḥīrat al-Quds</i>	735		■		



17	* <i>al-Nahlah al-Insīyah fī al-Rihlah al-Qudsiyah</i> (?)	after 735?		?		
18	<i>al-Fāḍil min Inshā' al-Fāḍil</i>	between 719 and 730				
19	<i>Sulūk Duwal al-Mulūk</i>	before 742?				
20	* <i>Sha'ā'ir al-Bayt al-Taḳawī</i>	730 or shortly after				?
21	<i>al-Mukhtār min Shi'r Ibn al-Rūmī</i>	before 730				
22	<i>al-Mukhtār min Shi'r Ibn Qalāqīs</i>	?				
23	<i>Taltīf al-Mizāj min Shi'r Ibn Ḥajjāj</i>	?				
24	* <i>al-Mukhtār min Shi'r Ibn Sanā' al-Mulḳ</i>	?				
25	<i>Mukhtār Dīwān al-Ṣāhib Sharaf al-Dīn al-Anṣārī</i>	754				
26	<i>Ta'liq al-Dīwān 743</i>	743				
27	<i>Ta'liq al-Dīwān 744</i>	744				
28	Letters in al-Qalqashandī, <i>Ṣubḥ al-A'shā</i>	various dates				
29	<i>Sūq al-Raqīq</i>	750s?				
30	(*) <i>Khubz al-Sha'ir</i>	?				
31	(*) <i>al-Sab'ah al-Sayyārah</i>	760s?				
32	(*) <i>Ṭarā'if al-Ziyādah</i>	?				
33	(*) <i>Julāsāt al-Qaṭr</i>	?				
34	(*) <i>Ṭālī' al-Sanah</i> (?)	?				

Corresponding to his importance and popularity, Ibn Nubātah is treated in a great number of bio-bibliographical works. These sources are of uneven value. Therefore it is useful to briefly comment on the more important of them. The texts are mentioned in chronological order.

(1) The *Ijāzah*. In the year 729 al-Ṣafadī asked Ibn Nubātah to grant him an *ijāzah* to transmit his writings and to give him information about his life and works. Ibn Nubātah's answer probably dates from the following year. It is the most important autobiographical document of Ibn Nubātah, who otherwise was more reluctant to talk about himself and his motives than most of his contemporaries. Of special relevance for this study is the list of works Ibn Nubātah had composed to that point, which is, of course, the most reliable list of Ibn Nubātah's works. It is also important for establishing a chronology of Ibn Nubātah's works since all works mentioned in it can be dated to, or before, 730. The text was considered important enough to be included in several sources. It can be found in al-Ṣafadī's *Wāfī* and in his *Alḥān*, in Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī's *Khizānat al-Adab*, and in Ibn Taghribirdī's *Manhal*. In the following, I will quote the *Ijāzah* according to the text in al-Ṣafadī's notice on Ibn Nubātah in his *Wāfī*.<sup>11</sup>

(2) Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*. After quoting the *Ijāzah*, al-Ṣafadī mentions several other

<sup>11</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, 1:311–31; the *Ijāzah* is on pages 314–19.



titles of works by Ibn Nubātah, some of which he had heard from Ibn Nubātah himself. The notice on Ibn Nubātah in al-Ṣafadī's *Wāfi* is the basis for most later sources.

(3) *Alḥān al-Sawāji'*. For whatever reason, there is no notice on Ibn Nubātah in al-Ṣafadī's *A'yan al-ʿAṣr*,<sup>12</sup> though other ulama still alive during the composition of the book are included. Perhaps the book was written during one of the periods in which their personal relationship had cooled. At the time of al-Ṣafadī's last biographical enterprise, *Alḥān al-Sawāji' bayna al-Bādī' wa-al-Murāji'*, their relationship must have improved again somewhat. This collection of letters and poems exchanged between al-Ṣafadī and his famous contemporaries not only follows a model created by Ibn Nubātah (*Saj' al-Muṭawwaq*), but Ibn Nubātah is also granted by far the longest entry of all. There is no list of works in the text, but the documents published by al-Ṣafadī provide much valuable information. In the following, I will quote the edition by Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ,<sup>13</sup> though it is marred by the fact that the editor failed to use al-Ṣafadī's autograph manuscript, Berlin MS 8631.

(4) Ibn Ḥabīb: The *adīb* and historian Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUmar Ibn Ḥabīb (710–79/1310–77) was a great admirer of Ibn Nubātah. In his youth he composed a *dīwān* of epigrams modeled after Ibn Nubātah's *Al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī*. The young Ibn Ḥabīb even dared to ask the most famous poets of his time, Ibn Nubātah and Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī, to write words of praise in the form of a *taqrīz* in his book, and both complied with his request.<sup>14</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb immortalized this most memorable event of his life in his *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh fī Ayyām al-Manṣūr wa-Banīh*, in which we find an excerpt of Ibn Nubātah's *taqrīz* among the memorable events of the year 730 and a biography of Ibn Nubātah, including a short list of his works, among the *wafayāt* of the year 768.<sup>15</sup> The information given by Ibn Ḥabīb can claim utmost authenticity, since he met his role model Ibn Nubātah several times during his life and the two men enjoyed an untroubled friendship.

(5) Another personal acquaintance of Ibn Nubātah's was Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (728–71/1327–70), to whom Ibn Nubātah dedicated a few *qasīdahs* and a number of seven-liners. Al-Subkī in turn mentioned Ibn Nubātah in his biography of Shafī'ī scholars,<sup>16</sup> and we also find an entry for him in the dictionary of al-Subkī's

<sup>12</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yan al-ʿAṣr wa-A'wān al-Nāṣr*, ed. ʿAlī Abū Zayd et al. (Damascus, 1418–19/1998).

<sup>13</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *Alḥān al-Sawāji' bayna al-Bādī' wa-al-Murāji'*, ed. Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ (Damascus, 1425/2004), 2:180–268; the text of Ibn Nubātah's *Ijāzah* is on pages 186–90.

<sup>14</sup>See Thomas Bauer, "Was kann aus dem Jungen noch werden! Das poetische Erstlingswerk des Historikers Ibn Ḥabīb im Spiegel seiner Zeitgenossen," in *Festschrift Hartmut Bobzin* (forthcoming, 2007).

<sup>15</sup>See Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh*, 2:203–4 and 3:304–9, resp.

<sup>16</sup>Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'īyah al-Kubrā*, 5:153 (= ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāh al-Ḥulw and Maḥmūd al-



teachers.<sup>17</sup> Both entries are short and do not contain a list of works. Instead, they reveal some details of Ibn Nubātah's activities in the field of hadith. Other hadith scholars mention Ibn Nubātah as well, but these entries only confirm Ibn Nubātah's role as a hadith transmitter and have little to add to our knowledge of Ibn Nubātah's life.<sup>18</sup>

(6) Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah (751–79/1377–1448) does not add substantially to the other sources. His *Tārīkh* contains a comparatively short article on Ibn Nubātah, in which he lists only the most popular of Ibn Nubātah's works.<sup>19</sup> Instead, Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah is often the most important source for all those to whom Ibn Nubātah addressed his poems and letters. His detailed and sometimes tedious habit of registering all the holders of administrative offices and madrasah professorships helps considerably in dating Ibn Nubātah's poems and reconstructing his social relationships, especially after the year 741.

(7) The longest notice in *Al-Dhayl 'alā al-'Ibar* by Ibn al-'Irāqī (762–826/1360–1423) is the article on Ibn Nubātah.<sup>20</sup> His father had known Ibn Nubātah in person. Thanks to this association, Ibn al-'Irāqī is able to provide some information absent in other sources.

(8) Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī (767–837/1336–1434), who saw himself as an *adīb* in the mold of Ibn Nubātah, quotes Ibn Nubātah prominently in his *Khizānat al-Adab*.<sup>21</sup> This book is also the only source for Ibn Nubātah's *Khubz al-Sha'ir* [30].

(9) Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (773–852/1372–1449) treats Ibn Nubātah in his *Al-Durar al-Kāminah*,<sup>22</sup> but this notice, which contains hardly any new information, does not reflect at all the importance of Ibn Nubātah for the *shaykh al-islām* Ibn Ḥajar, whose father had been an acquaintance of Ibn Nubātah.<sup>23</sup> We will deal with this relationship later in the section on the *Diwān Ibn Nubātah*.

(10) Ibn Taghrībirdī (b. ca. 812/1409–10, d. 874/1470) was an ardent admirer Ṭanāhī, 2nd ed. [Cairo, 1413/1992], 9:273).

<sup>17</sup>Al-Subkī, *Mu'jam al-Shuyūkh, Takhrīj Ibn Sa'd al-Ḥanbalī*, ed. Bashshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf et al. (Beirut, 2004), 459–62.

<sup>18</sup>Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Rāfi', *Al-Wafayāt*, ed. Ṣāliḥ Mahdī 'Abbās (Beirut, 1402/1982), 2:311–12; Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Fāsi, *Dhayl al-Taḥyīd fī Ruwāt al-Sunan wa-al-Masānid*, ed. Kamāl Yūsuf al-Ḥūt (Beirut, 1410/1990), 1:250; al-Dhahabī, *Mu'jam Shuyūkh al-Dhahabī*, ed. Rūḥiyah 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūfi (Beirut, 1410/1990), 567–68.

<sup>19</sup>*Tārīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah*, ed. 'Adnān Darwish (Damascus, 1977–97), 3:304–5.

<sup>20</sup>Ibn al-'Irāqī, *Dhayl al-'Ibar*, 1:219–23.

<sup>21</sup>Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī, *Khizānat al-Adab wa-Gḥāyat al-Arab*, ed. Kawkab Diyāb (Beirut, 2001/1421). Ibn Nubātah's *Ijāzah* is quoted in 3:326–34. For further quotations see index, 5:296.

<sup>22</sup>Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A'yān al-Mi'ah al-Thāminah* (Hyderabad, 1929–31), 5:485–91.

<sup>23</sup>See Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Inbā' al-Ghumr bi-Abnā' al-'Umr*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mu'īd Khān et al. (Hyderabad, 1387–96/1967–76), 1:174.



of the poetry of Ibn Nubātah. This is reflected in the length of the notices in which he treats Ibn Nubātah, though he does not offer much information not already given in earlier sources. Ibn Taghrībirdī devoted a long notice to Ibn Nubātah in his *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, in which he cites Ibn Nubātah's *Farā'id al-Sulūk* [7] and other poems.<sup>24</sup> Ibn Taghrībirdī's notice on al-Ṣafadī in the same work contains more information about Ibn Nubātah than about al-Ṣafadī, since the aforementioned *Ijāzah* is quoted in its entirety in this entry.<sup>25</sup> The notice on Ibn Nubātah in *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah* is shorter and can be ignored.<sup>26</sup>

(11) Despite its late date, the chronicle of Ibn Iyās has some additional details, not so much in the obituary,<sup>27</sup> but scattered throughout the first volume.

(12) The entry on Ibn Nubātah in al-Shawkānī's *Al-Badr al-Tālī*<sup>c</sup> is important for an understanding of the reputation of Ibn Nubātah immediately before the onset of colonialism, but does not provide us with any otherwise unknown facts about the life and work of our author. The same is true for many other sources, both from contemporaries of Ibn Nubātah as well as from authors in later times.<sup>28</sup>

(13) 'Umar Mūsā Bāshā's study *Ibn Nubātah al-Miṣri* from 1963 is the only book-length scholarly monograph on Ibn Nubātah to date.<sup>29</sup> It is especially valuable for

<sup>24</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi wa-al-Mustawfā ba'da al-Wāfi*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn et al. (Cairo, 1984–). The notice on Ibn Nubātah is in vol. 11 (Cairo, 2005), 93–106.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., vol. 6 (Cairo, 1990), 241–57; the *Ijāzah* is on pages 246–54.

<sup>26</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fi Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah*, Vol. V (746–800 A.H.), ed. William Popper (Berkeley, 1936), 248–50. See also idem, *Al-Dalīl al-Shāfi 'alā al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, ed. Fahīm Muḥammad Shaltūt (Cairo, 1998), 700.

