

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

### 4. AUTOGRAPH MANUSCRIPTS

Ibn Nubātah's handwriting was considered to be exceptional. Nearly all of his biographers comment on it. Al-Ṣafadī, who cultivated his own, easily recognizable style of writing, praised the hand of his master and colleague. "As far as his handwriting is concerned, it is more precious than pearls," he writes.<sup>1</sup> Ibn Taghrībirdī praises the "extreme beauty of his handwriting."<sup>2</sup> More effusive is the statement of Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, who says:<sup>3</sup>

سبق الناس . . . إلى براعة الخطّ فما قدر معارض على أن يحكي له خطأ أو يجاريه في أصول كتابته  
وانسجامها وجريانها

"He surpassed everyone . . . in his excellence of penmanship, so that no one who tried to vie with him succeeded in matching him in his script or keeping pace with him in the fundamentals of the art of writing or its harmony and fluency."

Al-Sakhāwī, the devoted pupil of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, praises his master's handwriting with the words: "He had nice handwriting in the style of Ibn Nubātah."<sup>4</sup> Since Ibn Nubātah was also Ibn Ḥajar's model in the field of poetry, it is probably not too farfetched to assume that he consciously tried to emulate Ibn Nubātah's style of writing. In fact, the similarity between his and Ibn Nubātah's handwriting can hardly be missed, as figure 5 shows.

As this unanimously enthusiastic judgment of Ibn Nubātah's handwriting shows, a study of his autographs is doubly important. First, these manuscripts shed light on the history of handwriting and the aesthetic principles prevailing at certain times in regard to the beauty of a script, and second, they allow us to reconstruct the history of Ibn Nubātah's work in an unusually detailed way.

Ibn Nubātah makes ample use of ligatures, but also of vowel signs and, at least

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<sup>1</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 1:312; similarly al-Maqrīzī, *Muqaffá*, 7:104.

<sup>2</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 5:248–49.

<sup>3</sup>Al-Subkī, *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿīyah*, 5:153.

<sup>4</sup>Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Jawāhir wa-al-Durar fī Tarjamat Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Ḥajar*, ed. Ibrāhīm Bājis ʿAbd al-Majīd (Beirut, 1419/1999), 1:287–88.



in some of his manuscripts, quite regularly provides *sīn* with three dots beneath in order to make clear that it is not an undotted *shīn*. Since I am not an expert in this field, I cannot precisely analyze the factors that make Ibn Nubātah's handwriting so distinctive. However, one can hardly fail to notice its elegance. Ibn Nubātah's handwriting obviously matches the sophistication of his texts. And just as his poetry and prose are not particularly easy to understand, his handwriting is not particularly easy to read. But both his literature and his handwriting are very distinctive and easily recognizable. The identification of manuscripts written by Ibn Nubātah is possible beyond any doubt even if the writer is not mentioned (as in El Escorial MS árabe 548). This helps in identifying additional manuscripts written by Ibn Nubātah, and perhaps also manuscripts of works other than his own. So far, the only published reproduction of an autograph manuscript can be found in al-Naṣṣār's edition of the poetry of Ibn al-Rūmī. The editor expresses doubts about its having been written by Ibn Nubātah, but these doubts are unfounded.<sup>5</sup>

So far, I have managed to identify five autograph manuscripts.<sup>6</sup> The principal facts are given in Table 1.

Only one manuscript is dated and provided with a carefully produced title page. The other four manuscripts are undated. Two of them lack a colophon altogether. We may attribute this lack to Ibn Nubātah's loathing of long prefaces, or conclude that these manuscripts were either created as Ibn Nubātah's personal records (though they seem not to be *musawwadāt*), or meant as presents for his friends and colleagues, who knew their writer anyway. As we will see, the text of most of these autograph manuscripts is not identical with the *textus receptus* of the corresponding works. This is due to Ibn Nubātah's habit of constantly revising and restructuring his own works. This working method of Ibn Nubātah causes major problems for the editors of his works, but it also gives us a singular opportunity to closely observe the creative process of a Mamluk artist. In some cases, passages of poems can even be compared in two different autograph versions. The next section will show how the existence of different versions of Ibn Nubātah's poems had an influence on the history of his *Dīwān*.

## 5. A WORK IN PROGRESS

There are few pre-modern authors whose work can be observed as closely as that of Ibn Nubātah. Thanks to the wealth of sources and the number of autograph manuscripts, the process of creating many poems and prose texts can be

<sup>5</sup>See *Dīwān Ibn al-Rūmī*, ed. Ḥusayn Naṣṣār, 3rd ed. (Cairo, 1424/2003), 1:33–35 and the plates on pages 51 and 53.

<sup>6</sup>In addition, three leaves at the end of the *Dīwān* manuscript Köprülü MS 1249 (fols. 165–67) were doubtlessly written by Ibn Nubātah himself. Their presence in this (quite old) manuscript remains to be explained.



Table 1  
Manuscripts Written by Ibn Nubātah

Manuscript	Work	Folios	Lines per page	Title	Colophon	Identification as Autograph
Istanbul, Ayasofya MS 4045	<i>Saj' al-Muṭawwaq</i> [3]	77	11	كتاب/سجع المطوق/من قبل الإتياء/ تصنيف العبد الفقير الى الله تعالى محمد بن الخطيب ابن نباته (written by the author himself)	ونجز الكتاب في سنة تسع عشره وبسبعماية وصلّى الله على سيدنا محمد/ وآله وصحبه الطاهرين وسلم تسليما كثيرا	title page, written by a third hand: بخط مؤلفه رحمه الله عليه
Istanbul, Köprülü MS 1397	<i>Muntakhab al-Hadiyah</i> [5]	74	8-9	منتخب الهدية/في المدائح المؤيدية/نظم الشيخ الامام العالم الايب الفاضل جمال الدين/ابي عبد الله محمد بن الشيخ الامام المحدث شمس الدين محمد بن نباته/ادام الله فوائده (written by a third hand)	none	top left corner of the title page, written by another hand than the title: وهو بخط المصنف الشيخ جمال الدين رحمه الله/...
El Escorial MS árabe 548	<i>Collection of Letters</i> [11]	147	10-12	من ترسل/ابن نباته (probably written by a third hand)	الحمد لله وحده وصلوته على سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه الطاهرين وسلام	no indication; so far not known to be an autograph
Istanbul, Ayasofya MS 4261	<i>Mukhtār Shī'r Ibn al-Rūmī</i> [21]	137	11-13	مختار شعر بن الرومي/لابن نباته/ بخطه (written by the author himself)	الحمد لله وحده وصلوته على سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه الطاهرين وسلام	indicated in the title
El Escorial MS árabe 449	<i>Sūq al-Raqīq</i> [29]	115	8-10	كتاب/سوق الرقيق/من غزل شعر/ابن نباته المصري بخطه/عفا الله عنه (left side of fol. 1v, probably written by the author himself)	هـ	indicated in the title



reconstructed in great detail. For these reasons, we are able to gain considerable insight into the history of Ibn Nubātah's works. The most important conclusion of such an inquiry is that Ibn Nubātah considered his poems and prose texts as "works in progress," which underwent constant revision and reworking. He reused verses in other poems, adapted texts dedicated to one person to another, reworded verses or passages in his *rasā'il*, exchanged parts of his works, shortened or expanded texts in order to accommodate them to a new purpose, and so on.

As interesting as such findings are, they obviously make the editing of Ibn Nubātah's works more difficult. How do we deal, for example, with the fact that the autograph manuscript of *Saj' al-Muṭawwaq* [3]<sup>7</sup> contains a poem in praise of Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Zamlakānī different from all other manuscripts of the work? This poem, an *ʿaynīyah* that comprises 56 lines, appears in Ibn Nubātah's own early compilation of his *Dīwān* in a revised and shortened version of 27 lines.<sup>8</sup> Obviously, only after Ibn Nubātah realized that another poem, a *tāʿīyah* he had sent to Kamāl al-Dīn in the same year, had become a striking success, did he substitute this one for the *ʿaynīyah*. The new *qaṣīdah*, a poem of the extraordinary length of a hundred lines, is introduced with the words:

كُتِبَتْ إِلَيْهِ هَذِهِ الْقَصِيدَةُ الَّتِي كَثُرَ نَظْمُ شُعْرَاءِ الْعَصْرِ فِي رَوِيَّهَا وَوَزَنُهَا

"I sent him this *qaṣīdah*, which the poets of this time often imitated in its rhyme and meter."<sup>9</sup> Needless to say, Ibn Nubātah again revised the poem and included a shortened version of 64 lines in his early *Dīwān*.<sup>10</sup>

The first victim of this situation was al-Bashtakī, the compiler of Ibn Nubātah's *Dīwān* after the latter's death. The modern redactor of the printed version further aggravated this situation by several editorial decisions.

The first poem of the *Dīwān* (*khafīf/-āʿī*) after the initial poem in praise of the Prophet may serve as an illustration of the problem. In fact, this poem must have caused Ibn Nubātah many a headache, since he did not subject many others to such drastic revision. The reason for Ibn Nubātah's permanent discontent with the poem may be found in the fact that it is of an experimental nature. Obviously, it was one of Ibn Nubātah's first attempts to develop his *tawriyah* style, which he

<sup>7</sup>Numbers in brackets refer to the chart of the works of Ibn Nubātah found in part I of this article, pp. 4–5.

<sup>8</sup>See *Saj' al-Muṭawwaq*, Ayasofya MS 4045, fols. 33v–36r; *Proto-Dīwān*, Berlin MS 7861, fol. 119r–v; *Dīwān*, 297–99.

<sup>9</sup>Cairo, Dār al-Kutub MS 170 *adab*, fol. 28r. See also al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿīyah*, 5:108–11 (article on Ibn al-Zamlakānī).

<sup>10</sup>Berlin MS 7861, fols. 44v–46v; the version in *Dīwān*, 67–71, is a pastiche between the version in *Saj' al-Muṭawwaq* and that in the *Proto-Dīwān*.



perfected only in the later phases of his life, especially in his poems dedicated to 'Alā' al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh. But among his poems dedicated to the Ayyubid prince of Ḥamāh, the *Mu'ayyadīyāt*, it is not typical and may create the impression of being somewhat contrived. His main artistic goal seems to have been to compose a poem that treats only a few themes that evoke many associations by a technique based on *tawriyah* (double entendre) and *ṭibāq* (antithesis). We will limit our investigation to the *nasīb*, which comprises 14 of 33 lines altogether (a remarkably high percentage) in the printed *Dīwān*. Line 15 is the *takhalluṣ* that leads from the *nasīb* to praise of Abū al-Fidā', the Ayyubid prince. The *madīḥ* focuses nearly exclusively on the subject of generosity. The *nasīb* and the *takhalluṣ* are given in the *Dīwān* (p. 4) as in the left column of the following chart:

Table 2 Text according to <i>Dīwān</i> , p. 4 (meter <i>khafīf</i> )	(2) MH	(3) PD	(4) SR	(5) Bash
١ قام يرئو بمقلة كحلاء عَلمتني الجُنون بالسوداء	x	x	x	x
٢ رَسَا دَبٌ فِي سِوَالِفِهِ النَّمْلُ فَهَامَتْ خِوَاطِرُ الشُّعْرَاءِ	x	x	x	x
٣ رَوْضٌ حُسْنٌ غَنَى لَنَا فَوْقَهُ الحُلَى فَأَهْلًا بِالرَّوْضَةِ العَنَاءِ	x			
٤ جَانِرُ الحُكْمِ قَلْبِهِ لِي صَخْرٌ وَبِكَانِي لَهُ بَكِي الخِنْسَاءِ			x	x
٥ عَدَلُونِي عَلَى هَوَاهُ فَأَغْرُوا فَهَوَاهُ نَصَبٌ عَلَى الإِغْرَاءِ	x	x	x	x
٦ مَن مُعِينِي عَلَى رَشَا صَرْتِ مَن مَاءِ دَمُوعِي عَلَيْهِ مِثْلُ الرِّشَاءِ			x	x
٧ مَن مُعِينِي عَلَى لَوَاعِجِ حَبِّ تَنْلَطِي مِثْلِ أَدْمُعِي بِالمَاءِ	x	x		x
٨ وَحَبِيبِ إِلَيَّ يَفْعَلُ بِالقَلْبِ فِعَالِ الأَعْدَاءِ بِالأَعْدَاءِ	x	x		x
٩ ضَيْقُ العَيْنِ إِنْ رَنَا وَاسْنَمَحْنَا وَعِنَاءُ تَسْمَحِ البِخْلَاءِ			x	x
١٠ لَيْتَ أَعْطَافَهُ وَلَوْ فِي مَنَامٍ وَعَدْتُ بِاسْتِرَاقَةٍ لِلقَاءِ			x	x
١١ يَنْتَنِي كَقَامَةِ العُصْنِ اللَدَنِ وَيَعْطُو كَالظَّبْيَةِ الأَدْمَاءِ	x	x		x
٢١ يَا شَبِيهَةَ العُصُونِ رَفَقًا بِصَبِّ نَاحِجِ فِي الهَوَى مَعَ الوَرَقَاءِ	x	x	x	x
٣١ يَذَكُرُ العَهْدَ بِالعَقِيقِ فَيَبْكِي لِهَوَاهُ بِدَمْعَةٍ حَمْرَاءِ	x	x	x	x
٤١ يَا لَهَا دَمْعَةٌ عَلَى الخَدِّ حَمْرَاءِ بَدَتْ مَن سِوَادٍ فِي صَفْرَاءِ	x	x	x	x
٥١ فَكَأَنِّي حَمَلْتُ رَنَكُ ابْنِ أَيُّوبِ عَلَى وَجْنَتِي لِفَرْطِ وِلَاءِ	x	x	x	x

As a matter of fact, the text given in the *Dīwān* does not contain a single word that is not by Ibn Nubātah himself, and there are only two clear mistakes in it, for in line 10, instead of *istirāqatin* one has to read *istirāqihī*, and in line 14 instead of *yā lahā dam'atun* one must read *yā lahā dam'atan*, as Ibn Nubātah clearly noted in both of his autograph manuscripts. Nevertheless, the text of the *Dīwān* is not



an authentic text, since the poem never existed in this form during the lifetime of Ibn Nubātah. Lines 3, 7, 8, and 11 never occurred together with lines 4, 6, 9, and 10, and in none of Ibn Nubātah's versions did the *nasīb* take such a large portion of the whole poem. Instead, Ibn Nubātah obviously cancelled line 3 and replaced lines 7, 8, and 11 with three other lines. In the chart above, the lines occurring in *Muntakhab al-Hadīyah* (= MH), the *Proto-Dīwān* (PD), and *Sūq al-Raqīq* (SR) are marked in columns 2 to 4 with an X. These are the three major versions that can be established to have existed during the poet's lifetime. The recension of al-Bashtakī (column 5) is nothing but a pastiche of all these versions. Line 3 is only reintroduced in a very late version of this recension. To reconstruct the history of the text, we must therefore have recourse to the manuscript material.

