

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

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*)¹⁴⁹ 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.¹⁵⁰ 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.¹⁵¹ 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).¹⁵² 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.¹⁵³ Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī dies in Baghdad.¹⁵⁴

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

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

¹⁴⁹ Ibn al-Wardī, *Tārīkh*, 2:336.

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

¹⁵¹ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 2:705–6.

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

¹⁵³ Al-Ṣafadī, *Alḥān al-Sawājiʿ*, 2:254–56.

¹⁵⁴ 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.¹⁵⁵ Ibn Nubātah had dedicated a poem to him already in his *Dīwān al-Aṣl*,¹⁵⁶ 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.¹⁵⁷

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.¹⁵⁸

753 (67)

At the beginning of the year, prices for foodstuffs in Damascus rise considerably.¹⁵⁹ 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.¹⁶⁰ 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

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

¹⁵⁶*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.

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

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

¹⁵⁹Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:33.

¹⁶⁰For 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].¹⁶¹

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.¹⁶²

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.¹⁶³

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.

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

¹⁶²The *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.

¹⁶³Ibn 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,¹⁶⁴ 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,¹⁶⁵ 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.¹⁶⁶

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,¹⁶⁷ 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.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ 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.

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

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

¹⁶⁷ 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.

¹⁶⁸ 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.¹⁶⁹ 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.¹⁷⁰ 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 Sha'ḥbān (764–78). Fakhr al-Dīn Mājid Ibn Khaṭīb is dismissed from office as vizier in Cairo.¹⁷¹ After ten months in office as vizier in Damascus, the recently converted Copt Fakhr al-Dīn Mājid Ibn Qarawīnah is transferred to Cairo to replace his namesake as vizier and *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ*.¹⁷² He administers his offices very successfully, but judgments of his personality are controversial.¹⁷³ 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 'Alam al-Dīn Ibrāhīm and Sa'd al-Dīn),¹⁷⁴ 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.¹⁷⁵

763 (77)

Death of Nāṣir al-Dīn Ibn Ya'qūb, *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.¹⁷⁶ He had already addressed his father Sharaf al-Dīn Ya'qūb (d. 729), who had been *nāẓir* of Aleppo for many

242, 271, 309; see also 229.

¹⁶⁹P. M. Holt, "Al-Nāṣir," *EI2*, 7:992–93; al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 2:247–52.

¹⁷⁰*Dīwān*, 15, 115, 195, 331, 380, 381, 491, 519, 521, 579.

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

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

¹⁷³See al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:147–48, and Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 9:185; Ibn al-'Irāqī, *Dhayl al-'Ibar*, 216–17.

¹⁷⁴Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:140.

¹⁷⁵On 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 Sa'd al-Dīn: *ibid.*, 240, 268, 468–69, 525; on 'Alam al-Dīn: *ibid.*, 461 (?).

¹⁷⁶*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.¹⁷⁷

764 (78)

Al-Ṣafadī 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-Ṣafadī issued several documents for Ibn Nubātah. But their friendship was not untroubled. Al-Ṣafadī 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-Ṣafadī 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-Ṣafadī'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.¹⁷⁸ Al-Ṣafadī opines that Ibn Nubātah never reached the rank among the *kuttāb* that he deserved.¹⁷⁹ 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-Ṣafadī did not reach the highest possible positions. In his case, it was his increasing deafness that got in the way.¹⁸⁰ Nāṣir 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.¹⁸¹ Death of al-Kutubī, who had known Ibn Nubātah.¹⁸²

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.¹⁸³ He

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

¹⁷⁸Al-Ṣafadī, *Alḥān al-Sawāji'*, 2:180–268.

¹⁷⁹Al-Ṣafadī, *Wafī*, 1:312.

¹⁸⁰Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 3:228.

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

¹⁸²See al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, 3:159.

¹⁸³The 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.¹⁸⁴ Ibn Nubātah was al-Qirāṭī's model, and, according to Ibn Taghribirdī, al-Qirāṭī is the best poet of the age next to Ibn Nubātah, and the poet who comes closest to him.¹⁸⁵

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-Zura'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.¹⁸⁶

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.¹⁸⁷ 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

to me.

¹⁸⁴Ibn 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 "Tahrir al-Qirāṭī," Berlin MS 7870, fol. 22r.

¹⁸⁵Ibn Taghribirdī, *Manhal*, 1:90.

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

¹⁸⁷Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 5:498.