<sup>27</sup>Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr fi Waqā'i' al-Duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Wiesbaden, 1960–75), 1:2:61–63.

<sup>28</sup>Al-Shawkānī, *Al-Badr al-Tālī*<sup>c</sup>, 2:131. Other sources: Ibn Kathīr (d. 774), *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah* (Cairo, 1351/1932), 14:322; Taqī al-Dīn al-Fāsī (d. 832), *Ta'rif Dhawī al-'Ulā bi-man lam Yadhkuruhu al-Dhahabī min al-Nubalā*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Arnā'ūt and Akram al-Būshī (Beirut, 1998), 169–78; Taqī al-Dīn al-Maqrīzī (d. 845), *Kitāb al-Muqaffā al-Kabūr*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ya'lāwī (Beirut, 1411/1991), 7:103–5; idem, *Durar al-'Uqūd al-Faridah fi Tarājim al-A'yān al-Mufidah*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Jalīlī (Beirut, 1423/2002), 3:221–23; idem, *Al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyādah et al. (Cairo, 1934–72), 3:147; al-Suyūṭī (d. 911), *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍarah fi Akhbār Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faql Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1387/1967–68), 1:571; Zayn al-Dīn Ibn Shāhīn (d. 920), *Nayl al-Amal fi Dhayl al-Duwal*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut, 1422/2002), 1:394; Ḥājjī Khalīfah (d. 1067/1657), *Kashf al-Zunūn 'an Asāmi al-Kutub wa-al-Funūn*, (Beirut, 1414/1994), 6:131; Ibn al-'Imād al-Ḥanbalī (d. 1089/1679), *Shadharāt al-Dhahab fi Akhbār Man Dhahab* (Beirut, n.d.), 6:212 [a terrible mess; he mixed up Ibn Nubātah, his father, and his son]; Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *Al-A'lām* (Damascus, 1373–78/1954–59), 7:268–69.

<sup>29</sup>The book by Maḥmūd Sālim Muḥammad, *Ibn Nubātah: Shā'ir al-'Aṣr al-Mamlūkī* (Damascus, 1420/1999), is worthless and cannot be considered a serious scholarly contribution. See my review in *MSR* 6 (2002): 219–24. J. Rikabi's entry in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd. ed., 3:900–1 is marred by many mistakes and a complete misjudgment of Ibn Nubātah's poetry. Julie Scott



its unprejudiced approach towards Ibn Nubātah's poetry. 'Umar Mūsá's book is a pioneering work and shows all the strengths and weaknesses of a work of this kind. It is high time for an update.

### 3. THE LIFE OF IBN NUBĀTAH

It is obvious that the works of Ibn Nubātah, both his poems as well as his letters and other prose texts, cannot be adequately understood if we ignore their historic and biographical context. In the following section I organize the main facts of Ibn Nubātah by year.<sup>30</sup> Due to the nature of the sources, the story of Ibn Nubātah's life appears mainly as the story of his social relations.

Amirs of the highest rank play a role twice in his life. In his first Syrian period, the princes of Ḥamāh, al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad and his son al-Afḍal, act as his patrons, and towards the end of his life the sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan would become the only sultan of immediate importance to him. But despite the enormous influence of al-Mu'ayyad on Ibn Nubātah's work, the main focus of Ibn Nubātah's life is the chancellery. Both the *dīwān al-inshā'* in Damascus as well as that in Cairo receive his attention from the very beginning of his literary activity. Even the chancellery of Aleppo is of some significance for him. Besides al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad, Ibn Nubātah's most important acquaintances are the *kuttāb al-sirr* of Damascus and Cairo, especially al-Shihāb Maḥmūd and the Ibn Faḍl Allāh brothers. Next in importance to the *kuttāb* are religious scholars with a more than passing interest in poetry, such as Ibn Ṣaṣrā at the beginning, and Nūr al-Dīn Ibn Ḥajar at the end of Ibn Nubātah's career. Another group, which was mainly the object of his epigrams, are higher officials connected with the chancelleries, such as viziers and *dawādārs*.

Personal relationships were often part of an association with a whole family. It seems as if the powerful families of the Mamluk empire took the place of caliphs, princes, and governors as patrons of literature. Therefore, a poet could give attention to even less important members of a family. The best examples are the

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Meisami's entry in the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, ed. J. S. Meisami and Paul Starkey (London, New York, 1998), 1:357–58, is also not free from errors. It was not Ibn Nubātah who "developed an interest in mysticism," but his patron al-Malik al-Afḍal. Both articles claim that Ibn Nubātah led an itinerant life during his second Syrian period. This is also not true. Three studies that appeared in the year 2003 and treat different aspects of the works of Ibn Nubātah deserve to be mentioned: 'Awaḍ al-Ghubārī, "Al-Tanāṣṣ fi Shi'r Ibn Nubātah al-Miṣri," in idem, *Dirāsah fi Adab Miṣr al-Islāmiyah* (Cairo, 2003), 149–230; Thomas Bauer, "Communication and Emotion: The Case of Ibn Nubātah's *Kindertotenlieder*," *MSR* 7, no. 1 (2003): 49–95; Everett K. Rowson, "An Alexandrian Age in Fourteenth-Century Damascus: Twin Commentaries on Two Celebrated Arabic Epistles," in *ibid.*, 97–110.

<sup>30</sup>A more narrative summary of Ibn Nubātah's life will be given in *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Arabic Literary Culture 1350–1830 C.E.*, ed. Joseph Lowry and Devin Steward (forthcoming).



Banū Faḍl Allāh. Ibn Nubātah had a close personal relationship with Shihāb al-Dīn and ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh. Yet Ibn Nubātah did not limit himself to addressing these two, but also eulogized other members of the family and congratulated them on diverse occasions of minor importance. Other families, of which several members became the object of Ibn Nubātah’s attention, were the offspring of Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd, the Banū al-Athīr, the Ibn Shaykh al-Salāmiyah family, Sharaf al-Dīn Ya‘qūb and his family, the Subkīs, and the Ibn Qarawīnah brothers. Next to the Banū Faḍl Allāh, the Subkīs were the most important of them. Their patronage even survived Ibn Nubātah. His pupil al-Qīrāṭī seems to have been a kind of house poet to the Subkīs.<sup>31</sup>

Ibn Nubātah’s relationship to contemporary poets may have been more extensive than the following section suggests. There are a few of them among his teachers (al-Ḥammāmī, al-Warrāq) and a few more among his colleagues or rivals (Ibn al-Wardī, al-Ḥillī, al-Ḍifdi‘, Ibn Abī Ḥajalah; al-Ṣafadī may be included rather among the *kuttāb*). Among his disciples, al-Qīrāṭī gained greatest fame. In sum, Ibn Nubātah’s life is part of a network that is representative of the culture of the *kuttāb* of the Bahri Mamluk period.

## I. FIRST CAIRENE PERIOD (686–716/1287–1316)

686 (0)<sup>32</sup>

Rabī‘ I/April 1287: Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Fāriqī al-Miṣrī is born in Cairo in the Zuqāq al-Qanādīl, the son of a hadith scholar and author of a history of the caliphs. He is a direct, tenth-generation descendant of ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Ibn Nubātah (d. 374/984–85), Sayf al-Dawlah’s famous preacher. The *nisbah* al-Fāriqī refers to this famous ancestor, who was born in Mayyāfāriqīn, the ancestral home of the Ibn Nubātah family. The *nisbah* al-Miṣrī helps to distinguish him from the preacher and from another famous, more distant relative, the poet Ibn Nubātah al-Sa‘dī (327–405/939–1014).<sup>33</sup> Some sources also mention the *nisbah* al-Ḥudhāqī, which refers to a branch of the tribe Iyād, to which the Ibn Nubātah family traced its origin. Jamāl al-Dīn had inherited this *nisbah* from his ancestor, but made hardly any use of it.<sup>34</sup> Of the several

<sup>31</sup>Ibn al-‘Irāqī, *Dhayl al-‘Ibar*, 490; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 1:12.

<sup>32</sup>Numbers in parentheses indicate Ibn Nubātah’s age at the time.

<sup>33</sup>*Dīwān Ibn Nubātah al-Sa‘dī*, ed. ‘Abd al-Amīr Maḥdī Ḥabīb al-Ṭā‘ī (Baghdad, 1397/1977).

<sup>34</sup>See Ibn Rāfi‘, *Wafayāt*, 2:312 and the explanation of the editor in footnote 2, and Ibn al-‘Irāqī, *Dhayl al-‘Ibar*, 220, with footnote 1. The correct form is also given in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 1:311; idem, *Alḥan al-Sawājī*, 2:180; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabih*, 3:304. “Al-Judhāmī” (see al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍarah*, 1:571; Rikabi, *EI2*, 3:900, with additional inappropriate explanations; and several other late sources) and “al-Ḥamdānī,” (Ibn Taghribirdī, *Manḥal*, 11:94) are obvious mistakes. The explicit testimony of those who knew Ibn Nubātah is more convincing than the geographical



*kunya*hs Ibn Nubātah used during his life,<sup>35</sup> Abū Bakr became the most famous.

689 (3)

The small child is brought by his father to attend hadith sessions. Though he did not become a professional hadith scholar, he never ceased to occupy himself with hadith and to attend hadith sessions. Consequently, his name is recorded in several dictionaries of hadith transmitters.

690 (4)

Ghāzī al-Ḥalāwī, Ibn Nubātah's first hadith teacher, dies at the age of about 95.<sup>36</sup> Ibn Nubātah had heard from him two parts of the *Ghaylānīyāt* and was eventually to become the sole transmitter of the work in al-Ḥalāwī's *riwāyah*.

692 (6)

Death of Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, the famous *kātib al-sirr* of the chancellery in Cairo and the most accomplished prose stylist of the age.<sup>37</sup> Ibn Nubātah mentions him among his teachers in his *Ijāzah*, but he cannot have learned much from him, given his young age. However, he did meet Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, who became a model as a prose stylist for Ibn Nubātah. According to al-Ṣafadī, Ibn Nubātah "extinguished the light of Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir and left no favored position for him in the hearts of the people."<sup>38</sup>

695 (9)

Death of Sirāj al-Dīn 'Umar al-Warrāq, an extraordinarily productive poet. He is considered the greatest Egyptian poet of his time and a master of the *tawriyah*. Al-Ṣafadī produces an anthology of the seven volumes of al-Warrāq's *Dīwān*.<sup>39</sup> Ibn Nubātah had met him and heard him recite an epigram.<sup>40</sup>

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arguments brought forward by 'Umar Mūsā Bāshā, *Ibn Nubātah*, 117–20.

<sup>35</sup>Ibn al-'Irāqī, *Dhayl al-'Ibar*, 219: *dhū al-kunā: Abū Bakr wa-Abū 'Abd Allāh wa-Abū al-Faṭḥ wa-Abū al-Faḍā'il*.

<sup>36</sup>Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, vol. 52, *Ḥawādith wa-Wafayāt* 691–700, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī (Beirut, 1421/2000), 430–31.

<sup>37</sup>J. Pedersen, "Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir," *EI*2, 3:679–80.

<sup>38</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 1:312 = al-Maqrīzī, *Muqaffā*, 7:104.

<sup>39</sup>Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār fī Mamālik al-Amṣār*, vol. 19, *Baqīyat Shu'arā' Miṣr*, ed. Yūnis Aḥmad al-Sāmarrā'ī (Abu Dhabi, 1424/2003), 15–305; Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur* (Weimar and Leiden, 1898–1949), 1:267; Ibn Ḥijjah, *Khizānat al-Adab*, 3:198–210.

<sup>40</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 1:318.