The earliest version of the poem available to us is found in the *Muntakhab al-Hadīyah* [5], Ibn Nubātah's collection of poems in praise of al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad. The book was completed before 729, perhaps around the year 725, and is preserved in a number of manuscripts and early printed editions. The earliest document is an autograph manuscript (Köprülü MS 1397) the text of which is not always identical with the version presented by all other known sources (which, nevertheless, must also present an authentic version going back to the author himself). In the case of our *nasīb*, there are only a few variant readings between the two recensions. Therefore, I will give the version of the autograph manuscript (fols. 15v–16r), which is as authentic as a text can be:<sup>11</sup>

قام يرنو بمقلة كحلاء	عَلَّمْتَنِي الْجُنُونَ بِالسُّودَاءِ	١
رَشَأُ دَبِّ فِي سِوَالْفِهِ النَّمْلِ فَحَارِبُ خَوَاطِرُ الشُّعْرَاءِ		٢
رَوْضُ حُسْنِ غَنَى عَلَى قَدِّهِ الْحَلِيِّ فَأَهْلًا بِالرَّوْضَةِ الْغَنَاءِ		٣
عَدَلُونِي عَلَى هَوَاهُ فَأَعَزَّوْا فِهْوَاهُ نَصَبٌ عَلَى الْإِعْرَاءِ		٤
مَنْ مُعِينِي عَلَى لَوَاعِجِ حُبِّ تَتَلَطَّى مِنْ أَدْمَعِي بِالْمَاءِ		٥
وَحَبِيبٍ لَدِي يَفْعَلُ بِالْقَلْبِ فِعَالِ الْأَعْدَاءِ بِالْأَعْدَاءِ		٦
يَتَنَتَّى كَقَامَةِ الْعُصْنِ الرُّطْبِ وَيَعْطُو كَالظَّبِيَّةِ الْأَدْمَاءِ		٧
يَا شَبِيهَ الْعُصُونِ رَفَقًا بَصَبٌ نَائِحٍ فِي الْهَوَى مَعَ الْوَرَقَاءِ		٨
يَذَكُرُ الْعَهْدَ بِالْعَقِيقِ فَيَبْكِي مِنْ هَوَاهُ بِدَمْعَةِ حَمْرَاءِ		٩
يَا لَهَا دَمْعَةٌ عَلَى الْخَدِّ حَمْرَاءِ بَدَتْ مِنْ سُودَاءِ فِي صَفْرَاءِ		١٠
فَكَأَنِّي حَمَلْتُ رَنَكُ ابْنِ أُيُوبِ عَلَى وَجْنَتِي لِفَرْطِ وَلَانِي		١١

(1) He stood, gazing with dark eyes that taught me madness in consequence of *black (eyes)/melancholia*,<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Since the poem is in the meter *khafif*, in which the caesura between the hemistichs is less important than with other meters and often runs across single words, we will not mark it here.

<sup>12</sup>A *tawriyah* is noted in the translations in the following way: The primarily intended meaning is



(2) a young gazelle on the temples of whom ants were crawling so that the poets' minds were confounded.

(3) He is a garden of beauty; the jewelry on his body sings—welcome to the lush garden full of rustling/*garden of the singer!*

(4) They blamed me for my love for him and incited desire, so that the love for him became a banner/*accusative* marking incitement.

(5) Who can aid me against the ardor of a love that is aflame even in the water of my tears,

(6) and against a beloved who inflicts on my heart things that only enemies are used to inflicting on each other?

(7) He sways in the form of a tender bough and stretches his neck like a light-brown gazelle.

(8) O you, who resemble boughs: Have mercy on an ardent lover who, in his passion, moans with the dark gray doves,

(9) while he remembers the days of intimacy with al-ʿAqīq/*the cornelian*, so that he weeps a red tear out of love.

(10) Oh what a tear on the cheek: Red that appeared from the black [eyes] [and runs down] on a yellow cheek!

(11) It is as if I would bear the emblem of Ayyūb's scion on my cheek, so great is my devotion!

Let us try an interpretation of the *nasīb* in this form. The first observation is that the *nasīb* has to be interpreted from the perspective of the *takhalluṣ* (line 11). This line leads from the subject of love to the subject of praise by means of the emblem of the prince. Considering the small number of literary references to the *rank*,<sup>13</sup> the line is also not without historic interest. As we learn from lines 10 and 11, the *rank* of al-Muʿayyad was a tricolor bearing the same colors as

underlined, the secondarily suggested meaning written in italics. In reading aloud, the words in italics should be omitted.

<sup>13</sup>N. Rabbat, "Rank," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 8:431.



the Belgian or the German flag (in whatever sequence). These three colors are now introduced through themes of love poetry, until they serve as a very neat and astonishing *takhalluṣ* to the *madīḥ*. This is carried out in three steps, each comprising three lines.

The first step, lines 1–3, is to give an idea about the fascination felt by the lover for the beloved. One of the three colors, black, is already introduced in the first line. This is done in a complex way in the form of a *tawriyah* and by making “blackness” the rhyme word. In this way the subject of color is on the stage from the very beginning. One may also note that the very first rhyme word, i.e., the rhyme word at the end of the first hemistich (*kaḥlāʾ*) is also a color term, but a term only applicable to eyes. The sequence: (a) special color term (*akḥal*) → (b) generally applicable color term (*aswad*) given in the first line is echoed in an expanded form in lines 7–10: (a) special color terms in the rhymes of lines 7–8 (*admāʾ*, *awraq*) → general color terms in the rhymes of lines 9–10 (*aḥmar*, *aṣfar*).

The second step, lines 4–6, can be read as an antithesis of the first one. Now the enemies of love, the faultfinders, enter the stage in line 4. As a consequence, the lover’s love turns into a “banner.” This motif anticipates the idea of the *rank*, but without mentioning any color. Further lines illustrate the reluctance and the cruelty of the beloved that are the reason for the lover’s despair and will eventually engender the two colors red and yellow, which are not yet mentioned in the colorless passage. The theme of “color” now is the point of the third step presented in lines 7–9. The beloved is compared to a red-brown gazelle. He resembles a bough, and on boughs we find doves whose sad cooing is one of the most time-honored motifs of love poetry. A common word for doves is *warqāʾ*, which originally means “dark gray”. So we have two lines that end with rhyme words that designate colors, *admāʾ* and *warqāʾ*. But they are not pure colors, but only color terms that can be applied to special categories of objects. As a climax, the third line of the passage concludes with a rhyme word which designates a pure color, i.e., red (*ḥamrāʾ*), which is introduced again in the complex way of a *tawriyah*, just as the color black had been in the first line. The color yellow is represented by the sallow cheeks of the pain-stricken lover as a natural consequence of what has been said in the second passage. This is a conventional *topos* of love poetry and need not be introduced separately to complete the tricolor. Instead, it forms the rhyme word of line 10, in which all three colors are now assembled. These are the colors of the *rank* of the sultan al-Muʾayyad, which the poet acquires through love just as the sultan had acquired them by rank and descent.

A few words may be in order to explain the rather dense stylistic construction, especially of the first section. Each of its three lines contains a *tawriyah*, the form of double entendre that was so popular in Ayyubid and Mamluk times that Ibn





Ḥijjah even called the whole period the “age of the *tawriyah*,” and Ibn Nubātah was unanimously considered the chief master of the *tawriyah* in his time. The *tawriyah* makes use of the fact that many words have more than one meaning, and it must be constructed in such a way that, though only one of its meanings is primarily intended, the hearer/reader is made aware of the other, non-intended meaning of the word. In the case of these three lines, we have no less than three different kinds of *tawriyah*. In the first line, the lyrical I is going mad on account of the black eyes of the beloved. However, *sawdā* means also “black bile, melancholia,” which enables a medical interpretation of the line. Since the context points to the primarily-intended meaning, we have a *tawriyah mubayyanah* before us. The situation in the next line is more complex. The “ants” that are creeping up the beloved’s cheek are a simile for the downy beard, one of the main subjects of Arabic love poetry from the time of Abū Tammām onwards until the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup> The comparison is not new at all, but Ibn Nubātah adds a *tawriyah* by stating that the downy beard “seizes the minds of the poets.” By mentioning the word *shu‘arā*’ the hearer becomes aware of the fact that *al-naml*, just like *al-shu‘arā*’, is the name of a *sūrah* of the Holy Quran. This form of *tawriyah*, which only becomes conspicuous by means of another *tawriyah*, is called *tawriyah muhayya’ah*. The third line adds the acoustic dimension to the optic one. The beloved’s face is a garden (a common image), but a garden is only perfect when birds sing in it. Instead of birds, the beloved’s garden here is filled with the rustling of his adornment (probably his earring); therefore it is a *rawdah ghannā*’ which one can interpret as “a garden, a singer.” But the intended meaning of *ghannā*’ is not that derived from the root *gh-n-y*, but that from the root *gh-n-n*. *Ghannā*’ can also be the feminine of *aghann* and means as an epithet a garden “abounding with herbs . . . in which the winds [murmur] by reason of the denseness of its . . . herbage.”<sup>15</sup> It is an old Arabic expression for a *locus amoenus* just as is *al-‘Aqīq* in line 9. The *tawriyah* in this case is a *tawriyah murashshahah*, in which the context (“singing”) points to the not-intended meaning (“singer”).

The next three lines (lines 4–6) are stylistically less complicated. Line 4, which brings in society in the form of the faultfinders, takes up the old motif of blame that incites the lover even further. Its classical formulation is by Abū Nuwās.<sup>16</sup> The motif is turned into another *tawriyah*, which fits the profanation of love by the faultfinders, since *naṣb ‘alā al-ighrā*’ (accusative of incitement) is simply a

<sup>14</sup>See Thomas Bauer, *Liebe und Liebesdichtung in der arabischen Welt des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 1998), 225–80; on 264–65, references to further comparisons between the beard and ants in the love poetry of the ninth and tenth centuries.

<sup>15</sup>E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, Edinburgh, 1863–93), q.v.

<sup>16</sup>See *Dīwān Abī Nuwās*, 3rd part, ed. Ewald Wagner (Stuttgart, 1408/1988), 2: دَعَّ عَنْكَ لَوْمِي فَإِنَّ اللَّوْمَ إِغْرَاءٌ



common grammatical term.<sup>17</sup> Lines 5 and 6 are marked by antitheses (fire-water; beloved-enemy) instead of *tawriyāt*. It is only in line 9 in the third section that the art of the *tawriyah* is perfected in the form of an *istikhdām*. It is presented by the word al-‘Aqīq, the name of a wadi in the Ḥijāz (and of several other places in the region), which at first seems out of place in Ibn Nubātah’s poem. But its geographical place is completely irrelevant since in Arabic poetry it is not so much a real place as a motif, and as such “part of the poetic idea embodied in that peculiarly suggestive landscape that may be called pastoral, idyllic, or, in an archetypal way, a vestige of man’s dream of the earth when it was good. It is a metaphor of sweetness, joy, and garden surroundings, too.”<sup>18</sup> As such, it is in perfect harmony with the references to the Quran and the garden in lines 2 and 3. But at the same time the word ‘*aqīq* has to be taken to mean “cornelian” in order to serve as an object of comparison for the red (i.e., bloody) tears of the lover. If both significations of a word have to be actualized, theorists speak of an *istikhdām*, which, nevertheless, may be considered a type of *tawriyah*. Though Ibn Nubātah left theory to al-Ṣafadī,<sup>19</sup> it is quite clear that he was very well aware of the different kinds of *tawriyah*, and it is certainly no accident that he tried to assemble them in this very passage, each fulfilling a specific task in its specific place. Further, it is also striking to see how Ibn Nubātah combines motifs of the traditional form of the *nasīb* (for this is rather a *nasīb*, not a *ghazal*)<sup>20</sup> with “modern” content, for no doubt it is a homoerotic love poem. In the same way as Ibn Nubātah offers modernized tradition (conventional *nasīb* motifs in modern style and content), the Ayyubid prince combines a glorious dynastic past with his generous activities in modern Mamluk society.

Given the two poles, “crafted” (*maṣnū‘*) and “natural” (*maṭbū‘*), there is no doubt that Ibn Nubātah’s lines are to be located at the very end of the “crafted” pole. A text containing a maximum of allusions and associations will inevitably end up on this side of the scale. Nevertheless, Ibn Nubātah must have felt a certain unease about his lines, or about some of them, and therefore decided to revise the poem.

Such changes had taken place already in the text of *Muntakhab al-Hadiyah*. The text of the other manuscripts and the nineteenth-century printed text of this work is not identical with the text of the autograph. Apparently, most differences go back to Ibn Nubātah himself, as the drastic changes (such as the exchange of whole poems) and the corroboration of some of these changes through later

<sup>17</sup>See W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, 1933), 2:74–75.

<sup>18</sup>J. Stetkevych, *The Zephyrs of Najd* (Chicago, 1993), 112.

<sup>19</sup>See al-Ṣafadī, *Faḍḍ al-Khitām ‘an al-Tawriyah wa-al-Istikhdām*, ed. al-Muḥammadī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Ḥinnāwī (Cairo, 1399/1979).

<sup>20</sup>On this distinction see Bauer, *Liebe*, 185–97.



autograph sources show. In our case, there are only minor alterations. We find *hāmat* instead of *hārat* in line 2 (a variant reading corroborated by the autograph of *Sūq al-Raqīq*) and *ilayya* instead of *ladayya* in line 6. More important is Ibn Nubātah's attempt to improve line 3. The phrase '*alā qaddihī* "above his stature" must have disturbed Ibn Nubātah, perhaps as not being very precise. Therefore he replaced it with the phrase *lahū fawqahū* "for which above it." The reading of the printed *Dīwān*, *lanā fawqahū*, has no textual basis whatsoever. It owes its existence to the fact that the writer of the manuscript that forms the basis for the printed text, had omitted *lahū*. The word *lanā* was only later added above the line, perhaps by another hand and as a conjecture. There is no senseless "for us" in Ibn Nubātah's text and no "we" is addressed in the whole passage.