698 (12)

Death of Egypt's leading grammarian of the time, Bahā' al-Dīn Ibn al-Nahḥās, "who never married . . . and never ate grapes,"<sup>41</sup> and whom Ibn Nubātah mentions among his teachers.<sup>42</sup>

700 (14)

Ibn Nubātah started to compose poetry before the turn of the century.<sup>43</sup> However, the only poems that can be dated with certainty to the first Cairene period are a two-line epigram on the Nile flood and a few epigrams on his early teachers and a few other celebrities.<sup>44</sup>

701 (15)

The famous hadith scholar and teacher of al-Dhahabī, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Abarqūhī<sup>45</sup> (b. 615), dies while on pilgrimage in Mecca. In his old age, Ibn Nubātah was sought after as the sole transmitter of the *Sīrah* of Ibn Ishāq/Ibn Hishām in the *riwāyah* of al-Abarqūhī.

702 (16)

Death of Ibn Daqīq al-Īd (625–702/1228–1302), one of the most renowned religious scholars of the time, considered by many as the *mujaddid* of the eighth century. As with many religious scholars, he was also an *adīb* and poet. Al-Ṣafadī compiled a short selection of his poetry.<sup>46</sup> Ibn Daqīq al-Īd was an acquaintance of Ibn Nubātah's father, and he must have exerted considerable influence on his son. However, the person whom Ibn Nubātah mentions as his main teacher in *adab*, a certain 'Alam al-Dīn Qays ibn Sulṭān al-Ḍarīr from Munyat Banī Khaṣīb,<sup>47</sup> is an otherwise unknown person.

704 (18)

Ibn al-Tīṭī, former *nā'ib dār al-ʿadl*, falls from his horse and dies.<sup>48</sup> He was a man with scholarly and literary interests and obviously an acquaintance of the Ibn Nubātah family. At a time when Ibn Nubātah had not yet reached puberty, Ibn al-Tīṭī suggested that he compose an epigram on the Nile flood. Ibn Nubātah records

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 2:12.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 1:318, 2:10–15; *GAL*, S1:527.

<sup>43</sup>Ibn al-ʿIrāqī, *Dhayl al-ʿIbar*, 221.

<sup>44</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 1:318–19.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 6:242 f.; idem, *Aʿyān*, 1:171 f.

<sup>46</sup>ʿAlī Ṣafī Ḥusayn, *Ibn Daqīq al-Īd: Ḥayātuhū wa-Dīwānuhū* (Cairo, 1960).

<sup>47</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 1:318.

<sup>48</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 4:330–32.



this event in his *Ijāzah*<sup>49</sup> and includes the epigram in his own poetic collections.<sup>50</sup> Like other poets, Ibn Nubātah was obviously proud of his early achievements. Since there is not a single longer *qasidah* that can be assigned to these years, there is no reason to assume that Ibn Nubātah was already a prolific poet in his first Cairene period, as ‘Umar Mūsá does.<sup>51</sup> Had Ibn Nubātah ever considered one of his early long poems (if there were any) worthy of preservation, he would have spared no effort to publish it and to note the occasion of its composition.

#### 705 (19)

Trial of Ibn Taymīyah in Damascus. Ibn Nubātah would become an acquaintance of two of the four judges, Najm al-Dīn Ibn Ṣaṣrā and Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Zamlakānī. The other two judges were already dead when Ibn Nubātah arrived in Damascus.<sup>52</sup>

#### 707 (21)

Besides the names of his teachers there is not much recorded for Ibn Nubātah’s early Cairene years. ‘Umar Mūsá, however, makes the year 707 the starting point of a second period in the life of Ibn Nubātah without presenting any compelling reason for this. According to him, this period is marked by Ibn Nubātah’s first panegyric poems, addressed, above all, to Badr al-Dīn and Sharaf al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh, as well as to ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr. Contrary to ‘Umar Mūsá’s contention, however, we have no indication whatsoever that Ibn Nubātah ever tried to make a living as a panegyrist in Cairo. Though he may have composed poems in praise of Cairene scholars, none has been preserved. The fact that Ibn Nubātah composed an elegy on the death of Sharaf al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh in 717, when he was already in Damascus, does not preclude the possibility that he had composed panegyrics for him while still in Egypt.<sup>53</sup> Elegies are not composed for the sake of the deceased, but for the bereaved. This elegy has to be seen in the context of Ibn Nubātah’s attempt to establish relations with the Banū Faḍl Allāh *after* his arrival in Syria in 716. The same is true for Ibn Nubātah’s poems on Badr al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh, who

<sup>49</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 1:318.

<sup>50</sup>In the *Proto-Diwan*, see Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik*, 19:614; on the epigram see also Th. Bauer, “Das Nilzaḡal des Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār,” in *Alltagsleben und materielle Kultur in der arabischen Sprache und Literatur: Festschrift für Heinz Grotzfeld*, ed. Th. Bauer and U. Stehli-Werbeck (Wiesbaden, 2005), 73.

<sup>51</sup>‘Umar Mūsá Bāshā, *Ibn Nubātah*, 137–49.

<sup>52</sup>See Sherman A. Jackson, “Ibn Taymiyyah on Trial in Damascus,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 39 (1994): 41–85.

<sup>53</sup>‘Umar Mūsá Bāshā, *Ibn Nubātah*, 144–45; neither the *Diwan* nor any other source contains a poem or document that was addressed to Sharaf al-Dīn during his lifetime.



is not, as ‘Umar Mūsá believes, Sharaf al-Dīn’s brother Badr al-Dīn the Elder, but the son of Sharaf al-Dīn’s brother Muḥyī al-Dīn, Badr al-Dīn the Younger, brother of Shihāb al-Dīn and ‘Alā’ al-Dīn. The third person mentioned by ‘Umar Mūsá as an addressee of Ibn Nubātah’s poems written in Cairo is ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr.<sup>54</sup> He lived from 680 to 730 and was *kātib al-sirr* in Cairo between 709 and 729. We have several odes and epigrams that Ibn Nubātah composed for ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ibn al-Athīr, as well as a letter he wrote to him. Again, this is a family story. The Banū al-Athīr and the Banū Faḍl Allāh alternated in holding the leading positions in the *dīwān al-inshā’* in Cairo and in Damascus. From his Damascene home Ibn Nubātah remained in contact not only with the members of these families who stayed in Syria, but also those who were in Cairo. A letter to ‘Alā’ al-Dīn that is preserved in *Zahr al-Manthūr* [12] and in El Escorial MS árabe 584 (fols. 106v–107r), and the rather small number of only three (albeit important) poems speak in favor of a relationship that consisted of the exchange of letters while Ibn Nubātah was in Syria. In sum, there is no justification for establishing a second Cairene period of the years 707–16. We can only assume that during these years Ibn Nubātah perfected his knowledge and his literary skill and composed his first poetry.

#### 708 (22)

Possible date of the death of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ḥammāmī (b. 669),<sup>55</sup> although 704 and 712 are also given.<sup>56</sup> He exchanged poems with Ibn Nubātah. The bath attendant al-Ḥammāmī was a popular poet, composing mainly strophic poetry and riddles, which he exchanged with Sirāj al-Dīn al-Warrāq. The three poets (and friends) al-Jazzār (601–79), al-Ḥammāmī, and al-Warrāq are the main representatives of Egyptian poetry in the generation before Ibn Nubātah. By mentioning two of them in his *Ijāzah*,<sup>57</sup> Ibn Nubātah places himself in this tradition, but at the same time strives to transcend it by composing denser and more sophisticated verses.

#### 710 (24)

The Ayyubid dynasty of Ḥamāh had come to an end with the death of the unloved Sultan al-Malik al-Muzaffar III, patron of the *washshāḥ* al-Maḥḥār, in 698. For the next twelve years, Ḥamāh was ruled by Mamluk governors. Dissatisfied with their conduct, Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad appoints his friend Abū al-Fidā’ ‘Imād al-Dīn Ismā‘īl governor of Ḥamāh and awards him the honorific title al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ.

<sup>54</sup>‘Umar Mūsá Bāshā, *Ibn Nubātah*, 145–49.

<sup>55</sup>Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 6:159–61.

<sup>56</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān*, 5:503–20; Otfried Weintritt, “An-Nāṣir al-Ḥammāmī (gest. 712/1312): Dichter und Bademeister in Kairo,” in Bauer and Stehli-Werbeck, eds., *Alltagsleben und materielle Kultur*, 381–90.

<sup>57</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 1:318–19.



In 720, he would be renamed al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad. He was the cousin of the last Ayyubid ruler of Ḥamāh. Abū al-Fidā' was a man of learning and literature, a poet and patron of poets and scholars. Today he is mainly known for his geographical work, *Taqwīm al-Buldān*, and his history, *Al-Mukhtaṣar fī Tārīkh al-Bashar*, which Ibn Nubātah praised with an epigram.<sup>58</sup>

#### 714 (28)

The sultan appoints Karīm al-Dīn Ibn al-Sadīd (d. 724) as the first *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ*. An epigram written to him by Ibn Nubātah may have been composed on this occasion.<sup>59</sup> When Ibn al-Sadīd became ill, many poets composed poems wishing him well and were each rewarded with two hundred dirhams. Among them was Ibn Nubātah, who contributed an epigram.<sup>60</sup> This is one of the few poems that can be dated to his Cairene period.

#### 715 (29)

Thirty years was the appropriate age to venture onto the public stage as an *adīb*.<sup>61</sup> Ibn Nubātah prepared for this step carefully. He collected material to be included in an anthology that, at the same time, was a manifesto of the importance of the *adīb* for contemporary scholarly society. In this book, the *Maṭla' al-Fawā'id* [1], Ibn Nubātah presented himself both as a scholarly expert on language and *adab*, as well as a legitimate heir to the grand tradition of Arabic poetry and prose. But was Cairo the right place to publish this book? The master of prose style, Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, was dead, and his successor as master *munshī*, Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd, directed the chancellery in Damascus. In Cairo, popular poetry flourished, but if Ibn Nubātah wanted to realize his project of a literature of sophistication and refinement, he had to address all those people who happened to live in Damascus or in other places in Syria at that time. Though deeply in love with his hometown and always proud to present himself as Ibn Nubātah "the Egyptian," there was little that could hold him in Cairo. Contrary to 'Umar Mūsá, I do not believe that the reason for Ibn Nubātah's departure from Cairo was economic failure as a panegyrist (for which there is no evidence), but rather his aspiration to join the ranks of the greatest *udabā'* of the time. He could find them in the chancelleries

<sup>58</sup>*Dīwān*, 171 (in general, I will only note the page on which the poem begins). On Abū al-Fidā' see H. A. R. Gibb, "Abū 'l Fidā," *EI2*, 1:118–19; Robert Irwin, "Abū al-Fidā," *EAL*, 1:32; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh*, 2:321–25; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:399–408.

<sup>59</sup>*Dīwān*, 478; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr*, 1:1:444–45, 453–54; see also W. M. Brinner, "Ibn al-Sadīd," *EI2*, 3:923–24; al-Ṣafādī, *A'yān*, 3:142–54.

<sup>60</sup>*Dīwān*, 546; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr*, 1:1:454; both epigrams also appear in *Al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī* (nos. 22, 173).

<sup>61</sup>See Bauer, "Ibn Ḥabīb."



of Damascus and Aleppo, in their madrasahs and the Umayyad mosque, or in al-Mu'ayyad's palace in Ḥamāh. Besides, his father had already left Cairo some time before to occupy a professorship in hadith at Damascus.