Another step of his revisions is represented by what I call Ibn Nubātah's "Proto-Dīwān." It is a collection of Ibn Nubātah's poetry, compiled by the poet himself, with which he answered requests for a *Dīwān* of his poetry during his Syrian years and which forms the basis for the *Dīwān al-Aṣl*. An early version of the *Proto-Dīwān* is included in Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh's *Masālik al-Abṣār* and therefore must be dated before 749. Further sources for the *Proto-Dīwān* are four manuscripts, one of which was written before Ibn Nubātah's death. Though the manuscripts do not depend upon each other, all five sources give an identical text of the poem, which differs in a few respects from the text given above. This version must be considered as another authentic version that can be traced back to Ibn Nubātah himself. It presents a text virtually identical with the autograph version of the *Muntakhab*. It still has *hārat* (line 2) and *ladayya* (line 6), but it reads *al-ghuṣn al-ladn* instead of *al-ghuṣn al-raṭb* in line 7 and *li-hawāhu* instead of *min hawāhu* in line 9. The most important change again concerns line 3, which is now entirely deleted. The poet had already marked it with a line in the autograph. The exact chronology of these modifications cannot be established. Perhaps Ibn Nubātah deleted the line first and tried to save it later for the *Muntakhab* by reformulating it in part, or he considered his attempt to improve it a failure and deleted it once and for all. As a matter of fact, the line does not turn up again in later versions of the poem, and it was not even included in the pastiche text compiled by al-Bashtakī. Copyists only added it subsequently, almost certainly from the *Muntakhab*.

Ibn Nubātah occupied himself with the poem for many years, as we see from the preceding, before he finally decided to rework it fundamentally. This new version is again preserved in an autograph manuscript. This is a manuscript of Ibn Nubātah's late work *Sūq al-Raqīq* [29], in which the author assembled a selection of the *nasīb* sections of his *qaṣīdahs* to create a work of love poetry. The *nasīb* is now not part of a longer poem, but stands alone. Nevertheless, in all probability the text was not changed on the occasion of its inclusion in *Sūq al-Raqīq*. Rather it



represents the form the *nasīb* had taken in the meantime in Ibn Nubātah's *Dīwān al-Aṣl*, i.e., in a revised and enlarged version of the *Proto-Dīwān*. This is corroborated by the Paris manuscript Bibliothèque Nationale MS 3362, which contains excerpts of Ibn Nubātah's *Dīwān* in a pre-Bashtakī recension (most certainly from the *Dīwān al-Aṣl*), and in which on fol. 98v a shortened version of our poem is given, which corresponds to the version given below. Further, the modifications made in this stage are obviously made to align the *nasīb* more closely to the main topic of the *madīḥ* instead of making it more erotic as one would expect from modifications undertaken for an anthology of love poetry.

This is the complete text of the poem in the autograph copy of *Sūq al-Raqīq* (Escorial MS árabe 449, fols. 2r–v):

قام يَرنُو بمقلّةٍ كحلاءِ أبا منها المجنونُ بالسُّوداءِ	١
رَشَا دَبَّ فِي سِوَالْفِه النَّمْلُ فَهَامَتْ خِوَاطِرُ الشُّعْرَاءِ	٢
جَانِزُ الحُكْمِ قَلْبَهُ لِي صَخْرٌ وَبِكَانِي لَهُ بَكَا الخِنْسَاءِ	٣
عَدَلُونِي عَلَى هَوَاهُ فَأَعْرَوَا فِهَوَاهُ نَصَبٌ عَلَى الإِغْرَاءِ	٤
مَنْ مُعِينِي عَلَى رَشَا صَرْتِ مَنْ مَاءِ دَمُوعِي عَلَيْهِ مِثْلُ الرِّشَاءِ	٥
ضَيْقُ العَيْنِ إِنْ رَنَا وَاسْتَمَحْنَا وَعِنَاءُ تَسْمَحُ البِخْلَاءِ	٦
لَيْتَ أَعْطَاهُ وَلَوْ فِي مَنَامٍ وَعَدْتُ بِاسْتِرَاقِهِ لِلْقَاءِ	٧
يَا شَبِيهَ العُصُونِ رَفَقًا بَصَبٌ نَائِحٌ فِي الهَوَى مَعَ الورْقَاءِ	٨
يَذَكُرُ العَهْدَ بالعَقِيقِ وَأَهْلِيهِ فَيَبْكِي بِدَمْعَةٍ حَمْرَاءِ	٩
يَا لَهَا دَمْعَةٌ عَلَى الخَدِّ حَمْرَاءِ بَدَتْ مِنْ سِوَدَاءِ فِي صَفْرَاءِ	١٠
فَكَأَنِّي حَمَلْتُ رَنكَ ابْنِ أَيُّوبَ عَلَى وَجْنَتِي لِفِرْطٍ وَلائِي	١١

(1) He stood, gazing with dark eyes that left me mad with *black (eyes)/melancholia*,

(2) a young gazelle on the temples of whom ants were crawling so that the poets' minds were seized by the raptures of love.

(3) A tyrant, his heart is (hard as) *stone/Ṣakhr* to me, and my weeping for him is like the weeping of al-Khansā'!

(4) They blamed me for my love for him and incited desire, so that the love for him became a banner/accusative marking incitement.

(5) Who can aid me against a fawn that made me seem a well-rope, for so many tears did I weep for him,



(6) a fawn that gazes with small eyes when we ask a favor of him—  
but it is distress to expect favors from misers!

(7) Would that his inclinations promised—and if only in a dream—  
that he could be stolen away for a rendezvous!

(8) O you, who resemble boughs: Have mercy on an ardent lover  
who, in his passion, moans with the dark gray doves,

(9) while he remembers the days of intimacy with al-<sup>ʿ</sup>Aqīq/*the  
cornelian* and its inhabitants, so that he weeps a red tear.

(10) Oh what a tear on the cheek: Red that appeared in consequence  
of black on yellow!

(11) It is as if I would bear the emblem of Ayyūb’s scion on my  
cheek, so great is my devotion!

If we compare these lines with the corresponding lines in *Muntakhab al-Hadiyah*, we see that only four lines survived without change (lines 4, 8, 10, 11), four were replaced by completely different lines (lines 3, 5–7), and three lines were modified in a more moderate way (lines 1, 2, 9). The length of the poem and the sequence of the lines remain unchanged. This is clear evidence of the fact that the new lines were not meant as an addition, as it appears from the printed *Dīwān*, but as replacements for earlier verses.

Line 3 is a substitute for the “singing jewelry” line that had proven resistant to all attempts at improvement. Instead of stressing the beloved’s beauty (to which little space is devoted in this revised version of the *nasīb*), the line complains about the reluctance and harshness of the beloved whose “heart is of stone (*ṣakhr*),” a very common theme of love poetry. As a result, the lover must weep, and the poet compares his weeping to that of the pre-Islamic poetess al-Khansāʾ who, according to tradition, spent many years composing elegies on the death of her beloved brother, whose name was Ṣakhr. Since the brother’s name is clearly not intended by the word *ṣakhr* in the first hemistich, this is a *tawriyah murashshahah*.<sup>21</sup> The new line therefore provides for exactly the same type of *tawriyah* as the line it was meant to replace. Despite the many changes, the number of *tawriyāt* representing

<sup>21</sup>Instead of *wa-bukāʾi lahū bukā al-Khansāʾi*, the Paris MS reads *wa-bukāʾi ʿalayhi ka-al-Khansāʾi*, which should be considered an authentic and plausible alternative reading of the line, since it avoids the contrast between *bukāʾ* and *bukan*, and *bakā ʿalā* is the normal construction of the verb.



four different types remains unchanged. With Ṣakhr and al-Khansā', two historical figures from old Arabic tradition have been introduced. As we have already seen, the confrontation between Arabic tradition and modern style and content is a specific trait of this poem. This tendency is underscored by the introduction of two additional figures of this kind. This helps to explain the transformation of line 1. While I do not think *ana minhā al-majnūnu* is necessarily better than *ʿallamatnī al-junūna*, through the word *majnūn* another figure of old Arabic lore is brought to the awareness of the hearer. In addition, juxtaposed to the word *al-majnūn*, the rhyme word *al-sawdā'* "black" strongly suggests the name of Laylá, the beloved of al-Majnūn, and thus completes the pair. This association was absent from the first version. By means of this transformation, the four *tawriyah* lines give the following sequence of historical allusions: Line 1 reminds the hearer of al-Majnūn, the hero of unrequited love in the *ʿudhrī* tradition, and his beloved Laylá. Line 2 recalls the Quran, and line 3 mentions in a more direct way another old Arabic hero and his sister, a model of sisterly love. The fourth *tawriyah* line, which introduces the "colors of the banner" passage, is line 9. In the original version, this line mentions al-ʿAqīq as a *locus amoenus* in the Arabian Peninsula and thus leads back to the scene of the first three verses. But there are no people in it. But by replacing *fa-yabkī min hawāhū* with *wa-ahlīhi fa-yabkī*, the place becomes populated and the line is in closer harmony with the first three lines. One may note also that in the first part of the *madih* several historical figures are mentioned (al-Ayyūb, Kaʿb, Ismāʿīl). The allusion to figures and stories of the past, which is called *ʿunwān* in *badīʿ* theory, is thus a stylistic device that unites *nasīb* and *madih*. This becomes much more obvious in the second version than in the first, though the new versions of the lines are not necessarily better than the old versions (with the exception of line 3, which is clearly improved in the second version).

Another attempt to thematically unify the poem was to strengthen the notion of avarice and refusal as opposed to generosity and liberality, which form the focus of the *madih*. For this purpose, the beauty of the beloved was no longer signalled by the image of the bough, but by his "small eyes." In a time when the male beloved is often a Turkish soldier, small eyes were considered a mark of beauty. Whereas the ancients used to write love poems on those with wide eyes (*al-ʿuyūn al-nujalā'*) "the modern poets often write love poems on the small eyes (*al-ʿuyūn al-ḍayyiqah*), that is, the eyes of the Turks."<sup>22</sup> But in line 6 of our poem, the small eyes are not so much a mark of beauty, but rather a sign of the beloved's reticence. The only favor that can be hoped for from such a stingy beloved is a theft committed in a dream. This idea of line 7 forms the climax of the middle passage of the revised *nasīb*, which can now be structured in the

<sup>22</sup>Al-Ṣafādī, *Al-Ghayth al-Musajjam fi Sharḥ Lāmiyat al-ʿAjam* (Beirut, 1411/1990), 2:19; see also Bauer, *Liebe*, 285–86.



following way: Lines 1–3: The beloved, who has to be conceived in a “modern” way as a young man, evokes memories of old Arabic and Islamic heritage. This ambiguous experience is expressed in the form of three *tawriyāt* of three different types. The stylistic device of the *tawriyah* is not only the device of ambiguity *par excellence*, but also the *modern* stylistic device *par excellence*. The reader is left with several associations and contradictions after this section. Line 4 brings in the poet’s contemporaries who make him a banner of love parallel to the banner of the Ayyubid prince that has to be introduced in the course of this *nasīb*, as has been explained above. But at first the beloved is portrayed as the antipode of the prince, as the embodiment of avarice, just as the prince will be shown to be the embodiment of generosity. This is accomplished in the revised middle part, which starts with a line featuring the traditional stylistic device of the *jinās* (line 5: *rashan - rishā*). A last part follows, in which the *tawriyah* style and the historic recollections of the first part are taken up again in line 9 and the poet’s sufferings of the middle part in line 10, only to bring about a synthesis in the form of the colors of the *rank* of the Ayyubid prince, who turns out to be the antipode of the beloved.

This last revision was made several decades after al-Malik al-Mu’ayyad’s death in 732/1332 and even after the end of the Ayyubid dynasty of Ḥamāh (742/1341). No Ayyubid prince ever read the poem in this form. Obviously the poet’s revisions were not made for the addressee, but for the general public. The same procedure of revising and polishing his texts can be observed with Ibn Nubātah’s prose texts. In winter 716, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī received a letter from Ibn Nubātah, in which he complained about the cold and snow. The text that al-Qazwīnī received must have been more or less identical with that of the autograph manuscript El Escorial MS árabe 548, fols. 91r–92r. But already a few years later, when Ibn Nubātah compiled his *Sajʿ al-Muṭawwaq* [3], he included a polished version, in which several cola were substituted for others. This new version is also documented in an autograph manuscript.<sup>23</sup> The new text was modified again, and a shortened version was prepared for its inclusion in *Zahr al-Manthūr*.<sup>24</sup> Al-Qazwīnī probably never read one of these revised versions of the letter that had once been addressed to him.

This process of revision demonstrates that Ibn Nubātah’s poems and prose texts were occasional texts in so far as they were induced by certain circumstances, which also became part of their thematic content. As works of art, however, their communicative potential was not limited to the occasion. Their author considered them artistic creations the value of which was not bound to the circumstances of

<sup>23</sup>Ayasofya MS 4045, fols. 29r–30r.

<sup>24</sup>See Chester Beatty MS 5161, fol. 24r–v.



their creation or to the person to whom they were first addressed. Therefore, the process of creation did not end with the occasion or the death of the addressee, but only with the author's decision to consider his work finished.

The effort expended by the poet must be reciprocated by the modern interpreter devoting a comparable amount of care and attention to Ibn Nubātah's text. It is quite clear that the text of the poem discussed above as it is given in the printed version does not allow for an adequate interpretation of the lines. Whereas both the early and the late version of the *nasīb* make perfect sense, each in their own way, the pastiche given in the printed text is marred by senseless repetitions (esp. lines 6 and 7), thematic breaks and inconsistencies, and an unbalanced proportion between *nasīb* and *madīh*. One who reads only this text does not know Ibn Nubātah's poem. It was al-Bashtakī's ambition to collect every line ever written by Ibn Nubātah as completely as possible. He had no critical edition in mind. Ibn Nubātah's method of working, however, is exactly the kind that calls for a critical edition that elucidates the different stages of Ibn Nubātah's creations.

It is true that only a few of Ibn Nubātah's poems were subjected to a comparably fundamental revision as the poem discussed above. An impression of the degree of re-working may be given by a comparison between Ibn Nubātah's poems quoted in Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh's *Masālik al-Abṣār* and their counterparts in the printed *Dīwān*. As will be shown later, Ibn Faḍl Allāh simply copied Ibn Nubātah's *Proto-Dīwān* to compile his section on the poet in his encyclopaedia, without bothering with an introduction and without making any textual changes. This is corroborated by four additional manuscripts of this version of Ibn Nubātah's *Dīwān*. Whenever the number of lines of a poem in Ibn Faḍl Allāh's *Masālik* differs from the number of its lines in the printed *Dīwān*, this is not due to an abridgement carried out by Ibn Faḍl Allāh. Instead, the additional lines were either added by the poet later or they are the result of a blend between lines from different stages of revision, as was the case in the *nasīb* discussed above. In the *Masālik*, Ibn Faḍl Allāh included 37 poems by Ibn Nubātah that comprise more than twenty lines. Of these poems, only 14 contain the same number of lines in the *Dīwān* as they do in the *Masālik*. In one case the *Masālik* version is longer. In all other cases, the *Dīwān* provides more lines than the *Masālik*, i.e., Ibn Nubātah's *Proto-Dīwān*. As a whole, the difference is 204 lines. This means an average difference of 5.6 lines, or of 14.6 lines if we only regard the poems with different lengths. In most cases, the difference is one or two lines (six cases each), but in other cases the difference amounts to 18 (no. 694 in the *Masālik*), 42 (no. 685), 45 (no. 747), and 51 (no. 703) lines, respectively. These figures only capture the different lengths of the poems, but not the numerous variant readings. As we saw above, most variants have to be traced back to the poet himself and are not scribal errors. An example is the introductory line of no. 678, which is completely different in the *Dīwān* (p.





483). Our statistics do not capture, either, the many cases in which poems were trimmed to become two-line epigrams or expanded to become seven-liners to be included in *Al-Sabʿah al-Sayyārah* [31], and many similar cases. To mention only two examples, the congratulatory poem on p. 47 of the *Dīwān (mutaqārib/3bū)* comprises 9 lines. It has 6 lines in the *Proto-Dīwān* and was shortened to 4 in *Al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī* [6]. The two lines of no. 894 in the *Masālik* are the beginning of a poem of 24 lines in the *Proto-Dīwān*, which appears in the printed *Dīwān* with 41 lines (p. 448).

The situation is similar with Ibn Nubātah's prose texts. The *Mufākharah bayna al-Sayf wa-al-Qalam* [10] appears in several sources, but never in an identical form. Further, it was dedicated to two different persons at two different times. As we have seen above, letters were also revised and reworked, even after they had long fulfilled their immediate purpose, and even after the death of their addressee.

The story of Ibn Nubātah's works, therefore, is complicated and requires meticulous reconstruction. But it offers singular insight into the creative process of one of the major literary figures of the eighth/fourteenth century and the intellectual life of the period in general.

## 6. THE *DĪWĀN* IBN NUBĀTAH

We are accustomed to accessing the works of the great poets, beginning with the Abbasid period, through their *dīwāns*. A *dīwān* in this sense is a more or less comprehensive collection of the poetic work of a poet. From the Umayyad poet Dhū al-Rummah onwards, many poets compiled their own *dīwān*. Many a *dīwān* was also arranged by philologists shortly after the death of a poet. The most famous case is that of Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī (d. ca. 335/946), who not only compiled the *dīwān* of Abū Nuwās, but also the *dīwāns* of Abū Tammām, Ibn al-Rūmī, and others. In principle, this practice was still common in the Mamluk period. Poets like Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī still compiled their own *dīwāns*, and a person like al-Bashtakī collected the *dīwān* of his teacher, Ibn Nubātah, whereas Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥijāzī collected that of al-Bashtakī. Nevertheless, to a certain extent, the *dīwān* had lost its former character as the central work of an *adīb*. Many *udabāʿ* such as al-Ṣafadī never had their poems collected in the form of a single *dīwān*. Other *dawāwīn* of this period present only selections of a person's poetry. Such "best ofs" may have been compiled by the poet himself (as in the case of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī) or again by another person (for example, Ibn Ḥijjah's selection of the *dīwān* of Burhān al-Dīn al-Qīrāṭī, entitled *Tahrīr al-Qīrāṭī*). Often poems that were composed for a certain occasion, or poems of a certain form or treating a specific subject, were compiled in the form of a small or medium-size book. Collections of this kind are also often called *dīwāns*. An example of a *dīwān* of this kind is Ibn Nubātah's



*Muntakhab al-Hadiyah* [5], which is often referred to as *Dīwān Ibn Nubātah* or *Al-Dīwān al-Ṣaghīr*. In a period when it was common to produce several smaller books, the compilation of a single, comprehensive *dīwān* was less common than it had been in the Abbasid period. Another factor that contributed to a decrease in importance of the traditional *dīwān* or to a modification of its form was the fact that many, if not most, *udabāʾ* of the Mamluk period gave as much weight to their prose texts as to their poems. Consequently, a *dīwān* of poetry represents only one facet of an *adīb*'s output in this period and is therefore less central than it was before. Alternatively, an *adīb* may compile a *dīwān* consisting of both poetry and prose. It seems as if this development occurred only in the generation after Ibn Nubātah. Ibn Nubātah's *dīwān* is still confined to poetry despite the overwhelming importance of his prose. From *udabāʾ* of the generations after Ibn Nubātah, several *dawāwīn* of the mixed kind have been preserved, for example the *dīwāns* of al-Qīrāṭī, Ibn Makānis, and Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī.

Accordingly, we can say that whereas the *Dīwān al-Mutanabbī* is al-Mutanabbī's life work, and to know the *Dīwān al-Mutanabbī* means to know all of his verse, to know the *Dīwān Ibn Nubātah* gives only a limited view of the literary universe of Ibn Nubātah, which should be accessed first through the works Ibn Nubātah intended for publication. The *Dīwān* contains neither Ibn Nubātah's copious production in prose, nor does it present the poems in their original context, when Ibn Nubātah first published them. Nevertheless, the *Dīwān* remains an indispensable source for our knowledge of Ibn Nubātah's poetic work since it contains many poems from collections otherwise lost (such as *Al-Sab'ah al-Sayyārah* [31]) as well as poems that were probably never part of a separate collection (such as the poems in praise of 'Alā' al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh).

In the printed version at our disposal, the *Dīwān* can fulfill these functions only in a very limited way. The printed *Dīwān* represents one of al-Bashtakī's recensions of Ibn Nubātah's poetry, but it is marred by a number of arbitrary and capricious interventions so that we have to conclude that still no reliable text—much less a critical edition—of the *Dīwān Ibn Nubātah* is available. Several factors contributed to this unsatisfactory situation. First, the poet himself had the habit of constantly revising his own works so that even he could not arrive at definitive versions of his poems. Second, the compiler al-Bashtakī lacked the perseverance and diligence necessary to undertake a task like this. As a result, he did not compile a single, definitive version of the *Dīwān*. And third, the modern editor lacked philological training and did more harm than good by his whimsical approach to the text. Therefore, the printed *Dīwān* is the result of a sum of unfortunate circumstances and a rather entangled history, which we will try to unravel in this section.

The most interesting result of this research is, however, that we are able to reconstruct the pre-Bashtakī history of the *Dīwān*. As will be shown, we are in



possession of two different recensions of Ibn Nubātah's *Dīwān* that were compiled by the poet himself in two different periods of his life. The exploitation of these sources, together with the sources for the other poetic works of Ibn Nubātah, will allow us to reconstruct the history of many of his great poems in a more detailed way than is possible for the works of any other Arabic author. We will also be able to date many of Ibn Nubātah's poetic works quite exactly and to understand them in their specific biographical and historical contexts. This will also enhance our understanding of the history of this period and the personalities of the time.

(1) THE *PROTO-DĪWĀN*

The longest section in al-Ṣafadī's *Alḥān al-Sawāji'* treats his correspondence with Ibn Nubātah. In this chapter, al-Ṣafadī tells us about all the works of Ibn Nubātah he had heard from him or for which he had received Ibn Nubātah's *ijāzah*. But still there was a source that did not fall into one of these categories, since he once mentions two lines Ibn Nubātah had written 'alá juz' *ahdāhu min shi'rihi* "on a fascicle of his poetry that he presented to me."<sup>25</sup> It is obvious that this *juz'* is not one of Ibn Nubātah's works provided with a title and preface and intended for a wider public, but a compilation of poetry that Ibn Nubātah used to hand out to his close friends when he was asked to do so, perhaps in exchange for other texts.

Another friend of Ibn Nubātah was Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh, who eventually brought Ibn Nubātah into the chancellery of Damascus. Ibn Nubātah's texts addressed to Shihāb al-Dīn (a dozen *qaṣīdahs* and a number of epigrams and letters) far outnumber those addressed to al-Ṣafadī. Given the close relationship between Shihāb al-Dīn and Ibn Nubātah and the latter's importance as a poet, it is only natural that Ibn Nubātah was accorded a privileged place in Shihāb al-Dīn's encyclopedia *Masālik al-Abṣār*. Volume 19 of the *Masālik* is dedicated to the younger Egyptian poets, among them Ibn Nubātah.<sup>26</sup> It is interesting that Ibn Nubātah, who lived in Syria for quite a long time, who had no family in Egypt after his father had moved to Damascus, and who was proud of his Syrian ancestors Ibn Nubātah al-Khaṭīb and Ibn Nubātah al-Sa'dī, still appears as an Egyptian. Most of the 24 poets from this volume are granted only a few pages. Two exceptions are Ibn Dāniyāl, given 27 pages in the printed edition, and al-'Azāzī, given 35. The first poet in the volume is Sirāj al-Dīn al-Warrāq (615–95/1218–96), the most popular late Ayyubid/early Mamluk poet of Egypt, who churned out poems in large quantities of uneven quality. Ibn Faḍl Allāh produced only a selection of his *dīwān* that still filled 292 pages.<sup>27</sup> Shihāb al-Dīn's *tarjamah* and *mukhtār*

<sup>25</sup> Al-Ṣafadī, *Alḥān al-Sawāji'*, 2:192.

<sup>26</sup> Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār fi Mamālik al-Amṣār*, vol. 19, *Baqīyat Shu'arā' Miṣr*, ed. Yūnis Aḥmad al-Sāmarrā'ī (Abu Dhabi, 1424/2003).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 15–306.



are so far our most important sources on this man. The counterpart at the end of the volume is the article on Ibn Nubātah that comprises 256 pages.<sup>28</sup> Taken together, the articles on al-Warrāq and Ibn Nubātah fill more than three quarters of the volume and obviously are its *raison d'être*, presenting the beginning of Mamluk Egyptian poetry and its contemporary end (however questionable Ibn Nubātah's Egyptianness may be). But there is one remarkable difference between the entries. Whereas the entry on al-Warrāq starts with the obligatory *tarjamah*, informing the reader about his life and praising his literary achievements, such a *tarjamah* is completely lacking in the case of Ibn Nubātah. The entry simply starts by mentioning his name and introduces the first poem by the formula *wa-qawluhū*. We are not informed about who chose the poems of this entry, either. But nothing suggests that Shihāb al-Dīn was responsible for the selection. Its first part consists of *qaṣīdahs* and epigrams on al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad, followed by numerous epigrams on different subjects, interspersed with a few *qaṣīdahs* such as one on the 'ālim Ibn al-Zamlakānī and Ibn Nubātah's famous elegy on the death of his son. Most conspicuously, we find none of the poems that Ibn Nubātah had dedicated to the author of the encyclopedia. Obviously, the text was not adapted by Ibn Nubātah to be part of the *Masālik al-Abṣār*, and, considering the total absence of a *tarjamah* of Ibn Nubātah, we can only conclude that Shihāb al-Dīn had had no time to polish this entry before his premature death, at which time the *Masālik* was not yet finished. Therefore, it is most probable that the Ibn Nubātah entry in the *Masālik* is not more than, as al-Ṣafadī calls it, a *juz' ahdāhu min shī'rihī*, a collection of his poetry that Ibn Nubātah used to give to his friends.

different manuscripts corroborate this, each of them representing a different line of transmission. They all bear the title *Dīwān Ibn Nubātah* and present a text that is virtually identical with that of the Ibn Nubātah section in *Masālik al-Abṣār*. In the first part, they contain the same poems, each poem comprising the same number of lines and the same version of each verse (usual variants apart). In the second part, most long *qaṣīdahs* that appear in the three manuscripts are missing in the *Masālik*, but the epigrams in between are all present in the same sequence. Whether it was Ibn Nubātah who had not yet included these *qaṣīdahs* in his collection, or if he had left them out purposely in his copy for Shihāb al-Dīn, or if Shihāb al-Dīn omitted them, cannot be ascertained and is of little importance for our purpose. More important is the fact that one of the three manuscripts—the Berlin manuscript—is dated in the year 761, but is not an autograph. Accordingly, it corroborates the existence of a pre-Bashtakī *dīwān* and shows that the *Masālik* version represents a compilation made by Ibn Nubātah himself that was circulated during the poet's lifetime. A comparison between this version of Ibn Nubātah's

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 433–688.



poetry and autograph manuscripts of *Muntakhab al-Hadiyah* and *Saj' al-Muṭawwaq* on one hand, and the Bashtakī recensions on the other, show that differences between the printed *Dīwān* and the text in the *Masālik* are nearly always due to later revisions by Ibn Nubātah himself and a subsequent amalgamation of different versions by al-Bashtakī or even later redactors. This discovery gives a value to the *Masālik* section on Ibn Nubātah that the editor could hardly have foreseen. In fact, the version of the poems presented in this encyclopedia represent the only doubtlessly authentic poetic texts by Ibn Nubātah critically edited so far! Therefore, any scholar who desires to work on the early poetry of Ibn Nubātah, especially his *Mu'ayyadīyāt*, without having recourse to manuscripts, should start with the text in the *Masālik*.