## II. FIRST SYRIAN PERIOD (716–42/1316–41)

716 (30)

In the heat of summer, Ibn Nubātah travels from Cairo to Damascus, only to find himself trapped in snow and ice the following winter. These meteorological annoyances are among the subjects of his extensive correspondence with the leading ulama of Syria, among them al-Shihāb Maḥmūd and his son Jamāl al-Dīn, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī, and the other ulama, who appear in *Sajʿ al-Muṭawwaq* [3]. He also directs poems and letters to Abū al-Fidāʿ, the ruler of Ḥamāh, then still bearing the title al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ. Death of the poet al-Wadāʿī. Ibn Nubātah copied many of his ideas, especially in the field of *tawriyah*.<sup>62</sup>

717 (31)

Ibn Nubātah publishes his programmatic work *Maṭlaʿ al-Fawāʿid* [1]. He dedicates the book to the prince of Ḥamāh and sends copies of it to the leading ulama, asking for a *taqrīz* to be published in a second book. After the death of Sharaf al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh, whom Ibn Nubātah commemorates with a dirge,<sup>63</sup> Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd (often referred to as Ibn Fahd in Western literature) is appointed *kātib al-sirr* in Damascus. This celebrated *munshiʿ* was the venerated model for a whole generation of prose stylists.<sup>64</sup> His proficiency in poetry and prose and his influence as head of the chancellery made him Ibn Nubātah's most important acquaintance during his first years in Damascus. He contributed to Ibn Nubātah's *Sajʿ al-Muṭawwaq* [3] and defended him when the *kuttāb* of the *dīwān* plotted against him, whereupon Ibn Nubātah directed a long letter of examination to him and his clerks [9]. At least five long odes in the *Dīwān* are addressed to him, and a letter to him is preserved in Ibn Nubātah's own hand.<sup>65</sup> ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, grandson of the legendary Muḥyī al-Dīn and himself a *munshiʿ* of rank, dies in Cairo. His death is commemorated by Ibn Nubātah, who had previously addressed several artful letters to him.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>62</sup>GAL, 2:9, S2:2 (wrong date of death); al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 22:199–213; Ibn Ḥijjah, *Khizānat al-Adab*, 3:291–310; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʿiʿ al-Zuhūr*, 1:1:447–48.

<sup>63</sup>*Dīwān*, 233. On Sharaf al-Dīn see al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 19:317–24; idem, *Aʿyān*, 3:191–99.

<sup>64</sup>See Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmārī, *Masālik al-Aḥsār fī Mamālik al-Aḥsār*, vol. 12, *Kuttāb al-Inshāʿ Sharqan*, ed. Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ (Abu Dhabi, 1423/2002), 397–447.

<sup>65</sup>See *Dīwān*, 152, 153, 284, 363, 438; El Escorial MS árabe 567, fol. 160r.

<sup>66</sup>The *marthiyah* is in Ibn Ḥajar's additions to the *Dīwān*, Göttingen MS arab. 179, fols. 43v–44r; the letters are in El Escorial MS árabe 548. On ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn see al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 3:487–96.



## 718 (32)

Ibn Nubātah writes two letters to Amīn al-Dīn al-Qibṭī Ibn Tāj al-Riʿāsah on the occasion of the latter's appointment as *nāẓir* of Ṭarābulus.<sup>67</sup> This is the first recorded contact between Ibn Nubātah and the vizier Amīn al-Dīn.<sup>68</sup> Ibn Nubātah congratulates 'Alā' al-Dīn Ibn Shaykh al-Salāmīyah (d. 730) on his marriage to the daughter of the vizier Shams al-Dīn Ghibriyāl.<sup>69</sup> The *nāẓir al-jaysh* of Aleppo, Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Rayyān (663–749), is transferred to a post in Ṣafad. He will hold his former office and several other similar offices in Aleppo and other places in Syria several times. Ibn Nubātah addresses a number of long odes and epigrams to him, most (or all) of them during Ibn Rayyān's years in Aleppo.<sup>70</sup>

## 719 (33)

Ibn Nubātah is able to assemble *taqārīẓ* from twelve leading ulama and *kuttāb* on his *Maṭla' al-Fawā'id*. Together with some additional texts, they come to form *Saj' al-Muṭawwaq* [3], one of Ibn al-Nubātah's most successful books and one of the most characteristic documents for the culture of the Mamluk *kuttāb*. Ibn Nubātah congratulates Fakhr al-Dīn Ibn Shaykh al-Salāmīyah on his appointment as *muḥtasib* of Damascus.<sup>71</sup>

## 720 (34)

The Sultan awards the title al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad to Abū al-Fidā' of Ḥamāh. During this period, Ibn Nubātah visits Ḥamāh regularly at least once a year. He is granted a pension of 600 dirhams per year, but receives additional presents on different occasions. The court of Ḥamāh offers Ibn Nubātah the opportunity to meet other poets such as Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī. Several of his works are dedicated to the prince, among them *Sarḥ al-'Uyūn* [4] and a selection of passages from letters and documents written by al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil, Ibn Nubātah's model for prose style. Above all, Ibn Nubātah assembles *qasīdahs*, *muwashshahāt*, a *zajal*, and epigrams addressed to al-Mu'ayyad and publishes them under the title *Muntakhab al-Hadiyah* [5]. Ibn Nubātah's nearly forty *qasīdahs* in praise of Abū al-Fidā' are the most important examples of panegyric poetry addressed to a ruler in post-Ayyubid, pre-modern Arabic literature. Ibn Nubātah writes a *taqrīẓ* on a *jīmīyah* by the poet

<sup>67</sup>El Escorial MS árabe 548, fols. 105r, 119r.

<sup>68</sup>See the years 733 and 735. On Amīn al-Dīn see al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 2:658–70.

<sup>69</sup>*Dīwān*, 112; a dirge on his death, *ibid.*, 112; on 'Alā' al-Dīn see al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 5:670.

<sup>70</sup>*Dīwān*, 112, 269, 394, 398, 401, 530; on Ibn Rayyān see al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 2:426–33. An epigram by Ibn Nubātah that is dedicated to Jamāl al-Dīn's son Bahā' al-Dīn is quoted in Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr*, 1:2:61.

<sup>71</sup>*Dīwān*, 47 = *Al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī*, no. 31.



Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Khayyāṭ, known as al-Ḍifdiʿ, “the Frog”<sup>72</sup> (693–756). He was a prolific poet who left a *Dīwān* of six volumes. His relationship to Ibn Nubātah, which is only attested by a few texts, may have been a troubled one, since al-Ḍifdiʿ was prone to satire and nobody escaped his sharp tongue. According to al-Ṣafadī, who seems to be quite amused by their quarrels, Ibn Nubātah and al-Ḍifdiʿ “were the Farazdaq and Jarīr of their age.”<sup>73</sup> Death of Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿAdīm, the first Hanafi qadi of Aleppo. An important *madīḥ* poem on him by Ibn Nubātah is preserved in different versions.<sup>74</sup>

## 721 (35)

*Rithāʿ* on the Cairene *munshiʿ* Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr,<sup>75</sup> to whom Ibn Nubātah had already directed several epigrams preserved in *Al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī* [6].

## 722 (36)

Death of the goldsmith Shams al-Dīn al-Ṣāʿigh, a leading *adīb* and specialist in metrics. His connection to Ibn Nubātah is attested by a long *qasidah*.<sup>76</sup> Further, al-Ṣāʿigh was a protege of Quṭb al-Dīn Ibn Shaykh al-Salāmiyah (661–732), who was also an acquaintance of Ibn Nubātah.<sup>77</sup>

## 723 (37)

*Rithāʿ* on Najm al-Dīn Ibn Ṣaṣrā, who had been chief Shafiʿi qadi of Damascus for 21 years. He was one of the contributors to *Sajʿ al-Muṭawwaq* [3] and an important acquaintance of Ibn Nubātah during his early Damascene years. This is reflected in many poems and epigrams in the *Dīwān* and in *Al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī* [6], among them an *urjūzah* of 169 rajaz verses.<sup>78</sup> For his first meeting with Ibn Ṣaṣrā, Ibn Nubātah had prepared not only a *madīḥ*, but also a satire in case Ibn Ṣaṣrā did not

<sup>72</sup>*Zahr al-Manthūr* [12], Chester Beatty MS 5161, fols. 42v, 39r–v; see also al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 5:353–63; *GAL*, 2:10, S2: 3.

<sup>73</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 5:358.

<sup>74</sup>*Dīwān*, 436, compare Chester Beatty MS 3813, fols. 29v–30v; a short poem, *Dīwān*, 525; on Kamāl al-Dīn see Ibn Hajar, *Durar*, 4:201–2; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Manhal*, 8:299.

<sup>75</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 4:333–37.

<sup>76</sup>*Dīwān*, 340; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 2:361–63; al-Maqrizī, *Sulūk*, 2:239. Al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 4:397–400, dates his death to the year 720; still another date is given in *GAL*, 2:9.

<sup>77</sup>See *Dīwān*, 330, perhaps also p. 40; a dirge on his son ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn p. 112. On Quṭb al-Dīn see al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 5:469–72.

<sup>78</sup>*Dīwān*, 508–11; see also *Dīwān*, 80, 168, 173, 270, 367 (*rithāʿ*), 370, 431, 439, 444, 454, 459, 540, and *Sajʿ al-Muṭawwaq* [3]; see also ʿUmar Mūsā Bāshā, *Ibn Nubātah*, 175–78; Muḥammad ibn Shākīr al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut, 1973–74), 1:125–27; W. M. Brinner, “Ibn Ṣaṣrā,” *EI2*, 3:931b.



welcome him properly. When he entered, Ibn Nubātah mistakenly handed him the satire. Ibn Ṣaṣrā not only forgave Ibn Nubātah this faux pas, but even kept it a secret.<sup>79</sup> At the request of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn, Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī collects his poetry into a thematically arranged *Dīwān*.<sup>80</sup> It documents part of the poetic exchange between him and Ibn Nubātah.<sup>81</sup> Additional poems and epigrams addressed to al-Ḥillī are preserved.<sup>82</sup> The two poets met several times in Ḥamāh, and despite their very different stylistic approach, Ibn Nubātah held al-Ḥillī in great esteem and called him “the best poet of his time.”<sup>83</sup> Whereas al-Ḥillī inspired Ibn Nubātah to write *Muntakhab al-Hadiyah* [3], Ibn Nubātah inspired al-Ḥillī to collect his epigrams in a separate *Dīwān* [see 5].

#### 724 (38)

Jalāl al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī is called to Cairo, honored by the sultan, and appointed chief Shafi‘i judge of Damascus.<sup>84</sup> Ibn Nubātah congratulates him with a *qasidah*.<sup>85</sup> Al-Qazwīnī (666–739) is known as Khaṭīb Dimashq because he was chief preacher of the Umayyad mosque. He was one of the contributors to *Saj‘ al-Muṭawwāq* and one of Ibn Nubātah’s first acquaintances in Damascus. Several letters to him are preserved, as are a number of *qasidahs* and epigrams written for him.<sup>86</sup> Al-Qazwīnī’s fame rests mainly on his *Talkhiṣ al-Miftāḥ*, a handbook of Arabic rhetoric. There is hardly a more frequently cited book in all of Arabic literature. Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Zamlakānī is appointed chief qadi of Aleppo. He takes up his new office reluctantly. Ibn Nubātah congratulates him with an epigram.<sup>87</sup>

#### 725 (39)

The death of three celebrities of Damascus induces Ibn Nubātah to compose three elegies. At the beginning of the year, the Sufi Ibn al-Ṣayyāḥ is mourned by an

<sup>79</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Muqaffá*, 1:715.

<sup>80</sup> W. Heinrichs, “Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī,” *EI2*, 8:802.

<sup>81</sup> See *Dīwān Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥawwar (Beirut, 2000), no. 208, and Ibn Nubātah, *Dīwān*, 72.

<sup>82</sup> *Dīwān*, 50, 72, 235, 344, 478, 426, 543 (see Ibn Ḥijjah, *Khizānat al-Adab*, 1:323).

<sup>83</sup> Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:595; see also Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah*, 5:97–98.

<sup>84</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:254, 439–42; al-Ṣafadī, *A‘yān*, 4:492–99; ‘Umar Mūsā Bāshā, *Ibn Nubātah*, 178–82; *GAL*, 1:295–96, 2:22, S1:516–19, S2:15–16; S. A. Bonebakker, “Al-Qazwīnī,” *EI2*, 4:863–64; W. P. Heinrichs, “Al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī,” *EAL*, 2:439–40.

<sup>85</sup> *Dīwān*, 198.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 161, 198, 323, 432, 495, 552; Ayasofya MS 2352, fol. 198v (a *wāwīyah* of 40 lines).