However, the text of this version was not meant by Ibn Nubātah to be a definitive version of his poetry. As we will see, it is not identical with what Ibn Nubātah called his *Dīwān al-Aṣl*, which is of a later date. Therefore, I will call it Ibn Nubātah's *Proto-Dīwān*, because it forms a preliminary stage of what would become the *Dīwān al-Aṣl*. Despite its preliminary character, the *Proto-Dīwān* survived long after al-Bashtakī's compilation had come to dominate the market. There is a sumptuous manuscript from the fifteenth century, in which the text is fully vocalized and the headings written in gold. There is a copy from the seventeenth century, which is carefully produced and must be considered a textual source of relevance despite its late date. The five sources are closely related to each other, but none of them is the immediate copy of one of the others. It seems as if quite a number of manuscripts of the *Proto-Dīwān* must have been in circulation during the poet's lifetime. The following chart summarizes the sources for the *Proto-Dīwān* that are known to me:

Source	Date	Observations
Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh, <i>Masālik al-Abṣār</i> , 19:433–688	before 749/1349 (death of Shihāb al-Dīn)	many <i>qaṣīdahs</i> in the second half missing; no <i>arājiz</i> and <i>muwashshahāt</i>
Berlin MS 7861	12 Rajab 761/29 May 1360	one of the most important Ibn Nubātah manuscripts



Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi MS 1249	acquired by Ḥasan ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥusayn al-Makhzūmī, <sup>29</sup> 845/1441–42	a beautiful and carefully written manuscript; several folios in disorder; a most important source
Istanbul, Ayasofya MS 2292	end of Dhū al-Ḥijjah 854/January 1452	lavishly decorated <i>khizānah</i> manuscript; several additions at the end
Cairo, Dār al-Kutub MS 558 <i>adab</i>	29 Jumādā I 1064/17 April 1654	a fine, carefully produced manuscript

Though the *Proto-Dīwān* does not represent a fixed text, as additional poems at the end of the Berlin manuscript show, the text as it is represented by the five sources mentioned above can be dated with some precision. First, we observe that the *Muʿayyadīyāt* are represented in an even more complete form than in *Muntakhab al-Ḥadīyah*. There is also the famous ode composed after the death of al-Muʿayyad, in which Ibn Nubātah both expressed condolence to the prince al-Afḍal on the death of his father and at the same time congratulated him on his succession to the throne.<sup>30</sup> But most of Ibn Nubātah’s eulogies on al-Afḍal are conspicuously missing. Therefore, the *Proto-Dīwān* must have been composed after 733, but several years before the death of al-Afḍal in 742, because, as we have seen, the prince was no longer interested in poetry during the last years of his reign. Consequently, the *qaṣīdahs* on al-Afḍal, which we find in other recensions of Ibn Nubātah’s *Dīwān*, must have been composed before 740 or even earlier, which means that the *Proto-Dīwān* still must have been compiled some years before them. Further dates are furnished by elegies on ‘ulamā’. Such elegies can be dated quite exactly. None of the elegies in the *Proto-Dīwān* date from the second half of the thirties or later. There are two poems, however, that were sent to ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh, obviously immediately after his departure for Egypt and the beginning of his employment in the chancellery of Cairo.<sup>31</sup> ‘Alā’ al-Dīn came to Cairo in 737 as a deputy for his father and became *kātib al-sirr* in 738. As far as I can tell, this date supplies the latest *terminus post quem*. We can conclude therefore that the *Proto-Dīwān*, as represented by the above-mentioned sources, assumed its final shape in the years 738 or 739, and, in any case, not later than 740.

Having established this date, we have at our disposal a tool to approximately date the many epigrams and *qaṣīdahs* in the *Proto-Dīwān* that do not give any further

<sup>29</sup>See al-Sakhāwī, *Dawʿ*, 3:91.

<sup>30</sup>*Dīwān*, 429; Ibn Ḥijjah, *Khizānat al-Adab*, 2:43–45.

<sup>31</sup>See *Dīwān*, 30–32.



clue about the circumstances of their creation. An example will demonstrate the usefulness of such knowledge.

Among the *qaṣīdahs* of the *Proto-Dīwān* is a comparatively short panegyric, which bears the heading “*Kāmīlyah*” in the printed *Dīwān* (p. 397), but no heading in the manuscripts of the *Proto-Dīwān*. The eulogized person is addressed as *malik* and as *al-kāmil*. It is therefore natural to identify the addressee as the sultan al-Malik al-Kāmil Sha‘bān. This conclusion seems to be corroborated by the fact that Ibn Nubātah composed a two-line epigram on the occasion of al-Kāmil Sha‘bān’s accession to the throne in Rabī‘ II 746/August 1345, making a pun on the words “Rabī‘” and “Sha‘bān.”<sup>32</sup> ‘Umar Mūsā Bāshā took this identification for granted and dedicated a short chapter to the relationship between Ibn Nubātah and al-Kāmil Sha‘bān.<sup>33</sup> However, there was no such relationship besides the epigram, which must not necessarily have been sent to the sultan himself.

The first fact that ought to have aroused suspicion is the brevity of the poem. Why did Ibn Nubātah send a poem to the sultan that was shorter and less ambitious than the poems he usually sent to the prince of Ḥamāh? Further, there are several allusions in the poem that do not readily correspond to the Cairene monarch. The addressee is praised for his great ancestors and for the fact that, thanks to him, the poet finds all that he hoped for from Syria more than fulfilled. Further, the last line lacks an understandable point. It reads: *lā jawra fī dahrin wa-fīhi mumaddaḥun washajāt manābituhū bi-nabti al-‘ādilī*<sup>34</sup> “There can be no tyranny at a time in which we can praise a man whose roots are entangled with the sprouts of the Just.” Ibn Nubātah, the master of lexical ambiguity, was not the poet to choose a word like *al-‘ādilī* in such a prominent position of the poem without intending more than a simple, not very well-fitting meaning. We can be sure that not any just man is meant, but an ancestor who bore the name or title *al-‘Ādil*. But there is no probable candidate in the sultan’s ancestry. And finally, the poem is part of the *Proto-Dīwān* and must therefore have been written before 740, if our theory is right. But al-Kāmil Sha‘bān came to the throne only six years later. Therefore, we have to look for another al-Malik al-Kāmil.

Such a person does indeed exist. He is al-Malik al-Kāmil Nāṣir al-Dīn ibn al-Malik al-Sa‘īd ibn al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Ismā‘īl ibn al-Malik al-‘Ādil ibn Najm al-Dīn

<sup>32</sup>*Dīwān*, 320; al-Ṣafadī found it charming and quotes it in *A‘yān*, 2:523.

<sup>33</sup>‘Umar Mūsā Bāshā, *Ibn Nubātah*, 211–12.

<sup>34</sup>The reading *washaḥat* of *Dīwān*, 398 must be corrected to *washajāt*, as all MSS read. There are a number of further variants; all MSS of the *Proto-Dīwān* suggest that the original reading of the last words of the line is *manāsibuhū bi-bayti al-‘ādilī*—see Berlin MS 7861, fol. 104v (slightly corrupted text); Ayasofya MS 2292, fol. 120v; Cairo, Dār al-Kutub MS 558 *adab*, p. 184. This reading points even more obviously to an ancestor named *al-‘Ādil*.



Ayyūb,<sup>35</sup> an Ayyubid prince, who had served as an *amīr ṭablkhānāh* in Damascus. He was a distant relative of al-Muʿayyad and spent many years in Ḥamāh. His closest friend among the *ʿulamāʾ* was Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Zamlakānī, in his turn an elder friend of Ibn Nubātah. This al-Malik al-Kāmil was born in 653/1255 and died in 727/1327. All these facts fit perfectly with the person addressed in Ibn Nubātah’s poem and its inclusion in the *Proto-Dīwān*. We can now understand the references to the glorious (Ayyubid) ancestors, the poet’s gratitude for helping to make him a home in Syria, and the reference to the “sprout (or: house) of the Just,” the “Just” being al-Malik al-ʿĀdil, the brother of Saladin and al-Kāmil’s great-grandfather. If still another proof for the identity of this Ayyubid prince with the addressee of Ibn Nubātah’s *qaṣīdah* should be needed, one could refer to the manuscripts of the recension *Bashtakī α*, where the prince is mentioned with full name and title.<sup>36</sup>

This example shows how important it is to follow a poem through its different recensions in order to avoid false conclusions. In this case, we can establish a connection between Ibn Nubātah and an elderly Ayyubid scion, who was an old man when Ibn Nubātah met him. Ibn Nubātah’s poem may have been hardly more than a gesture of politeness and respect towards an old relative of his venerated patron, which gives a new starting point for an interpretation of the poem. Further, we learn that Ibn Nubātah, indeed, never directed a *qaṣīdah* to a Mamluk sultan prior to al-Nāṣir Ḥasan.

## (2) THE *DĪWĀN AL-AṢL*

A *Dīwān al-Aṣl* is mentioned as one of the sources of al-Bashtakī in the printed *Dīwān*. But we learn more about it in the longer preface of al-Bashtakī’s recension (*Bashtakī α*, see below). In this version, instead of *wa-jamaʿtuhū min Dīwān al-Aṣl . . .*, we read: . . . *min dīwānihī alladhī sammāhu Dīwān al-Aṣl wa-huwa bi-khaṭṭ yadihī fī mujalladayn . . . mablaghuhū min hādhā al-Dīwān qadar al-thulth* “I collected it from his *Dīwān*, to which he had given the title *Dīwān al-Aṣl*, and which, in his own hand, fills two volumes. It amounts to about one third of the present collection.” As we see from this formulation, *Dīwān al-Aṣl* is a title that was given by Ibn Nubātah himself to a compilation of his poetry. We also learn that it was of considerable size and therefore a “real” *dīwān* and more than an occasional collection. The *Proto-Dīwān* is not divided into two volumes, and none of the four sources makes any reference to the title *Dīwān al-Aṣl*. Further, it had been completed about thirty years before Ibn Nubātah’s death. Too many poems must have been missing, therefore, to make it the main source for al-Bashtakī’s

<sup>35</sup>Al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 4:550–55.

<sup>36</sup>Ayasofya MS 2352, fol. 141v; Cairo, Dār al-Kutub MS *adab Ṭalʿat* 4658, fol. 172v.





compilation.

There is a manuscript, however, that bears the title *Dīwān al-Aṣl*. The writer of the manuscript Oxford MS Marsh 273 informs us on the first page that the volume is “the second part of the poetry of Ibn Nubātah, the one that is called the *Dīwān al-Aṣl*.” The beautiful volume is not the only copy written by the copyist, who must have been a proficient and professional scribe. A manuscript in the Ayasofya was written by the same copyist. The handwriting and the way in which verses are distributed on the page is absolutely identical. The Ayasofya manuscript is nearly complete. Only a few pages at the beginning and in the second part are missing. Consequently, we lack the title page, the preface, the first poem, which certainly was the poem in praise of the Prophet with which the Bashtakī version starts, and a few other poems, among them the poem on al-Mu’ayyad we treated above. The second part, which starts with Ibn Nubātah’s *munāẓarah* on Ka‘b’s *Burdah*,<sup>37</sup> does not bear a heading, but the text is identical with that of the Oxford manuscript. Both manuscripts are undated and the copyist remains anonymous. There can be no doubt that these manuscripts represent a nearly complete text of the *Dīwān al-Aṣl*. Moreover, the style of the writing suggests a date not too long after the death of the poet.

Source	Date	Observations
Ayasofya MS 3891	undated	vol. 1 and 2; beginning missing; right order: fols. 1, 317–35, 2–316, 336–38; omission of 61 poems in vol. 2 (see fol. 292v and MS Marsh 273, fols. 74v–90v)
Oxford MS Marsh 273	undated; same hand	vol. 2 only; fol. 1r, by the copyist’s hand: <i>al-juz’ al-thānī min shī‘r Ibn Nubātah al-Miṣri wa-huwa al-musammá bi-Dīwān al-Aṣl</i> ; lacunae after fols. 8, 28, 102.

It is tempting to see a connection between Ibn Nubātah’s compilation of the *Dīwān al-Aṣl* and the order of Sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan to produce a copy of Ibn Nubātah’s *Dīwān* (probably for his *khizānah*). Ibn Nubātah commemorates this event in one of his miniature *qaṣīdahs* that constitute his late *Al-Sab‘ah al-Sayyārah* [31].<sup>38</sup> The poem, however, is not part of the *Dīwān al-Aṣl*, and neither are the four long odes on Sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan,<sup>39</sup> nor are most of the seven-liners that

<sup>37</sup>See *Dīwān*, 428–29.

<sup>38</sup>*Dīwān*, 519; see also ‘Umar Mūsá Bāshā, *Ibn Nubātah*, 224.

<sup>39</sup>See *Dīwān*, 195, 380, 381, 491.



would become *Al-Sab‘ah al-Sayyārah*. Most of these poems are even lacking in the recension *Bashtakī* α. The *rā‘īyah* on al-Ḥasan, probably Ibn Nubātah’s first Cairene poem, found its way into *Bashtakī* α, but not into the *Dīwān al-Aṣl*. Thus we can conclude that the *Dīwān al-Aṣl* was composed in Damascus before Ibn Nubātah’s departure for Cairo. This means that a great part of the many poems on ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh were not written in Cairo, but sent to him from Damascus just as were the two poems already in the *Proto-Dīwān*. On the other hand, the great number of poems on al-‘Alā’ Ibn Faḍl Allāh shows that the *Dīwān al-Aṣl* cannot have been composed long before Ibn Nubātah’s departure for Cairo in 761/1360. It is a good guess, therefore, that the *Dīwān al-Aṣl* was composed around 760 and contains the greatest part of Ibn Nubātah’s Syrian production.

The *Dīwān al-Aṣl* is obviously an expanded and revised version of the *Proto-Dīwān*, about twice its size. Its structure is a consequent development of the structure of the *Proto-Dīwān*. The *Proto-Dīwān* starts with a poem in praise of the Prophet, followed by the 37 *qaṣīdahs* on al-Malik al-Mu‘ayyad, followed by 27 epigrams on the same patron. After a dirge on al-Mu‘ayyad’s death, there is an absence of any detectable principle of order. *Qaṣīdahs* and epigrams follow without chronological or alphabetical order, and poems directed to a certain addressee are no longer put together. The author never placed more than three *qaṣīdahs* next to each other without interrupting the sequence with some epigrams, and the number of epigrams following each other without an interrupting *qaṣīdah* rarely exceed ten. But any regular pattern is absent.

The revision of the *Proto-Dīwān* in the form of the *Dīwān al-Aṣl* proves that this was done consciously. In the *Dīwān al-Aṣl*, the principle of avoiding any detectable pattern of order is carried even further. Three poems on the Prophet are used to frame the text. There is one at the beginning of the first part, one at the beginning of the second part, and a third at the end of the *qariḍ* poems. These are the only poems that owe their place to the person of their addressee. Most importantly, Ibn Nubātah saw no reason to uphold the special position given to al-Mu‘ayyad in the *Proto-Dīwān* any longer. Consequently he had to dissolve the cluster of *Mu‘ayyadīyāt* at its beginning. This was done by distributing the *Mu‘ayyadīyāt* between the two volumes. Most of them can now be found in the beginnings of the first and of the second volumes. Sometimes epigrams have been put between them. Occasionally, sequences of a few poems that display the same rhyme consonant appear. Since a similar phenomenon is encountered in the revised version of *Al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī* [6], we may conclude that Ibn Nubātah by now used to archive his poems in alphabetical order. He also applied the alphabetical principle to his late collection of the *nasīb*s of his *qaṣīdahs*, *Sūq al-Raqīq* [29], but for his *Dīwān al-Aṣl* he still chose the principle of avoiding monotony by eschewing order. Since al-Ṣafadī advocates a similar idea in his preface to *Al-Ghayth al-Musajjam* with direct



reference to al-Jāhiz,<sup>40</sup> Ibn Nubātah seems to have been following conventions that were current during these years, though I know of no other *Dīwān* ordered (or rather disordered) in a similar way.

After having distributed his *Mu'ayyadīyāt* to different parts of the *Dīwān*, he next added his new poems, i.e., the poems that were created after his *Proto-Dīwān*, in an order similar to that of the *Proto-Dīwān*. Here the high percentage of poems on al-ʿAlāʾ Ibn Faḍl Allāh and on members of the Subkī family is remarkable. As in the *Proto-Dīwān*, *qaṣīdahs* and epigrams alternate freely. The second volume of the *Dīwān al-Aṣl* starts with a poem in praise of the Prophet, followed by several *Mu'ayyadīyāt*, interspersed with epigrams and *qaṣīdahs* of a later production. The greater part of the second volume is occupied by the *Proto-Dīwān*.<sup>41</sup> Besides a few transpositions of larger groups of poems, its text is put here without any remarkable changes. In a few cases, the poet himself fell victim to his conscious construction of disorder, since at least two poems appear twice.

The *Dīwān al-Aṣl* does not represent Ibn Nubātah's last word on his poems. Some of them were revised later, as becomes clear from *Sūq al-Raqīq* [29] and the Bashtakī recensions. Some of the poems already display their later forms, while others are as they were in the *Proto-Dīwān*. Remarkably, many of the *qaṣīdahs* are shorter than they were in the *Proto-Dīwān*, if only by one or two lines. If these abridgements were not made by the copyist (which is rather improbable), they display an increasingly critical attitude by Ibn Nubātah towards his own creations. In revising his *Dīwān*, he began to consider several of his lines dispensable. This approach of Ibn Nubātah towards his own poetry is fundamentally different from al-Bashtakī's method of accumulating as many verses as possible.

### (3) THE BASHTAKĪ RECENSIONS

The Cairene *adīb* Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Bashtakī was born in the Khānqāh Bashtak (hence his *nisbah*) in 748/1347 and died eighty years later (830/1427) in the pool of a bathhouse.<sup>42</sup> He kept company with many famous poets and *udabāʾ* of his time, among them Ibn Abī Ḥajalah, Ibn al-Ṣāʾigh, Ibn Makānis, and al-Qīrāṭī. As soon as Ibn Nubātah came to Cairo, al-Bashtakī joined him and heard his *Dīwān*. Al-Bashtakī earned his livelihood as a copyist, and his ability in this profession was highly praised. He could write both quickly and accurately and used to spend the whole day and part of the night copying books with only a lunch break. When he was tired, he lay down on his side without interrupting his work. On Mondays and Thursdays he used to sell his manuscripts

<sup>40</sup> Al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Ghayth al-Musajjam fī Sharḥ Lāmiyat al-ʿAjām* (Beirut, 1411/1990), 1:11–12.

<sup>41</sup> Ayasofya MS 3891, fols. 162–287.

<sup>42</sup> See Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ al-Ghumr*, 8:132–33; idem, *Dhayl al-Durar*, ed. ʿAdnān Darwish (Cairo, 1412/1992), no. 608; al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍawʾ al-Lāmiʿ*, 6:277–79.



in the market. Later at night he went home to meet other *udabā'* to hear and recite poetry. He was a clever, quick-witted, and sharp-tongued man, but “the extensive copy work had a stupefying effect on his intellect.”<sup>43</sup> He composed a lot of poetry himself, but did not collect it in a *dīwān*.

In the year 773/1371–72, al-Bashtakī could offer a new commodity on the book market, the *dīwān* of his master Ibn Nubātah, who had died five years before. As becomes obvious through a comparison of different manuscripts, al-Bashtakī produced not just one recension of the *Dīwān Ibn Nubātah*, but two. They not only differ in the arrangement of the poems, but also in their preface and in their content. Two manuscripts of the recension which I call *Bashtakī α* start with a preface that is considerably longer than the preface of the other recension. The shorter preface can be found in the printed *Dīwān*. Since it is unlikely that the *Bashtakī α* recension will ever be published separately, it seems appropriate to present the longer preface here based on the Cairo manuscript (Dār al-Kutub MS 4658 *adab Ṭalʿat*):

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 أما بعد حمد الله المنفرد بالجمال \* والصلاة والسلام على سيدنا محمد جامع محاسن الكمال \* وعلى آله وصحبه أفصح  
 صحب وأفصح آل \* وسلم ومجد وكرم \* فيقول العبد الفقير إلى الله تعالى المستغني به عن من سواه محمد ابن ابراهيم  
 ابن محمد البشتكي تجاوز الله تعالى عن خطاه وعمده \* وتداركه برحمة من عنده \* إنني كنت في سنة ٧٧٣ جمعت  
 شعر شيخنا—القاضي الفاضل الإمام الحافظ جمال الدين محمد بن محمد بن محمد بن حسن بن الحسن بن صالح بن  
 علي بن يحيى بن طاهر بن محمد بن الخطيب بن عبد الرحيم بن نباتة ومولده في سنة ٦٨٦ بزقاق القناديل بمصر  
 ووفاته بالبيمارستان المنصوري صبيحة يوم الثلاثاء من صفر سنة ٧٦٨ ودفن بمقبرة الصوفية خارج باب النصر بترية  
 الصوفية رحمه الله تعالى ورضي عنه—من ديوانه الذي سماه ديوان الأصل وهو بخط يده في مجلدين ونسبته المنسوبة  
 سعيد السعداء رضي الله عنه ورحم مبلغه من هذا الديوان قدر الثلث وطرائف الزيادة والمدائح المؤيدية والسوق الرقيق  
 وديوان الخاص بالسبعة السيارة والقطر النباتي وجلاسة القطر وغالبها بخطه وأرجو أن لا يفوتني من شعره إلا النادر  
 أو ما أسقطه هو ولا أدعي الإحاطة فمن صح عنه شيء من شعره فليلحقه بتوفيته ونقلت من مسوداته ومبعضاته كل  
 ما وقفت عليه من شعره مرتباً لكل ذلك على حروف المعجم ثم كتبت نسخة ثانية قدمت فيها القوائد المطولات على  
 السباعيات ثم المثالث على المثاني<sup>44</sup> وكتب الناس من كل منهما عدة من النسخ هي فذلكت ذلك الجمع ومن أذ ما يقرع  
 السمع ولا أدعي الإحاطة بكل ما قال رحمه الله تعالى ولا يعرف قدر هذه النسخة إلا من طالع ما طالع وجمع من  
 كلامه ما جمعت والله تعالى بحسن الخاتمة كفيلاً \* وهو حسبي ونعم الوكيل.

In this foreword, al-Bashtakī tells the whole story of his compiling of the *Dīwān Ibn Nubātah* and his revising his own compilation. Remarkably, this longer foreword is attached to the non-revised version of the compilation, i.e., *Bashtakī α*. We will have to solve the enigma of why al-Bashtakī tells the story of his revision in the preface to the non-revised edition, whereas it cannot be found in

<sup>43</sup>Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā'*, 8:133.

<sup>44</sup>Both MSS (Cairo, Vienna) erroneously: الثالث على الثاني, correct in Tunis MS 8717.



most manuscripts of the revised edition.

In the version presented above, al-Bashtakī mentions the date of his compilation. The short account of Ibn Nubātah's life is part of both versions of the preface. Then al-Bashtakī mentions his sources. We learn that his main source was the *Dīwān al-Aṣl* in an autograph manuscript. The reference to the Khānqāh Saʿīd al-Suʿadā<sup>45</sup> is enigmatic. In all probability, the passage from *nisbatuhū* to *raḥima* has to be deleted here. In the other versions of the preface, Saʿīd al-Suʿadā is given as the place of Ibn Nubātah's burial. According to al-Bashtakī, the size of the *Dīwān al-Aṣl* "is a third of the present *Dīwān*." This is a gross exaggeration. After all, al-Bashtakī earned his living by selling his manuscripts, and since other versions of Ibn Nubātah's *Dīwān* were still being sold, al-Bashtakī obviously expected to increase sales by this sort of advertising. According to my estimation, the *Dīwān al-Aṣl* is not one third, but rather three-quarters of the size of al-Bashtakī's recension. As a sample, I counted the longer poems (more than ten lines) in the section of poems with a rhyme on *lām* or *lām-alif* in the printed *Dīwān*, which represents *Bashtakī* β. In the printed *Dīwān* there are 30 long *lāmīyāt*, 22 of which had already found their way into the *Dīwān al-Aṣl* and 15 of which were already included in the *Proto-Dīwān*.

Al-Bashtakī then enumerates other works of Ibn Nubātah that he used as a source. This enumeration is of great value for our purpose. But al-Bashtakī's knowledge of most of these works did not contribute much to his recension of the *Dīwān*. All *Muʿayyadīyāt* and all (or at least most of) the epigrams of *Al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī* (and probably those of *Julāsat al-Qaṭr*) are already part of the *Dīwān al-Aṣl*. The same is true for *Sūq al-Raqīq*, which, however, displays later versions of many texts. Again, al-Bashtakī's main intention with this passage may have been to show off his intimate knowledge of the work of his master.

Al-Bashtakī then admits that his recension cannot claim to be exhaustive. This is a topos of modesty, but it may also reflect an uneasy feeling of the author, since the phrase is repeated a few lines later. This overtly apologetic tone is absent in the preface of *Bashtakī* β and provides an important hint to the understanding of the story of the recension. Al-Bashtakī closes his introduction with another bit of advertising, saying that nobody who does not share his extensive knowledge of Ibn Nubātah's poetry can properly assess his achievement.

As we see, al-Bashtakī did the following: (1) He rearranged the *Dīwān al-Aṣl* in alphabetical order; (2) he added poems from a few later books (perhaps *Tarāʾif al-Ziyādah* [32] was an important one); and (3) he inserted lines from different versions of a poem into the *Dīwān al-Aṣl* version. All in all, he contributed much less than he claimed in his preface, and not everything he did was to the benefit

<sup>45</sup>See S. Denoix, "Saʿīd al-Suʿadā," *EP*, 8:861.



of the poems.

At first, it may seem rather strange that al-Bashtakī compiled two different versions. As he says, he first compiled an alphabetically arranged version, which he copied again, this time arranging the poems also according to their length: “First the long poems (*al-muṭawwalāt*), then the seven-liners, then the three-liners, and finally the two-liners. People copied numerous manuscripts from both versions.” So far, I have been able to identify three manuscripts that represent the first recension, which I call *Bashtakī* α. They are presented in Table 5.

Source	Date	Observations
Istanbul, Ayasofya MS 2352	3 Rajab 878/24 November 1473	no preface; fol. 208v end of the <i>Dīwān</i> and beginning of a section of additions (the same as in 4658 <i>adab Ṭalʿat</i> ). A very faulty manuscript.
Cairo, Dār al- Kutub MS 4658 <i>adab Ṭalʿat</i>	6 Jumādā I 1233/ 13 March 1818	long preface; fol. 239v end of the <i>Dīwān</i> and beginning of the additions
Vienna MS 483 <sup>46</sup>	10 Muḥarram 1236/18 October 1820	long preface, no section of additions

As far as I can judge, the manuscripts in the following table represent the recension *Bashtakī* β. I have not had the opportunity to examine all of them, and the list is not complete:

<sup>46</sup>See Gustav Flügel, *Die arabischen, persischen und türkischen Handschriften der Kaiserlich-Königlichen Hofbibliothek zu Wien* (Vienna, 1865–67), 1:472–74.



Table 6 <i>Dīwān Ibn Nubātah: Bashtakī β</i>		
Source	Date	Observations
Dublin, Chester Beatty MS 3831	20 Shawwāl 803/3 June 1401	written during al-Bashtakī's lifetime by the <i>adīb</i> and historian Ibn Duqmāq; one of the most important MSS of the β recension; several additions by Ibn Duqmāq; second half only (from <i>fā'</i> onwards)
Berlin MS 7862	19 Ramaḍān 812/25 January 1410	another manuscript from al-Bashtakī's lifetime; unvoweled, sparingly dotted; second half only (from <i>ʿayn</i> onwards)
Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye MS 3802	date unreadable	written by a certain Aḥmad ibn Mubārakshāh al-Ḥanafī
Tunis MS 8717	Ṣafar 1174/ September 1760	lavishly decorated manuscript in Maghribī script, copied from a "very faulty" Bashtakī manuscript
Cairo, Dār al-Kutub MS 1018 <i>adab</i>	Rajab 1291 / Aug.–Nov. 1874	see the following entry
Cairo, Dār al-Kutub MS 2125 <i>adab</i>	11 Shaʿbān 1314/15 January 1897	copied from Dār al-Kutub MS 1018 <i>adab</i> , basis for the printed edition
Maṭbaʿat al- Tamaddun, ʿAbidīn, Cairo	1323/1905	printed under the direction of Muḥammad al-Qalqīlī on the basis of Dār al-Kutub MS 1018 <i>adab</i> ; several additions, a few omissions, deliberate combination of readings that belong to different versions of a poem; many transpositions. The 1905 edition has been reprinted several times and forms the only basis for all studies on the poetry of Ibn Nubātah carried out so far.
further MSS		Cairo, Dār al-Kutub MS 30 <i>Muḥammad ʿAbduh zāy</i> ; MS 923 <i>Shīr Taymūr</i> ; MS 1264 <i>adab</i> ; El Escorial MS 449; Gotha MS 2304; Leiden MS 734; London, Br. Museum MS 1086; Upsala MS 144; see also Brockelmann II, 11, Brockelmann Supplement II, 4.