<sup>87</sup> *Dīwān*, 277–78, cf. Sibṭ Ibn al-‘Ajāmī, *Kunūz al-Dhahab fī Tārīkh Ḥalab*, ed. Shawqī Shaghth and Fāliḥ al-Bakkūr (Aleppo, 1417/1997), 1:326, and al-Ṣafadī, *A‘yān*, 4:632.



elegy, which is quoted in its entirety by al-Şafadī.<sup>88</sup> A death of more consequence for Ibn Nubātah occurs in Sha‘bān, when Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd dies. Ibn Nubātah writes a dirge.<sup>89</sup> As head of the chancellery, Shihāb al-Dīn’s successor is his son Shams al-Dīn, who had already assisted his father in this office in previous years. Badr al-Dīn Ibn al-‘Aṭṭār, son of the famous *munshi* Kamāl al-Dīn (d. 702), *adīb* and holder of several administrative offices, dies in Dhū al-Qa‘dah.<sup>90</sup> Ibn Nubātah composes another elegy. Badr al-Dīn was one of the contributors to *Saj‘ al-Muṭawwaq* [3], where Ibn Nubātah also quotes a long ode and several shorter poems he had addressed to him.<sup>91</sup>

#### 726 (40)

During his first fifteen years in Damascus, Ibn Nubātah visits the court of Ḥamāh every year, but—contrary to ‘Umar Mūsā’s assumption—keeps Damascus as his main residence. Ibn Nubātah writes quite a number of works, each of them a milestone of its kind, to prove himself a universal master of *adab*. Most of his works in this period are dedicated to the prince of Ḥamāh, but meant to be read and appreciated by all of the *udabā’* and *kuttāb*, especially those of Syria. Among the works that appear before 730, but cannot be dated more precisely, is *Sarḥ al-‘Uyūn fī Sharḥ Risālat Ibn Zaydūn* [4], a pioneering work that combined the form of a commentary with that of an anthology.<sup>92</sup> Besides Damascus and Ḥamāh, Aleppo is the third important place for Ibn Nubātah in Syria. The *nāẓir al-awqāf* Ibn Şaqr, who dies in this year, is one of the prominent men of Aleppo to whom Ibn Nubātah dedicates his poems.<sup>93</sup>

#### 727 (41)

*Rithā’* on the death of Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Zamlakānī, famous scholar and influential office holder in Damascus and Aleppo, one of the dignitaries who contributed a *taqrīz* to *Saj‘ al-Muṭawwaq* [3]. Additional poems about him are to be found in the *Dīwān* and in *Al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī* [5]. Ibn Nubātah recites his *rithā’* on Kamāl al-Dīn to al-Şafadī, who is highly impressed.<sup>94</sup> After only two years in office, Shams al-

<sup>88</sup>*Dīwān*, 220; al-Şafadī, *A‘yān*, 1:61–63.

<sup>89</sup>*Dīwān*, 155.

<sup>90</sup>See al-Şafadī, *A‘yān*, 4:240–41; idem, *Wāfi*, 30:272–73. On Kamāl al-Dīn see Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik*, 12:365–92.

<sup>91</sup>*Dīwān*, 44 (*rithā’*), 149, 277; most epigrams from *Saj‘ al-Muṭawwaq* are not in the printed *Dīwān*.

<sup>92</sup>See Rowson, “An Alexandrian Age.”

<sup>93</sup>*Dīwān*, 39 (?), 57, 233. On Ibn Şaqr see al-Şafadī, *Wāfi*, 2:200–1; idem, *A‘yān*, 4:317–19; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh*, 2:163–64.

<sup>94</sup>Al-Şafadī, *Wāfi*, 4:219–20; see also Ibn Nubātah, *Dīwān*, 67, 76, 172, 297, 405 (*rithā’*), 494, 505;



Dīn ibn Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd dies. Ibn Nubātah's dirge for him is quoted by al-Ṣafadī.<sup>95</sup> He is replaced as *kātib al-sirr* by Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn Faḍl Allāh (645–738), the father of Shihāb al-Dīn, Badr al-Dīn, and 'Alā' al-Dīn.

#### 728 (42)

The son of al-Mu'ayyad, who still bears the title al-Malik al-Manṣūr, was fond of hunting, a passion he shared with the governor of Syria, Tankiz. One of these hunting parties, which must have taken place around this year, is made the subject of Ibn Nubātah's *Farā'id al-Sulūk fi Maṣā'id al-Mulūk* [7]. With 193 *rajaz* couplets, it is the longest hunting *urjūzah* in Arabic literature and the most important contribution to hunting poetry after Abū Firās.

#### 729 (43)

Al-Ṣafadī writes from Cairo via Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh asking Ibn Nubātah for an *ijāzah* to transmit his works. Ibn Nubātah's answer probably dates from the following year. This *Ijāzah* is the most important source for Ibn Nubātah's early years and the chronology of his works. Still in 729, al-Ṣafadī and Ibn Nubātah meet in Damascus and Ibn Nubātah transmits to al-Ṣafadī some of his works in the Umayyad Mosque (*Al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī* [6], *Muntakhab al-Hadiyah* [5], *Farā'id al-Sulūk* [7], *Al-Mufākharah bayna al-Sayf wa-al-Qalam* [10]).<sup>96</sup> Ibn Nubātah sends his *Mufākharah bayna al-Sayf wa-al-Qalam* to the *dawādār* Naṣir al-Dīn (see the year 734). The head of the chancellery of Cairo, 'Alā' al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr, falls ill. Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh is transferred to Cairo to replace him. His place in Damascus is taken by Sharaf al-Dīn ibn Shams al-Dīn ibn al-Shihāb Maḥmūd,<sup>97</sup> who will change places with Muḥyī al-Dīn for eight months in 732–33 and return for a second term in office for one and a half years in the beginning of 733. While Ibn Nubātah's connection to Muḥyī al-Dīn is well established,<sup>98</sup> so far no text addressed to al-Shihāb Maḥmūd's grandson has been found.

#### 730 (44)

Ibn Nubātah publishes *Zahr al-Manthūr* [12], a collection of epistolary excerpts. With this book Ibn Nubātah establishes himself as the leading prose stylist of his time. Since he did not hold a position in the *dīwān al-inshā'* (and probably did not yet aspire to one), he had to draw largely on his private correspondence. A large

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but several epigrams from *Saj' al-Muṭawwaq* are missing in the printed *Dīwān*.

<sup>95</sup> *Dīwān*, 221; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 5:13–14; idem, *A'yān*, 5:255–56.

<sup>96</sup> Al-Ṣafadī, *Alḥān al-Sawāji'*, 2:180–92; idem, *Wāfi*, 1:312–19.

<sup>97</sup> See al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 10:259–64; idem, *A'yān*, 2:12–25.

<sup>98</sup> Two long odes in the *Dīwān*, 100, 564, and a few shorter poems.



number of letters and gifts are exchanged between al-Şafadī, who is in al-Raḥbah, and Ibn Nubātah.<sup>99</sup> ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr dies and Ibn Nubātah “laments his death with a celebrated elegy.”<sup>100</sup> During his lifetime, Ibn Nubātah had written poems and letters to him. They show that Ibn Nubātah kept in contact not only with the chancellery of Damascus, but also with that of Cairo. Ibn Nubātah spends time in Aleppo. The young *adīb* and later historian Ibn Ḥabīb presents to him a newly-written collection of epigrams, in which he emulated Ibn Nubātah’s *Al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī*. Ibn Nubātah praises the work of the young aspirant with a rhetorically brilliant *taqrīz*. In the following year, Ibn Ḥabīb is able to obtain a *taqrīz* by Şafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī. He will never cease to be proud of this achievement at such an early age.<sup>101</sup> Ibn Nubātah writes a *rithā’* on the death of the young Şalāḥ al-Dīn Ibn Shaykh al-Salāmiyah, who was a member of the family to whom Ibn Nubātah dedicated poems.<sup>102</sup>

### 731 (45)

On 8 Rabī‘ I, al-Şafadī enters the *dīwān al-inshā’* in Damascus.<sup>103</sup> On his arrival in Damascus he receives a present from Ibn Nubātah and thanks him with an epigram.<sup>104</sup> The *adīb* and historian Tāj al-Dīn al-Makhzūmī spends time in Damascus and meets al-Şafadī. His visit to Ibn Nubātah may have occurred in the same year. On this occasion, he composed an epigram on the many ants that he saw in Ibn Nubātah’s house.<sup>105</sup>

### 732 (46)

Death of al-Malik al-Mu’ayyad of Ḥamāh. With the help of Tankiz, the mighty governor of Syria, his son al-Malik al-Manşūr Nāşir al-Dīn Muḥammad is nominated as his successor and awarded the title al-Malik al-Afḍal.<sup>106</sup> The poem in which Ibn Nubātah comforts al-Afḍal on the death of his father and simultaneously congratulates him on his nomination as the new sultan of Ḥamāh is praised

<sup>99</sup>Al-Şafadī, *Alḥān al-Sawāji’*, 2:192–224.

<sup>100</sup>Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 4:15–18; further texts in *Dīwān*, 83, 107, 212, El Escorial MS árabe 548, fol. 106v (also in *Zahr al-Manḥūr* [12]). See also ‘Umar Mūsá Bāshā, *Ibn Nubātah*, 145–49; al-Şafadī, *A’yān*, 3:264–70.

<sup>101</sup>Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh*, 2:203–4; see also Bauer, “Ibn Ḥabīb.”

<sup>102</sup>*Dīwān*, 112, the poems p. 40 and p. 330 probably to his father, Quṭb al-Dīn Mūsá (see al-Şafadī, *A’yān*, 5:469–72), two poems p. 46 probably to ‘Izz al-Dīn ibn Mūsá (see Ibn al-‘Irāqī, *Dhayl al-Ibar*, 267–68).

<sup>103</sup>Al-Şafadī, *A’yān*, 4:257.

<sup>104</sup>Al-Şafadī, *Alḥān al-Sawāji’*, 2:225.

<sup>105</sup>Al-Şafadī, *Wāfi*, 18:26–27. On al-Makhzūmī see also *GAL*, S2:220.

<sup>106</sup>Al-Şafadī, *Wāfi*, 2:224–27; idem, *A’yān*, 4:322–30; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Manhal*, 9:322–24.



as an outstanding example of *iftinān*, the combination of different genres in a single text.<sup>107</sup> On 9 Rabīʿ II, the *adīb* Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Nāhiḍ (d. 761), imam of the madrasah and mosque al-Firdaws in Aleppo, finishes a copy of *Al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī* [6]. Ibn Nubātah knew Ibn Nāhiḍ personally and had visited him in al-Firdaws.<sup>108</sup> Ibn Nubātah writes a letter to al-Şafadī, who is in Cairo.<sup>109</sup>

### 733 (47)

Al-Şafadī answers Ibn Nubātah's letter.<sup>110</sup> Amīn al-Dīn Ibn Tāj al-Riʿāsah is appointed to his last vizierate of Damascus (733–40). This is the most probable occasion for a long congratulatory poem.<sup>111</sup> During this year and the following years, Ibn Nubātah regularly visits Ḥamāh and composes poems on al-Afḍal. For several years, al-Afḍal is still interested in literature and acts as a patron to poets. After some more years in office—the exact date cannot be fixed—al-Afḍal starts to retreat from worldly affairs and becomes a pious *zāhid*. Ibn Nubātah first reacts by no longer beginning his *qasīdahs* with love poetry, but with ascetic themes instead.<sup>112</sup> But after a while, al-Afḍal comes to loathe even this sort of poetry and stops the regular stipends paid to Ibn Nubātah. He also neglects his administrative duties, which leads to a bedouinization of the vicinities of Ḥamāh and to al-Afḍal's deposition in 742. In all, Ibn Nubātah composes more than twenty poems, most of them long *qasīdahs*, to eulogize al-Afḍal.