As far as the arrangement of the poems is concerned, the main difference between the two recensions is not so much the separation between long and short poems, but the arrangement of epigrams according to length. Even in *Bashtakī* α, in general, the long odes precede the short poems, though there are a number of exceptions that were eliminated in *Bashtakī* β. In *Bashtakī* α, there is no further order as far as the epigrams are concerned. In his preface, al-Bashtakī mentions seven-liners because Ibn Nubātah had composed numerous miniature *qaṣīdahs* of seven lines, which he collected in his *Al-Sab‘ah al-Sayyārah* [31]. The bulk of Ibn Nubātah’s epigrams comprise two or three lines, as do most epigrams in this period. This is the reason why al-Bashtakī mentions three- and two-liners, but not four- or five-liners. The term *al-mathālith wa-al-mathānī* (or vice versa) had become a near synonym for “epigram” in this time.<sup>47</sup> Of course, poems of four, five, or six lines also exist, but only in comparatively small quantity. In all manuscripts of *Bashtakī* β, the epigrams are strictly sorted according to the number of lines. Exceptions are due to later additions or to al-Qalqīlī’s re-arrangement in the printed text.

But these are not the only differences. In *Bashtakī* β, the long poems are again arranged in a certain order. Every chapter begins with (a) poems in praise of the Prophet (if there are any), then follows (b) poems on al-Malik al-Mu’ayyad, (c) poems on al-Malik al-Afḍal and other *umarā’* (including the sultan), (d) poems on ‘*ulamā’*, and (e) elegies. There is no such order in *Bashtakī* α. A further modification concerns poems with the rhyme *-lā*. Whereas in *Bashtakī* α they are included in the chapter of poems rhyming in *lām*, in *Bashtakī* β a separate chapter of poems rhyming in *-lā* is inserted between *wāw* and *yā’*. The idea is to define rhyme on the basis of rhyme *letters*, and since the ligature *lām-alif* was often counted as a letter of its own, one could argue that poems ending with the graphic sequence *lām-alif* form a separate category. This idea is incompatible with the Arabic rhyme system, and it is contrary to Ibn Nubātah’s own perception of rhyme. Whenever Ibn Nubātah arranged poems alphabetically according to the rhyme consonant (in *Sūq al-Raqīq* [29] and some of his anthologies [21, 25]), poems rhyming in *-lā* are always grouped with the other *lāmīyāt*.

A closer comparison between *Bashtakī* α and early manuscripts of *Bashtakī* β is necessary to establish the extent to which al-Bashtakī added additional texts to his second version. The *nūniyah* on Sultan Ḥasan,<sup>48</sup> to mention one example, is missing in *Bashtakī* α, whereas it can be found in Ibn Duqmāq’s manuscript of *Bashtakī* β from the year 803. In any case, al-Bashtakī’s achievement as a collector of Ibn Nubātah’s poems is not very impressive, judging from the *Bashtakī* α manuscripts.

<sup>47</sup>Safī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī entitled his collection of epigrams *Dīwān al-Mathālith wa-al-Mathānī fī al-Ma‘ālī wa-al-Ma‘ānī*; see Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS 3341; the edition by Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Ḥimṣī (Damascus, 1419/1998) is insufficient.

<sup>48</sup>See *Dīwān*, 491.





Again, I checked the *qaṣīdahs* with the rhyme *lām*, and found only a single *qaṣīdah*, a poem on al-Afḍal,<sup>49</sup> which is neither in the *Proto-Dīwān* nor in the *Dīwān al-Aṣl*. A poem on al-‘Alā’ ibn Faḍl Allāh, which was included in the *Dīwān al-Aṣl*, can only be found in the additions to the *Dīwān* in the *Bashtakī α* recension. The existence of an appendix of this kind is disturbing anyway. This appendix follows after a full-fledged colophon and is identical in two of the three manuscripts (which are not dependant upon each other), but missing in the third. Therefore, I presume that these additions are the work of al-Bashtakī himself, who must have known the ‘Alā’ al-Dīn poem from the *Dīwān al-Aṣl*. But even considering the appendix, al-Bashtakī’s omissions are considerable. Four odes included in the printed *Dīwān* and in manuscripts of *Bashtakī β* are missing in *Bashtakī α*,<sup>50</sup> among them two panegyric odes to al-Nāṣir Ḥasan. Further, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī copied a *qaṣīdah* in the meter *ṭawīl* from Ibn Nubātah’s autograph.<sup>51</sup> The poem starts with the line:

كَفَى أَلْمَا أَنْ النَّسِيمِ رَسُولُ      أَرُومُ شَفَائِي مِنْهُ وَهُوَ عَلِيلُ

This rather long ode of more than fifty lines is missing in all of al-Bashtakī’s recensions and is not known from any source other than Ibn Ḥajar so far.

As this survey of the rhyme letter *lām* shows, the shortcomings of *Bashtakī α* are only too obvious. Consequently, people who already had a certain expertise on Ibn Nubātah must have started to complain (as Ibn Ḥajar actually did). Al-Bashtakī tried to meet this criticism by revising his original work. Though not everything he changed was a real improvement, he must have considered his new version better. But still the question remains as to why he continued to support his earlier version and provide it with a preface.

The key to the solution of this question is to be found in the fact that the manuscript Ayasofya MS 2352 does not have a preface (besides “this is the *Dīwān* of N.”), though it is the oldest manuscript of this group and the rest of the text is the same as that of the other manuscripts of *Bashtakī α*. It shares not only the colophon with Dār al-Kutub MS 4658 *adab Ṭal‘at*, but also the rather large section of additions, which considerably distorts the original purpose of its composition. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude that the copyist did *not* omit the original preface and substitute for it two short introductory lines, but that there was no longer a preface to the original version of *Bashtakī α*. Indeed, the preface given above is only understandable if it is understood as a later addition by the author

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 551.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 380, 381, 389, 403.

<sup>51</sup>Göttingen, MS arab. 179, fols. 32r–v; see figure 5, top.



after he had completed the revised version of *Bashtakī* β. But why did al-Bashtakī continue to support his earlier recension, when he considered it inferior to his new one?

The only possible answer is that there were still copies of *Bashtakī* α left after he had already compiled *Bashtakī* β. Neither al-Bashtakī nor the brokers and booksellers that used to collaborate with him wanted to be left holding the manuscripts of the earlier version or to hear complaints about having sold an inferior product. Therefore al-Bashtakī had to add a preface in which he explains the differences between the two versions and states that the earlier version is still valid in its own right. This also explains the apologetic character of the text. After all, al-Bashtakī's compilation was first and foremost a commercial enterprise and not made for philological reasons as was Ibn Ḥajar's volume of additions to the *Dīwān*.

The manuscript that was the basis for the Tunis manuscript (Tunis MS 8717) was obviously written after al-Bashtakī had provided the manuscripts of *Bashtakī* α with a preface, since its preface corresponds to the short preface of the other manuscripts of *Bashtakī* β in the first part, but adds the story of the compilation and the concluding apologetic phrases from the longer preface. The story of the prefaces may thus be reconstructed as follows: Al-Bashtakī's first manuscripts of the *Dīwān Ibn Nubātah* had no preface at all. Complaints about the deficiencies of these manuscripts induced al-Bashtakī to produce a new, more complete recension. These manuscripts were introduced by a preface, the "short" preface. A longer, more apologetic preface was then added to the remaining copies of the first recension (*Bashtakī* α) to make them easier to sell. As a final step, parts of the longer preface were added to the old "short" preface in new manuscripts of *Bashtakī* β. At that time, al-Bashtakī must have sold a considerable number of manuscripts of Ibn Nubātah's *Dīwān* in two different recensions and with several versions of the preface. His manuscripts were not always of good quality. The writer of the Tunis manuscript complains about the many mistakes in the *Bashtakī* manuscript from which he had to copy his own manuscript. When we consider the profit al-Bashtakī must have made from selling copies of Ibn Nubātah's *Dīwān* under the pretense of being the greatest authority on his master's poetry, and his rather mediocre achievements in establishing a complete and correct text, we can hardly avoid characterizing al-Bashtakī's relationship to Ibn Nubātah as parasitic. But since a considerable part of the poetry of Ibn Nubātah is only accessible through the filter of al-Bashtakī, it is necessary to study carefully the different versions produced by Ibn Nubātah's business-minded disciple.

For the reconstruction of al-Bashtakī's efforts, the manuscripts of *Bashtakī* α are still important, since they represent a text that carries no signs of later modifications or additions. Therefore, they can be of help in assessing the amount



of al-Bashtakī's interference in the text of Ibn Nubātah. Manuscripts of *Bashtakī* β far outnumber manuscripts of *Bashtakī* α. For obvious reasons, *Bashtakī* β soon gained wider currency than *Bashtakī* α and it formed the basis for the printed text. Since al-Bashtakī's invitation to add further lines and poems by Ibn Nubātah did not go unheard, it is not always easy to determine the exact form of al-Bashtakī's original text. This can only be done by a careful comparison between its manuscripts and the other versions of Ibn Nubātah's poetry.

One of the first to make additions to the *Dīwān* was Šārim al-Dīn Ibn Duqmāq (b. between 740 and 750, d. 809/1496), who is mainly known as a historian today, but who was also a proficient *adīb*.<sup>52</sup> He wrote his manuscript of Ibn Nubātah's *Dīwān* thirty years after al-Bashtakī had compiled it. Al-Bashtakī was still alive then. Several poems in his manuscript, of which only the second part has been preserved, are not in the printed *Dīwān*, and a remark by Ibn Duqmāq shows that he was in possession of autograph drafts (*musawwadāt*) by Ibn Nubātah. He was certainly not the only one who could add to the corpus assembled by al-Bashtakī, and perhaps al-Bashtakī himself added newly discovered poems in different copies of his *Dīwān Ibn Nubātah*. Hence the story of *Bashtakī* β is a rather complicated one, and it cannot be reconstructed in complete detail on the basis of the manuscripts that are at my disposal.

#### (4) IBN ḤAJAR'S ADDITIONS TO THE BASHTAKĪ RECENSION

Whereas Ibn Duqmāq and others inserted their additions in their manuscripts of the recension *Bashtakī* β, others compiled separate volumes with their additions to the *Dīwān*. The most important supplement of this kind was written by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī. A second collection of this kind from the eleventh/seventeenth century was unavailable to me:

Table 7 Supplements to the <i>Dīwān Ibn Nubātah</i>		
Source	Author and date	Observations
<i>Ziyādāt ʿalā al-Dīwān</i> , Göttingen, 8 <sup>o</sup> Cod. MS arab. 179, fols. 21r–62v <sup>53</sup>	Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī	autograph; <i>musawwadah</i>
<i>Ziyādāt Dīwān Ibn Nubātah</i> , Damascus, Dār al-Kutub al-Ḍāhirīyah MS 7681 <i>Shiʿr Majmūʿ</i>	Ramaḍān ibn Mūsā al- ʿUṭayfī, 1046/1636–37	see ʿUmar Mūsā, <i>Ibn Nubātah</i> , 243

<sup>52</sup>See *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7, [no. 1] (2003): 260–62.

<sup>53</sup>See Tilman Seidensticker, *Die Arabischen Handschriften Cod. Ms. arab. 136 bis 180 der*



What motivated the greatest hadith scholar of post-formative Islam to assemble a supplement to the *dīwān* of the greatest post-Mutanabbian Arabic poet? Ibn Ḥajar's relationship to Ibn Nubātah was threefold. First, there was an indirect personal relationship between them; second, Ibn Nubātah was also a hadith transmitter; and third, Ibn Nubātah was Ibn Ḥajar's model in the field of *adab* to such an extent that Ibn Ḥajar even emulated Ibn Nubātah's handwriting.

Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (773–852/1372–1449) was born five years after the death of Ibn Nubātah. But his father, Nūr al-Dīn ʿAlī Ibn Ḥajar (d. Rajab 777/December 1375), a productive poet and trained *faqīh*, was a close acquaintance of Ibn Nubātah during Ibn Nubātah's last years. In those days, Ibn Nubātah lived in a house that Nūr al-Dīn had lent him. For some reason, a quarrel arose between them and Nūr al-Dīn asked for the key to the house back. Ibn Nubātah complained to ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh about “a man of stone (*ḥajar*) in his descent and in his wrath.”<sup>54</sup> The poet al-Qīrāṭī was asked to mediate between them. The story left a trace in a number of poems preserved in Ibn Nubātah's *Dīwān*. Most of them are miniature *qaṣīdahs* of seven lines.<sup>55</sup> Ibn Ḥajar junior ascribes the break-up of their friendship to Ibn Nubātah, who, according to him, used to behave in a whimsical manner in his friendships.<sup>56</sup> Shihāb al-Dīn cannot have heard this story directly from his father, nor can he have heard transmissions of Ibn Nubātah's poems by him, because Nūr al-Dīn died when his son was a boy of only four years. But he may have inherited a number of Ibn Nubātah autographs, which form the basis of his supplement to the *Dīwān*.

Another connection between the hadith scholar Ibn Ḥajar and Ibn Nubātah was the result of Ibn Nubātah's activities as a transmitter of hadith. Ibn Ḥajar had heard some of Ibn Nubātah's transmissions by one of Ibn Nubātah's transmitters. Therefore, Ibn Nubātah appears in Ibn Ḥajar's *Fahrasah*.<sup>57</sup>

A more important bond, however, was Ibn Ḥajar's interest in *adab*. Ibn Ḥajar was a poet of major importance himself and left a *dīwān* in different recensions.<sup>58</sup>

*Niedersächsischen Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen* (Stuttgart, 2005), 154–57.

<sup>54</sup>*Dīwān*, 229.

<sup>55</sup>See *ibid.*, 74, 75, 158, 228–30, 240, 242, 271, 309.

<sup>56</sup>See Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ʿUmr*, 1:174.

<sup>57</sup>Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Muʿjam al-Mufahras aw Tajrīd Asānīd al-Kutub al-Mashhūrah wa-al-Ajzāʾ al-Manthūrah*, ed. Muḥammad Shakkūr al-Mayādīnī (Beirut, 1418/1998), nos. 191 (*Sīrat Ibn Ishāq-Ibn Hishām*), 356 (Abū ʿUbayd, *Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān*), and 1942 (the *Dīwān*); the editor is unable to distinguish between Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Nubātah and his father Shams al-Dīn; most references in the index, p. 541, refer to Shams al-Dīn.

<sup>58</sup>See *Mamlūk Studies Review* 6 (2002): 219–24, and Thomas Bauer, “Ibn Ḥajar and the Arabic Ghazal of the Mamluk Age,” in *Ghazal as World Literature*, vol. 1, *Transformations of a Literary Genre*, ed. Th. Bauer and A. Neuwirth (Beirut, 2005), 35–55.