### 734 (48)

Death of Ibn Nubātah's son ʿAbd al-Raḥīm.<sup>113</sup> Ibn Nubātah's private life was overshadowed by the death of most of his children. Though infant death was a common experience in those times, Ibn Nubātah lost many children who were older, after having developed an intense emotional relationship with them. According to al-Şafadī, Ibn Nubātah had to bury about sixteen sons, all aged between five and seven.<sup>114</sup> Ibn Nubātah confronted his pain by composing poetry. Just like Friedrich Rückert, Ibn Nubātah composed a series of “Kindertotenlieder” on the death of his children, most of them on the death of ʿAbd al-Raḥīm,<sup>115</sup> who may have been Ibn Nubātah's favorite son. Note that he bore the name of his

<sup>107</sup>*Dīwān*, 429; Ibn Ḥijjah, *Khizānat al-Adab*, 2:43–45.

<sup>108</sup>Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh*, 3:239.

<sup>109</sup>Al-Şafadī, *Alḥān al-Sawājiʿ*, 2:230–32.

<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*, 232–37.

<sup>111</sup>*Dīwān*, 502 (27 lines; the poem has 53 lines in Ibn Duqmāq's manuscript of the *Dīwān*).

<sup>112</sup>See for example *Dīwān*, 139.

<sup>113</sup>See *Ḥaḍīrat al-Uns* [16].

<sup>114</sup>Al-Şafadī, *Wāfi*, 1:312.

<sup>115</sup>See Bauer, “Communication and Emotion.”



famous ancestor, the preacher of Sayf al-Dawlah. The career of the *dawādār* Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Kawandak came to a tragic end. Since 712, Nāṣir al-Dīn had been the dearest friend of the governor Tankiz and the most powerful man in the office of the *dawādār*. “People never saw a *dawādār* like him.”<sup>116</sup> Ibn Nubātah dedicated to him his “Debate between Sword and Pen,” [10] after he had already dedicated it to al-Malik al-Mu’ayyad. The subject was most suitable for a man in a position between the civil and military elite.

## 735 (49)

Ibn Nubātah accompanies Amīn al-Dīn Ibn Tāj al-Ri’āsah on his journey to Jerusalem and al-Khalīl. Ibn Nubātah describes this journey in his *Ḥaḍīrat al-Uns ilā Ḥaḍrat al-Quds* [16]. Perhaps there was a connection between this journey and Ibn Nubātah’s appointment to the office of the *nāẓir al-qumāmah*, the keeper of the key of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.<sup>117</sup>

## 736 (50)

The Syrian governor Tankiz is so enamored of ‘Alam al-Dīn Ibn al-Quṭb that he appoints him *kātib al-sirr* of Damascus, much to the disappointment of al-Shihāb Ibn Faḍl Allāh, who had expected to get the post himself.<sup>118</sup> Ibn Nubātah was a close friend of Shihāb al-Dīn and the Faḍl Allāh family. Therefore he did not dare to extend his contacts with Ibn al-Quṭb, and his relations with the *dīwān al-inshā’* declined. This may have occurred at a time in which Ibn Nubātah needed employment in the *dīwān* more urgently than before, since the patronage of the prince of Ḥamāh had become more and more uncertain.

## 737 (51)

‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh takes up his duties in the chancellery of Cairo, first as deputy for his sick father, and then, after his death in the following year, as *kātib al-sirr* himself. He would hold this office for 33 (lunar) years, longer than anybody else, until his death in Ramaḍān 769/1368. More than forty poems addressed to him are preserved in Ibn Nubātah’s *Dīwān*, among them a number of seven-liners [31]. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn was a man of literary taste and great stylistic competence. He was also an active and engaged patron of poets, among them al-Qirāṭī and the popular poet al-Mi’mār. In Ibn Nubātah’s later years, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn played a role similar to that of al-Mu’ayyad during his early years. There is no other person to whom Ibn Nubātah ever dedicated as many poems as he did to these two. In

<sup>116</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān*, 5:105.

<sup>117</sup>See *Dīwān*, 465; see also ‘Umar Mūsā Bāshā, *Ibn Nubātah*, 198–202, and al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 1:212.

<sup>118</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān*, 4:304–10.



his poems to ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, Ibn Nubātah perfected his *tawriyah* style. These poems differ remarkably from his earlier poems and represent the main achievement of his later work. Most of Ibn Nubātah’s poems to him date from his second Syrian and second Cairene period. Death of the prominent *kātib* ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ibn Ghānim, who had contributed to *Saj’ al-Muṭawwaq* [3].<sup>119</sup> Ibn Nubātah also knew his son Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh (721–44), whose promising career was ended by his premature death.<sup>120</sup>

### 738 (52)

After a year and eight months in office, the *kātib al-sirr* Ibn al-Quṭb is arrested, his property is confiscated, and he is put under house arrest until Tankiz’s removal from office. His successor is Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyá ibn Ismā‘īlī Ibn al-Qaysarānī,<sup>121</sup> Tankiz’s new favorite. Al-Ṣafadī congratulates him immediately,<sup>122</sup> but Ibn Nubātah, who once had praised Yaḥyá’s father,<sup>123</sup> was in a worse situation. Perhaps the poem *Dīwān*, 400 was an attempt to ingratiate himself with the chancellery again. It obviously was not successful. He may have been too closely associated with al-Shihāb Ibn Faḍl Allāh. Shihāb al-Dīn, however, often criticized the state of the chancellery of Damascus. This angered the sultan, who imprisoned him.

### 739 (53)

Tāj al-Dīn Ibn al-Zayn Khaḍir, *kātib al-sirr* of Aleppo since 733, is deposed and retreats to Cairo.<sup>124</sup> He would return to Syria as successor to Badr al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh as *kātib al-sirr* of Damascus in 746, eight months before his own death. Ibn Nubātah dedicates several long odes to him, perhaps most of them during Tāj al-Dīn’s Aleppo period.<sup>125</sup> Aleppo obviously was always an important place for Ibn Nubātah. Ibn Nubātah laments the death of al-Qazwīnī with a *marthiyah*.<sup>126</sup>

### 740 (54)

Tankiz, the mighty governor of Syria, had aroused the suspicion of Sultan al-Nāṣir

<sup>119</sup>*Dīwān*, 235, 320, 448, further texts in *Saj’ al-Muṭawwaq* [3]; see also al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 22:33–38; idem, *A’yān*, 3:496–502; al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, 3:78–84.

<sup>120</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 17:351–62.

<sup>121</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān*, 5:550–60.

<sup>122</sup>*Ibid.*, 557–58.

<sup>123</sup>*Dīwān*, 463.

<sup>124</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān*, 4:420–21; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabih*, 3:96; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 2:498–99.

<sup>125</sup>*Dīwān*, 87, 110, 154, 223 (*rithā’*), 366; it is not always possible to decide if a *Tājīyah* was directed to him or to Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī.

<sup>126</sup>*Ibid.*, 404.



and he is arrested, taken to Alexandria, and executed.<sup>127</sup> With the death of Tankiz, many of his favorites are dismissed from office. Ibn Nubātah had fared well with the Tankiz administration, though he had not been employed by the *dīwān al-inshā'* during the last years. He might have viewed this development with mixed feelings.

#### 741 (55)

After his imprisonment in the Cairene Citadel (Sha‘bān 739 to Rabī‘ I 740), al-Shihāb Ibn Faḍl Allāh regains favor and is finally appointed *kātib al-sirr* of Damascus.<sup>128</sup> Shihāb al-Dīn, a good poet and extraordinary prose stylist, is the most important person in Ibn Nubātah’s life besides Abū al-Fidā’ and al-Shihāb’s brother ‘Alā’ al-Dīn. The dozen *Shihābiyāt* in Ibn Nubātah’s *Dīwān* give an imperfect picture of the importance of this relationship, as do the few preserved prose texts, such as Ibn Nubātah’s *taqrīz* on Shihāb al-Dīn’s extract of *Qalā'id al-Iqyān* included in *Zahr al-Manthūr* [12]. Ibn Nubātah also dedicates his *Al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī* [6] to Shihāb al-Dīn. Amīn al-Dīn Ibn Tāj al-Ri’āsah is executed in Cairo after he had been dismissed from the vizierate the year before.<sup>129</sup>

#### 742 (56)

In Rabī‘ II, al-Afḍal is deposed as governor of Ḥamāh and transferred to Damascus as an *amīr mi‘ah*, but he dies in the same month. Ibn Nubātah composes an elegy, which laments his death, the end of the Ayyubid dynasty, and the closing of an important chapter in his own life.<sup>130</sup> Sultan al-Nāṣir Aḥmad appoints Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh (710–60) to the rank of an *amīr ‘asharah*. This Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, brother of Shihāb al-Dīn and ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, is the rare case of an offspring of a family of ulama who went to Cairo in Turkish attire to make a career among the *umarā'*.<sup>131</sup> The seven-liner *Dīwān*, 117, may have been dedicated to him. Death of Badr al-Dīn Ibn Makkī, *kātib* and holder of several offices in Tripoli. He and Ibn Nubātah had been on good terms, but their friendship suffered a crisis that resulted in an exchange of epigrams.<sup>132</sup>

### III. SECOND SYRIAN PERIOD (743–61/1342–60)

#### 743 (57)

<sup>127</sup>See S. Conermann, “Tankiz,” *EI2*, 10:185–86.

<sup>128</sup>Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 2:571.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., 163.

<sup>130</sup>*Dīwān*, 99.

<sup>131</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān*, 5:491–92. Another amir of this family is Nāṣir al-Dīn; see the year 764.

<sup>132</sup>*Dīwān*, 333, also in *Al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī* [6] and Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 6:17–18.



Ibn Nubātah enters the *dīwān al-inshāʿ*. His financial situation had become increasingly difficult, especially after the loss of his Ḥamāh stipend. It seems that at this time he relied to a degree on the support of his father.<sup>133</sup> Therefore, to seek a position in the *dīwān* was the most obvious thing for him to do. He had established close contact with the chancellery since coming to Syria, but the last years were not favorable for Ibn Nubātah, who was a partisan of Ibn Faḍl Allāh. His friend Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh had finally become the head of the *dīwān*, and it was he who took Ibn Nubātah with him into the chancellery. Ibn Nubātah started to work immediately, but it was only after some time had elapsed that he received his appointment decree, which was drawn up by al-Ṣafadī.<sup>134</sup> Advanced in age as he was, and having acquired the reputation of a great stylist, his situation as a “beginner” in the *dīwān* must not have been easy for him. He met the pressure to succeed by publishing a collection of documents and official letters produced in his first year under the title *Taʿlīq al-Dīwān* [26]. Still in the same year, Shihāb al-Dīn is dismissed and replaced by his brother Badr al-Dīn. Shihāb al-Dīn spends his time in the following years writing his encyclopedia *Masālik al-Aḥṣār*, which contains an early version of the *Dīwān Ibn Nubātah*.

#### 744 (58)

Ibn al-Quṭb’s star is rising again. After two unsuccessful years as vizier in Damascus, he is appointed inspector of the army of Damascus. He would hold this office for sixteen years. It is only now that Ibn Nubātah addresses a few lines to him.<sup>135</sup> Ibn Nubātah publishes this year’s output as a *muwaqqiʿ* in the chancellery as a sequel to his *Taʿlīq al-Dīwān* [27].

#### 745 (59)

The new vizier (= *nāẓir al-dawāwīn*) Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Marājil arrives in Dhū al-Ḥijjah.<sup>136</sup> If I understand al-Maqrīzī correctly, he cut the wages of many secretaries of the Damascene chancellery, among them prominent members, including Ibn Nubātah.<sup>137</sup> On the other hand, Ibn Nubātah welcomed Ibn Marājil with an epigram, and hailed the vizier with two long *qasīdahs*, in which he thanks him for the many favors he had bestowed on him.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 5:192; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 5:437.

<sup>134</sup> Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 1:330–31.

<sup>135</sup> *Dīwān*, 470.

<sup>136</sup> Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 2:414–16, 449–50, 3:230.

<sup>137</sup> Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:671. Contrary to ʿUmar Mūsā Bāshā, *Ibn Nubātah*, 207, I do not think that *qaṭaʿa* in this context means “remove from office.”

<sup>138</sup> *Dīwān*, 147, 208; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabih*, 3:260.



## 746 (60)

Death of Badr al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh. Ibn Nubātah writes a dirge and transforms a poem intended to be addressed to Badr al-Dīn into a poem on his brother Shihāb al-Dīn.<sup>139</sup> Due to his early death at the age of 36, Badr al-Dīn left a smaller trace than his brothers in the oeuvre of Ibn Nubātah. There is only a single long ode to him in Ibn Nubātah's *Dīwān*, but Ibn Nubātah was also the author of Badr al-Dīn's marriage contract.<sup>140</sup>

## 747 (61)

For a few months the vizierate of Damascus is held by the 24-year-old Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Hilāl. Ibn Nubātah congratulates him with an epigram that he recited to al-Ṣafadī, who criticized it.<sup>141</sup> Ibn Nubātah composes a dirge on the death of Tāj al-Dīn Ibn al-Zayn Khaḍir, Badr al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh's short-term successor as *kātib al-sirr* of Damascus.<sup>142</sup> Tāj al-Dīn's successor Nāṣir al-Dīn Ibn al-Ṣāhib Ya'qūb would enjoy a longer period in office (until 763). Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Shihāb Maḥmūd (676–760) is appointed *kātib al-sirr* of Aleppo, an office he had already held for sixteen years until 733. He would be dismissed two years later, but would return for a third term from 752 to 759. His successor is al-Ṣafadī.<sup>143</sup> Besides his father, Jamāl al-Dīn was the most important member of the family for Ibn Nubātah, who addresses letters and a large number of poems to him. At least two odes composed for him are missing in the printed *Dīwān*.<sup>144</sup>

## 748 (62)

From Jumādā I to the beginning of the following year, Shams al-Dīn Ibn al-Tāj Ishāq (d. 771) is appointed to the vizierate of Damascus for the first time. Ibn Nubātah dedicates to him at least two long *qasidahs* (one on this occasion) and an epigram.<sup>145</sup> The Marinid ruler Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī establishes a *waqf* in Damascus for which Ibn Nubātah writes the *tawqī'*.<sup>146</sup> Execution of the amir al-Ḥājj Baydamur

<sup>139</sup>*Dīwān*, 460, 211; 'Umar Mūsā Bāshā, *Ibn Nubātah*, 139–44, confuses this Badr al-Dīn with his uncle, the brother of his father Muḥyī al-Dīn.

<sup>140</sup>Included in *Zahr al-Manthūr* [12]. The ode is in *Dīwān*, 365, shorter poems *ibid.*, 56, 78, 234.

<sup>141</sup>*Dīwān*, 414; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 6:406; *idem*, *A'yān*, 1:219; al-Maqrizī, *Muqaffá*, 1:391.

<sup>142</sup>*Dīwān*, 223.

<sup>143</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 6:143–45; *idem*, *A'yān*, 1:127–32; *idem*, *Alḥān al-Sawāji'*, 1:47–51.

<sup>144</sup>*Dīwān*, 11, 108, 109, 216, 396, 399, 438, 466, 554; see also Berlin MS 7861, fol. 129r and “the famous *qasidah*» mentioned by Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah*, 5:171 f; letters in El Escorial MS árabe 548.

<sup>145</sup>*Dīwān*, 260, 269, 302; on Ibn al-Tāj see Ibn Qāḍi Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 2:504, 541, 3:378–79.

<sup>146</sup>Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīkh* (Beirut, 1417/1996), 2:336–37. See also 'Umar Mūsā Bāshā, *Ibn Nubātah*, 207–8.



al-Badrī, the former governor of Aleppo, to whom Ibn Nubātah had dedicated one of his few long odes addressed to an amir.<sup>147</sup> Death of the *muḥaddith al-ʿaṣr*, al-Dhahabī, who reckoned Ibn Nubātah among his *shuyūkh*.<sup>148</sup>

#### 749 (63)

Year of the Black Death. Many friends and colleagues of Ibn Nubātah die, including the poets Zayn al-Dīn Ibn al-Wardī (who calls Ibn Nubātah *ṣāhibunā*)<sup>149</sup> and al-Miʿmār. For Ibn Nubātah, the heaviest loss may have been Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh. Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Jumlah is appointed preacher at the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. He will hold this office until his death in 764. He was the successor of Tāj al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī, to whose father Ibn Nubātah had turned when he came to Damascus. Ibn Nubātah's connection to Ibn Jumlah is attested by at least two long odes.<sup>150</sup> It seems as if the Great Mosque of Damascus was the most important religious institution with which Ibn Nubātah maintained close contact. Some documents even suggest that he held some sort of position in its *dīwān* for a while.

#### 750 (64)

Ibn Nubātah's father Shams al-Dīn dies in Damascus at the age of 84 (lunar) years and is buried at the foot of Jabal Qāsiyūn.<sup>151</sup> He had reached the pinnacle of his career only the year before, when he had been appointed shaykh of the Nūriyah madrasah in Damascus as successor to Zayn al-Dīn al-Mizzī, the son of the famous hadith scholar and previous shaykh of the Nūriyah, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Mizzī (654–742).<sup>152</sup> Ibn Nubātah is appointed successor to his father as notary (*shāhid al-qasam*) of Dārayyā and Dūmah, two places in the Ghūṭah. Again he asks al-Ṣafadī to issue his appointment decree.<sup>153</sup> Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī dies in Baghdad.<sup>154</sup>

<sup>147</sup> *Dīwān*, 362; see al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 2:98 f.

<sup>148</sup> Al-Dhahabī, *Muʿjam Shuyūkh al-Dhahabī*, ed. Rūḥiyah ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūfī (Beirut, 1410/1990): 567–68.

<sup>149</sup> Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīkh*, 2:336.

<sup>150</sup> *Dīwān*, 304, 403; on Ibn Jumlah see *GAL*, S2:77; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 2:553, 3:221, 240–41.

<sup>151</sup> Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 2:705–6.

<sup>152</sup> Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 11:83; on al-Mizzī see G. H. A. Juynboll, “Al-Mizzī,” *EI2*, 7:212–13.

<sup>153</sup> Al-Ṣafadī, *Alḥān al-Sawājiʿ*, 2:254–56.

<sup>154</sup> The date 749 is given by al-Ṣafadī, *Wafī*, 18:482, but since al-Ṣafadī corrected this date later in his *Aʿyān*, 3:70, it is likely incorrect. The date 752 given in the *Aʿyān*, however, is most certainly too late. Therefore, the date 750 is the most probable. It is given by Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabih*, 3:138, who was a close acquaintance and great admirer of al-Ḥillī. It is corroborated by al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, 2:350; see also Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 2:595: “Baghdad, end of 750.”



## 751 (65)

Bahā' al-Dīn Abū al-Baqā' al-Subkī is given a professorship at the Madrasah al-Rawāḥiyah in Damascus.<sup>155</sup> Ibn Nubātah had dedicated a poem to him already in his *Dīwān al-Aṣl*,<sup>156</sup> which indicates his early and strong connection to the Subkī family. Another Bahā' al-Dīn al-Subkī, Aḥmad ibn 'Alī, the son of Taqī al-Dīn and author of *'Arūs al-Afrāḥ*, an ingenious manual on rhetoric, may also have been the object of poems by Ibn Nubātah. It is not always possible to determine which of them is the addressee.<sup>157</sup>

## 752 (66)

'Izz al-Dīn Ṭuqtāy (d. 760) is appointed *dawādār* and is at the height of his power, which lasts until 758. At least two epigrams attest to Ibn Nubātah's (if only marginal) relationship to this amir.<sup>158</sup>

## 753 (67)

At the beginning of the year, prices for foodstuffs in Damascus rise considerably.<sup>159</sup> We do not know if this caused problems for Ibn Nubātah and his family, but a review of Ibn Nubātah's life must note his repeated complaints about his miserable financial situation.<sup>160</sup> The sources agree that Ibn Nubātah never achieved worldly riches. Not every complaint should be taken as a sign of extreme poverty, though. To ask other people for gifts was also a way to make contact with them and to honor them. Further, I cannot help but feel that wealth was not a major ambition of Ibn Nubātah. Rather than risk exaggerating Ibn Nubātah's poverty, one should carefully study the attitudes towards money and wealth in this period and the role of gifts in the establishment and preservation of social relationships.

## 754 (68)

Ibn Nubātah produces a selection of the poetry of Sharaf al-Dīn al-Anṣārī [25]. This is one of four selections of poetry he made that have survived. The others are dedicated to the poems of Ibn al-Rūmī [21], Ibn Qalāqīs [22], and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj

<sup>155</sup>Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:10; on Bahā' al-Dīn see *ibid.*, 3:499–501, and al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 3:310–14.

<sup>156</sup>*Dīwān*, 288 (see Ayasofya MS 3891, fols. 22v–23r), 343, 446, and see *Dīwān*, 50 and Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr*, 1:2:12.

<sup>157</sup>The seven-liner, *Dīwān*, 159 is probably addressed to Aḥmad ibn 'Alī.

<sup>158</sup>*Dīwān*, 261–62; see the headlines in Ayasofya MS 2352, fol. 94r.

<sup>159</sup>Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:33.

<sup>160</sup>For example, al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 1:330; 'Umar Mūsā Bāshā, *Ibn Nubātah*, records many instances of this kind throughout his book.



[23]. His selection of the poetry of Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk [24] seems to have been lost.

#### 755 (69)

Beginning of the second reign of Sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan, who was interested in Ibn Nubātah's poetry. He ordered production of a copy of Ibn Nubātah's *Dīwān* and eventually invited him to Egypt. If Ibn Iyās is right, Ibn Nubātah congratulated the sultan on this occasion with an epigram that is only a slight revision of an epigram he had composed on a different occasion many years before and included in his *Al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī* [6].<sup>161</sup>

#### 756 (70)

Death of Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī, the prolific scholar, qadi, and preacher. Ibn Nubātah dedicated to him at least three *qasīdahs* and several shorter poems. A first-rank literary joke is Ibn Nubātah's transformation of al-Ḥarīrī's didactic poem on syntax, the *Mulḥat al-Frāb*, into a panegyric *urjūzah*. Ibn Nubātah composes a long elegy on his death, as did al-Ṣafadī, al-Qīrātī, and others, and sends it from Damascus to Taqī al-Dīn's son Tāj al-Dīn in Cairo.<sup>162</sup>

#### 757 (71)

Ibn Nubātah exchanges letters with the poet and prolific writer Ibn Abī Ḥajalah (725–76), who is also the addressee of at least one of Ibn Nubātah's seven-liners.<sup>163</sup>

#### 758 (72)

In all probability, Ibn Nubātah's *Sūq al-Raqīq* [29] was written during the late fifties, though no exact date can be given. In this book, the poet collected the *nasīb* of many of his *qasīdahs* to create a book of love poetry. The text, which is preserved in Ibn Nubātah's own hand, shows that the poet had thoroughly revised many poems since their creation.

<sup>161</sup>See *Dīwān*, 531, and Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī' al-Zuhūr*, 1:1:553.

<sup>162</sup>The *qasīdahs* *Dīwān*, 8, 264, 273, the shorter poems *ibid.*, 94, 237, 241, 349, 415, Cairo, Dār al-Kutub MS adab Ṭal'at 4658, fols. 22r–v; the *rajaz* poem *Dīwān*, 582; the *rithā'* *ibid.*, 41; see also Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'īyah*, 5:305–407, esp. 397–400, and Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī' al-Zuhūr*, 1:1:556–57. See also *GAL*, 2:86–88, S2:102–4; al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 3:417–55.

<sup>163</sup>Ibn Abī Ḥajalah, *Sukkardān al-Sulṭān*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad 'Umar (Cairo, 2000), 10–11; on Ibn Abī Ḥajalah see *GAL*, 2:12–13, S2:5–6; J. Robson, U. Rizzitano, "Ibn Abī Ḥadjala," *EI2*, 3:686; T. Seidensticker, "Ibn Abī Ḥajala," *EAL*, 1:305. Ibn Nubātah's seven-liner, *Dīwān*, 227.



## 759 (73)

The famous scholar Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī,<sup>164</sup> son of the aforementioned Taqī al-Dīn, is dismissed from office as chief Shafi‘i qadi of Damascus in Sha‘bān but reinstated a month later. On this latter occasion, al-Ṣafadī congratulates him with a long poem,<sup>165</sup> and in all probability Ibn Nubātah’s poem *Dīwān*, 141–43, was composed on the same occasion. Tāj al-Dīn was one of the closest acquaintances of Ibn Nubātah during his last years. They exchanged many poems and shared (together with al-Ṣafadī) a passion for riddles. A few more long *qasīdahs* and about a dozen of Ibn Nubātah’s seven-liners are addressed to Tāj al-Dīn.<sup>166</sup>

## 760 (74)

The *kātib al-sirr* Nāṣir al-Dīn Ibn Ya‘qūb is transferred to Aleppo as the successor to al-Ṣafadī, who, in turn, becomes Nāṣir al-Dīn’s successor as *wakīl bayt al-māl* and *muwaqqi‘ al-dast* in Damascus. The new head of the chancellery is Amīn al-Dīn Ibn al-Qalānīsī,<sup>167</sup> to whom Ibn Nubātah seems to have had no close ties and in whose biographies epithets or praise are conspicuously missing. He will be dismissed two years later, and Nāṣir al-Dīn returns for a few months. It must remain speculation whether these developments contributed to Ibn Nubātah’s decision to go to Egypt despite his advanced age.

## IV. Second Cairene Period (761–68/1360–66)

## 761 (75)

At the invitation of Sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan, Ibn Nubātah returns to Cairo in Rabī‘ I, 44 years after he had left. He is appointed *muwaqqi‘ al-dast* in the Cairene chancellery. Due to his poor health, he cannot work regularly, but is paid his wages nonetheless. This office may have been meant as a sinecure for the renowned aging *adīb* rather than a real job. Ibn Nubātah stays in a house that is lent to him by the merchant Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī Ibn Ḥajar (d. 777/1375), a legal scholar and man of letters, to whom Ibn Nubātah addresses many of his seven-liners. Some of them mention a quarrel about the house, which would end their friendship. Nūr al-Dīn’s son, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, would profit from Ibn Nubātah’s manuscripts which he inherited from his father.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>164</sup> GAL, 2:89–90, S2:105–7; J. Schacht, C. E. Bosworth, “Al-Subkī,” *EI2*, 9:744–45; al-Ṣafadī, *Alḥān al-Sawāji‘*, 1:392–424.

<sup>165</sup> Al-Ṣafadī, *Alḥān al-Sawāji‘*, 1:402–4; on the event see Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:133–34.

<sup>166</sup> *Dīwān*, 48, 77, 92, 158, 159, 226, 309, 314, 349, 457, 469, 470, 574.

<sup>167</sup> On Nāṣir al-Dīn see al-Ṣafadī, *A‘yān*, 5:311–18; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:145–46, 186, 214–15; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 6:42–44. On Amīn al-Dīn see al-Ṣafadī, *A‘yān*, 4:310–12; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 5:96–97.

<sup>168</sup> See part II of this article; poems addressed to Nūr al-Dīn in *Dīwān*, 74, 75, 158, 228, 230, 240,



## 762 (76)

Sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan is put to death on 9 Jumādā I.<sup>169</sup> Most contemporaries and historians do not say much in favor of this sultan, besides his building the beautiful madrasah-mosque that bears his name. As is easily understandable, Ibn Nubātah saw things differently. He praised the sultan with four *qasīdahs*, a *takhmīṣ*, and several seven-liners.<sup>170</sup> Al-Nāṣir Ḥasan was the only sultan eulogized by Ibn Nubātah. We do not know anything about the relationship between Ibn Nubātah and al-Ḥasan's successors al-Manṣūr Muḥammad (762–64) and al-Ashraf Shaʿbān (764–78). Fakhr al-Dīn Mājīd Ibn Khaṭīb is dismissed from office as vizier in Cairo.<sup>171</sup> After ten months in office as vizier in Damascus, the recently converted Copt Fakhr al-Dīn Mājīd Ibn Qarawīnah is transferred to Cairo to replace his namesake as vizier and *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ*.<sup>172</sup> He administers his offices very successfully, but judgments of his personality are controversial.<sup>173</sup> After the overthrow of Yalbughā in 768, he was tortured to death three months after Ibn Nubātah's death. He was one of three brothers (the others were ʿAlam al-Dīn Ibrāhīm and Saʿd al-Dīn),<sup>174</sup> to whom Ibn Nubātah addressed several of his seven-liners. The Ibn Qarawīnah family was probably the last family that came to play a role in Ibn Nubātah's life. Since Ibn Nubātah had already dedicated poems to Fakhr al-Dīn Ibn Khaṭīb, it is not always easy to avoid confusion over who is addressed.<sup>175</sup>

## 763 (77)

Death of Nāṣir al-Dīn Ibn Yaʿqūb, *kātib al-sirr* of Damascus since 747, with the exception of two years in Aleppo (760–62). He is praised as a pious man, well versed in the religious sciences, and a bibliophile, who was interested in literature and composed poetry himself. Ibn Nubātah had addressed many poems to him, among them a dirge on the death of his mother.<sup>176</sup> He had already addressed his father Sharaf al-Dīn Yaʿqūb (d. 729), who had been *nāẓir* of Aleppo for many

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242, 271, 309; see also 229.

<sup>169</sup>P. M. Holt, "Al-Nāṣir," *EI2*, 7:992–93; al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 2:247–52.

<sup>170</sup>*Dīwān*, 15, 115, 195, 331, 380, 381, 491, 519, 521, 579.

<sup>171</sup>Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:51; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:179–80.

<sup>172</sup>Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:180, 301–2; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 9:185; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:60, 147–48 (erroneously قنبروز).

<sup>173</sup>See al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:147–48, and Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 9:185; Ibn al-ʿIrāqī, *Dhayl al-ʿIbar*, 216–17.

<sup>174</sup>Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:140.

<sup>175</sup>On Fakhr al-Dīn Ibn Khaṭīb see *Dīwān*, 47, 520, and the *qasīdah* p. 389; on Fakhr al-Dīn Ibn Qarawīnah: *ibid.*, 166 (?) and 468; on Saʿd al-Dīn: *ibid.*, 240, 268, 468–69, 525; on ʿAlam al-Dīn: *ibid.*, 461 (?).

<sup>176</sup>*Dīwān*, 306, other poems *ibid.*, 16 (?), 62, 209, 243, 253, 327, 349, 390.



years, and written a poem of condolence when he lost his uncle.<sup>177</sup>

#### 764 (78)

Al-Şafadī dies. His relationship to Ibn Nubātah began as that of a pupil, after which they became friends and exchanged poems and presents. In the *dīwān al-inshā'* in Damascus they were colleagues and al-Şafadī issued several documents for Ibn Nubātah. But their friendship was not untroubled. Al-Şafadī emulated Ibn Nubātah's work to a degree that Ibn Nubātah regarded as plagiarism. Their quarrels culminated with Ibn Nubātah's *Khubz al-Sha'ir* [30]. This may have been a reason for al-Şafadī to concentrate more on the theoretical side of *adab*, which was not Ibn Nubātah's domain. Later, there seems to have been a reconciliation. In al-Şafadī's *Alḥān al-Sawāji'*, Ibn Nubātah is granted by far the longest chapter. It comprises almost a hundred pages and contains poems and letters exchanged between them.<sup>178</sup> Al-Şafadī opines that Ibn Nubātah never reached the rank among the *kuttāb* that he deserved.<sup>179</sup> This was probably due to Ibn Nubātah's very late decision to enter the *dīwān al-inshā'*. In addition, his character seems not to have been without a certain stubbornness, which made it difficult for him to navigate the intrigues of the chancellery. But even the more amiable and successful al-Şafadī did not reach the highest possible positions. In his case, it was his increasing deafness that got in the way.<sup>180</sup> Nāşir al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh, the grandson of Sharaf al-Dīn, dies in Adana. He and his father are two more examples of members of the Faḍl Allāh family who pursued a military career. Ibn Nubātah had addressed poems to him.<sup>181</sup> Death of al-Kutubī, who had known Ibn Nubātah.<sup>182</sup>

#### 765 (79)

Perhaps as his last work, Ibn Nubātah assembles his miniature *qasīdahs* of seven lines in a separate *Dīwān* entitled *Al-Sab'ah al-Sayyārah* [31]. An exact date cannot be given, but the book cannot have been finished earlier than during the Cairene years (if it was ever finished at all).

#### 766 (80)

The poet and prose stylist Burhān al-Dīn al-Qīrāṭī (726–81) returns to Cairo.<sup>183</sup> He

<sup>177</sup>Ibid., 43, other poems *ibid.*, 12, 345; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh*, 2:196.

<sup>178</sup>Al-Şafadī, *Alḥān al-Sawāji'*, 2:180–268.

<sup>179</sup>Al-Şafadī, *Wafī*, 1:312.

<sup>180</sup>Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:228.

<sup>181</sup>*Dīwān*, 237 (= Ibn Ḥijjah, *Khizānat al-Adab*, 3:353), 242; see Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:239; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 5:222.

<sup>182</sup>See al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, 3:159.

<sup>183</sup>The date 766 is given by Brockelmann, *GAL*, 1:14, but I could not find it in the sources accessible



and Ibn Nubātah enjoy boat trips on the Nile. Several of Ibn Nubātah's seven-liners directed to al-Qirāṭī date from these years. When Ibn Nubātah was still in Damascus, al-Qirāṭī had written a letter of praise of "extreme length and beauty" to Ibn Nubātah, which is counted among al-Qirāṭī's major works.<sup>184</sup> Ibn Nubātah was al-Qirāṭī's model, and, according to Ibn Taghrībirdī, al-Qirāṭī is the best poet of the age next to Ibn Nubātah, and the poet who comes closest to him.<sup>185</sup>

#### 767 (81)

Birth of the poet, prose stylist, and literary critic Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī (d. 837), a great admirer of Ibn Nubātah, who lauded Ibn Nubātah's achievements, especially in the field of the *tawriyah*, in his *Kashf al-Lithām 'an Wajh al-Tawriyah wa-al-Istikhdām* and in his *Khizānat al-Adab*, in which several otherwise lost texts by Ibn Nubātah are preserved. Death of Burhān al-Dīn al-Zurā'ī, the son of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah. He had once been Ibn Nubātah's travelling companion and gave Ibn Nubātah reason to compose a humorous epigram.<sup>186</sup>

#### 768 (82)

7 Šafar (13 October 1366): At the age of 82 lunar (79 solar) years, Ibn Nubātah dies in the hospital that had been built by al-Manšūr Qalāwūn. He is buried at the so-called Cemetery of the Sufis north of Bāb al-Našr. He leaves behind a son named Muḥyī al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. after 790), a mediocre *adīb*, who earned his living as copyist.<sup>187</sup> This is one of the many parallels between Ibn Nubātah and Ibn Ḥajar. Both hoped for a son who would continue their enterprises. When, after many setbacks, they became fathers to sons who survived infancy, the sons proved unable to meet the expectations of their fathers. Ibn Ḥajar had his pupil al-Sakhāwī to step in. Ibn Nubātah's "Sakhāwī" was al-Bashtakī, who re-edited Ibn Nubātah's *Diwān* in the year 773, though in a rather questionable way. But Ibn Nubātah's poems and prose texts survived and helped to shape Arabic literature for centuries to come.

*To be continued*

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to me.

<sup>184</sup>Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-Ghumr*, 1:312, see also *GAL*, 2:14, S2:7; Ibn al-'Irāqī, *Dhayl al-'Ibar*, 488–90; Ibn Nubātah, *Diwān*, 16, 75. A boat trip on the Nile is reported in "Tahrīr al-Qirāṭī," Berlin MS 7870, fol. 22r.

<sup>185</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 1:90.

<sup>186</sup>"Al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī," Paris, Bibliothèque nationale MS 2234, fols. 186v–187v.

<sup>187</sup>Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 5:498.