In his poetry, he proved himself an adherent of Ibn Nubātah's *tawriyah* style. In his youth, Ibn Ḥajar even planned a career as an *adīb* before he turned to hadith. Perhaps the thoroughness with which Ibn Nubātah covered the whole field of *adab* influenced Ibn Ḥajar's decision to specialize in the field of hadith. Here he could do exactly what Ibn Nubātah had done in *adab*. In *adab*, Ibn Nubātah had written exemplary works in nearly all of its branches, and what he left undone was covered by al-Ṣafadī. Remarkably, this is exactly what Ibn Ḥajar did in the field of hadith, covering all of its fields and sub-disciplines with at least one comprehensive and exemplary work. As an *adīb* with this ambition, Ibn Ḥajar could not have escaped the shadow of Ibn Nubātah. As hadith scholar, he could become as epochal a figure as Ibn Nubātah was as an *adīb*.

Ibn Ḥajar was in possession of a number of manuscripts of the works of Ibn Nubātah, among them several autographs, and Ibn Ḥajar knew many *udabā'* who had known Ibn Nubātah. One of them was al-Bashtakī, with whom Ibn Ḥajar had a close relationship for twenty years from 791 onwards.<sup>59</sup> Al-Bashtakī heard hadith from Ibn Ḥajar, exchanged *mutārahāt* with him, and dedicated to him an entry in his biographical dictionary of the poets of the age.<sup>60</sup> They had a common interest in the poetry of Ibn Nubātah. Whereas al-Bashtakī had the advantage of having known Ibn Nubātah himself, Ibn Ḥajar was a more diligent worker who felt that al-Bashtakī could have achieved more than he did. The introductory words of his supplementary volume are not without reproach. Though he does not mention the name al-Bashtakī, everybody knows to whom the following words allude:

This is what [I could assemble] from what escaped the collector of the poetry of the leading figure among the literati of the modern age (*shaykh al-udabā' al-muta'akhhirīn*), Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Nubātah. It includes texts that I found written by himself or by people who transmitted them from his manuscripts or who heard it from him. . . . [it is] astonishing how much it is, though he who had collected [Ibn Nubātah's poetry] before claimed comprehensiveness.<sup>61</sup>

This is not exactly true, since al-Bashtakī did not claim comprehensiveness but apologized for not being able to reach it. Nevertheless, Ibn Ḥajar's discontent with al-Bashtakī is certainly justified. In a similar vein, al-Sakhāwī states that al-Bashtakī "collected the poetry of his master Ibn Nubātah in two volumes. Though he had worked hard to obtain it, a portion of it escaped him in such a quantity that our master [Ibn Ḥajar] compiled a whole supplementary volume, which I have

<sup>59</sup>Ibn Ḥajar, *Dhayl al-Durar*, no. 608.

<sup>60</sup>Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Jawāhir wa-al-Durar*, 1:287–88, 486–92, 2:793.

<sup>61</sup>Arabic text: see Seidensticker, *Handschriften*, 154–55 = fol. 21r. I follow Seidensticker's reading; the text is extremely difficult to read.



also seen.”<sup>62</sup> Al-Sakhāwī also mentions this volume in his list of Ibn Ḥajar’s works, and he adds that he had seen both the *musawwadah* as well as the *mubayyadah* of the book.<sup>63</sup>

It is an important event for the study of both Ibn Ḥajar and Ibn Nubātah that this volume has now come to light. A copy of it has been found in Göttingen and is described in the catalogue.<sup>64</sup> The copy is a *musawwadah*, written by Ibn Ḥajar himself, perhaps the same copy that al-Sakhāwī refers to. It is very difficult to read and it will be impossible to edit the poems without another textual basis, but it gives a good impression of what is lacking in al-Bashtakī’s recension. In whatever way, some of its poems and lines have found their way into manuscripts and the printed texts of the Bashtakī recensions. For other poems, among them the only *bullayq* Ibn Nubātah ever composed, Ibn Ḥajar’s supplement is the only source. Contrary to the expectation raised by al-Sakhāwī, the volume is much smaller than a volume of the *Dīwān*, but is long enough to demonstrate again the insufficiency of the Bashtakī recensions.

#### (5) THE PRINTED TEXT

A printed book is more accessible than a manuscript copy but no longer in a dynamic state. Very few printed books are revised and adapted after their author’s death. The reader is now restricted to his role as receiver, whereas in a manuscript culture he can engage the text by adding marginal jottings, and the copyist can intervene by improving the text, by introducing additional materials available to him (among them marginal jottings by other readers), or by adding comments. Thus he can, however marginally, intrude on the role of the author. In the case of Ibn Nubātah, this was the usual practice for centuries. Long after the poet’s death, the *Dīwān Ibn Nubātah* existed in many different versions and was still subjected to continuous modifications. In a print culture, the diversity of voices representing the voice of the poet has to be kept alive by the philologist who produces a critical edition that allows reconstruction of the range of diversity, which is inevitably lost as a consequence of his activity. Philological work of this kind, however, is necessary.

This was exactly what happened in the case of Ibn Nubātah. A late and unimportant manuscript representing an incomplete recension of Ibn Nubātah’s *Dīwān* was subjected to arbitrary abridgements and senseless transpositions before it was converted into a sparsely voweled, unsightly printed book. But as a printed text, it enjoyed an authority that it would never have enjoyed as a manuscript

<sup>62</sup>Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʿ*, 6:277.

<sup>63</sup>Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Jawāhir wa-al-Durar*, 2:695 (no. 268).

<sup>64</sup>See Seidensticker, *Handschriften*, 154-57, and figure 5, *top*.



(though some surviving manuscripts are superior to it). For more than a century, nobody ever doubted that the book that was printed in 1323/1905 in the Maṭbaʿat al-Tamaddun in Cairo, and has been reprinted several times since, contained an authentic text of Ibn Nubātah's poetry.

This was not the first book of Ibn Nubātah's that was printed. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, Ibn Nubātah's *Muntakhab al-Hadiyah* [5] was printed in Cairo under the title *Diwān Ibn Nubātah*. This text was reprinted by several printing houses in Beirut. Obviously, Ibn Nubātah still guaranteed commercial success. It was only natural that after the success of Ibn Nubātah's "small *Diwān*," as *Muntakhab al-Hadiyah* is called already in some manuscripts, the "large *Diwān*" would find a publisher. This was the case in 1323/1905, when the book was printed "in a short time"<sup>65</sup> in the Maṭbaʿat al-Tamaddun. The editor was a certain Muḥammad al-Qalqīlī.

The manuscript he used as the basis for his edition can be identified. It is the Dār al-Kutub MS 2125 *adab*, a manuscript completed only a few years before the printed text. This manuscript was in turn a copy of a manuscript written in 1291/1874. The manuscript 2125 *adab* carries numerous editorial remarks so that we are able to reconstruct in detail the process by which the *Diwān* was converted to print. We can see that al-Qalqīlī compared parts of the text to another source. This was perhaps a printed text of *Muntakhab al-Hadiyah*. Often, the editor substituted the readings of *Muntakhab al-Hadiyah* for that of *Bashtakī* β. In this way, elements of a very early version of a poem have been inserted in a very late version. The main shortcoming of the *Bashtakī* recensions is that they present an amalgamation of different versions of a poem. This problem is further aggravated by al-Qalqīlī's arbitrary interference with the text.

When al-Qalqīlī started his work, he first planned to shorten the *Diwān*. In chapter *alif*, a number of poems, among them several seven-liners, are omitted. From chapter *bā'* onwards, the editor changed his method. Instead of leaving out poems, he assembled them in a separate subsection under the heading *wa-min muqatta'ātihi*. In this subsection, poems do not have a heading but are separated by a line. All epigrams, which do not bear a more detailed heading in the manuscript, are relegated to this subsection, along with several longer poems that did not appeal to al-Qalqīlī. Among them is a *qaṣīdah* of 33 lines addressed to Quṭb al-Dīn Mūsā Ibn Shaykh al-Salāmiyah (d. 732/1332),<sup>66</sup> which now appears under the heading "epigrams." The heading is al-Qalqīlī's, and of course, Ibn Nubātah had never considered a poem like this an epigram. An original heading like *qāla fī al-sab'ah al-sayyārah* means that the following seven-liners are taken

<sup>65</sup>*Diwān*, iii.

<sup>66</sup>*Diwān*, 330–31; on Quṭb al-Dīn see *A'yān*, 5:469–72.



from the book of this name. The editor left the first poem in the first section, because it bears a heading, though the heading belongs not only to this poem, but also to the following seven-liners. These seven-liners, however, were transferred to the second subsection, where they do not have any heading now. The creation of this subsection in every chapter misleads the reader and violates al-Bashtakī's principle of arrangement.

Though al-Qalqīlī gave up his plan to shorten the *Dīwān*, even in latter chapters poems, mainly epigrams, have been removed. More often, single lines were deleted. Towards the end, omissions increase. In chapter *wāw*, a long ode on al-Qazwīnī (42 lines) and three shorter poems are missing. The concluding section containing Ibn Nubātah's *muwashshahāt* suffered the heaviest losses. Of fifteen *muwashshahāt* and a *zajal* present in the manuscript used by al-Qalqīlī, only four *muwashshahāt* found their way into the printed *Dīwān*.<sup>67</sup>

It is obvious that al-Qalqīlī's printed text is not a reliable source for the poetry of Ibn Nubātah. Nevertheless, it will still be used for a long time, since a new edition is unlikely. Therefore, it is necessary for every user to know the shortcomings of the printed text and to be aware of the changes made by its editor. Despite all the deficiencies of the printed text, I do not consider it a most urgent task to re-edit the Bashtakī version of Ibn Nubātah's poetry. Rather, the *Dīwān al-Aṣl* should be made the basis for a new edition, to which should be added the poems not in the *Dīwān al-Aṣl* in the form of a supplement, and the different texts of each poem when different versions exist should be carefully presented. But even more important is an edition of all those works which Ibn Nubātah himself considered worthy of publication. In this way, a great portion of the poems of the *Dīwān* will appear in their authentic context. These works will be the subject of the next part of this survey.

*To be continued*

<sup>67</sup>I know of eighteen *muwashshahāt* composed by Ibn Nubātah. Fourteen of them are edited in Aḥmad Muḥammad 'Aṭā, *Dīwān al-Muwashshahāt al-Mamlūkiyah fī Miṣr wa-al-Shām (al-Dawlah al-Ūlá* (Cairo, 1419/1999).





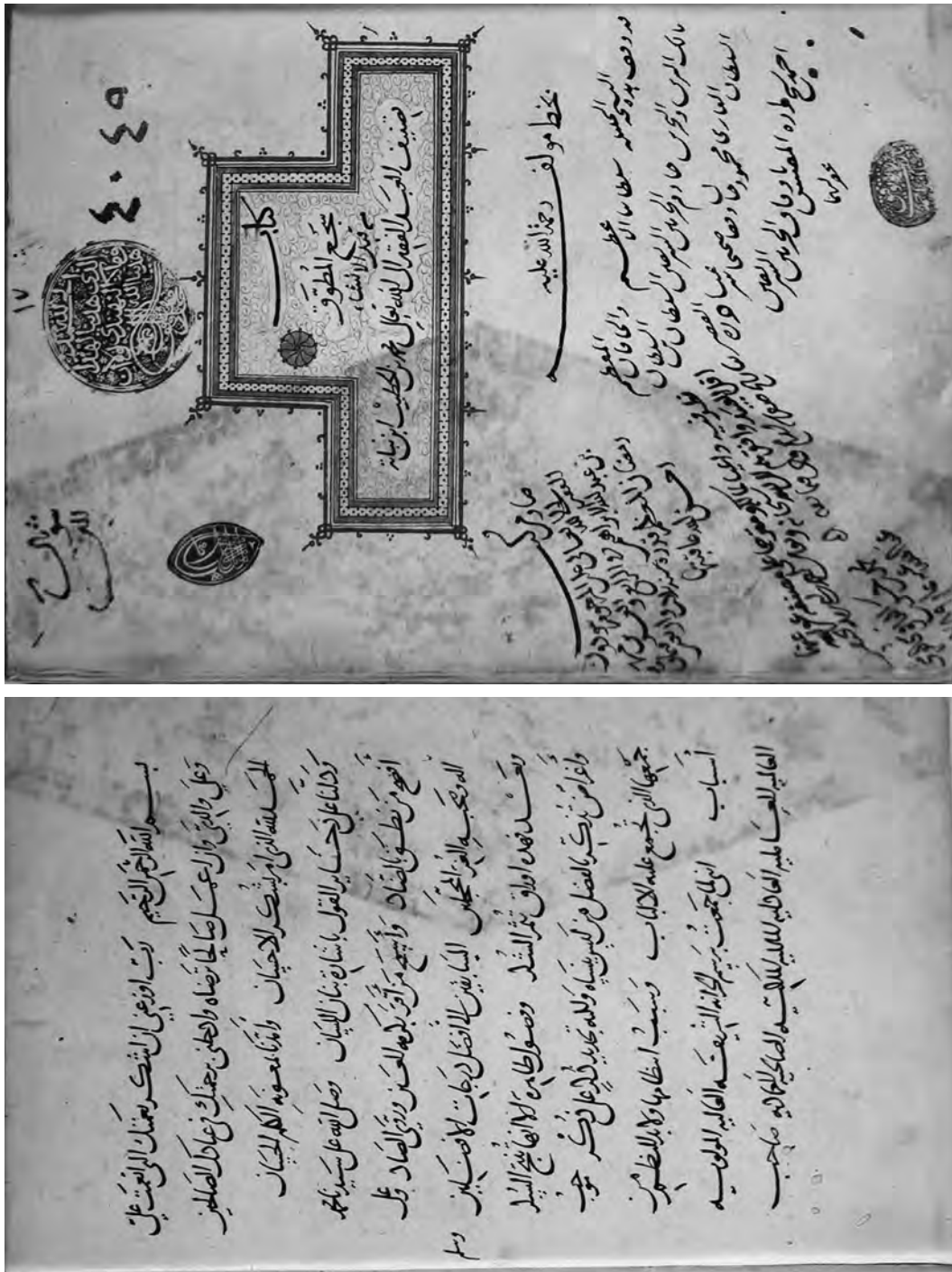


Fig. 1. Title and beginning of *Saj' al-Muṭawwaq* in the autograph manuscript Ayasofya MS 4045, fol. 1r-v



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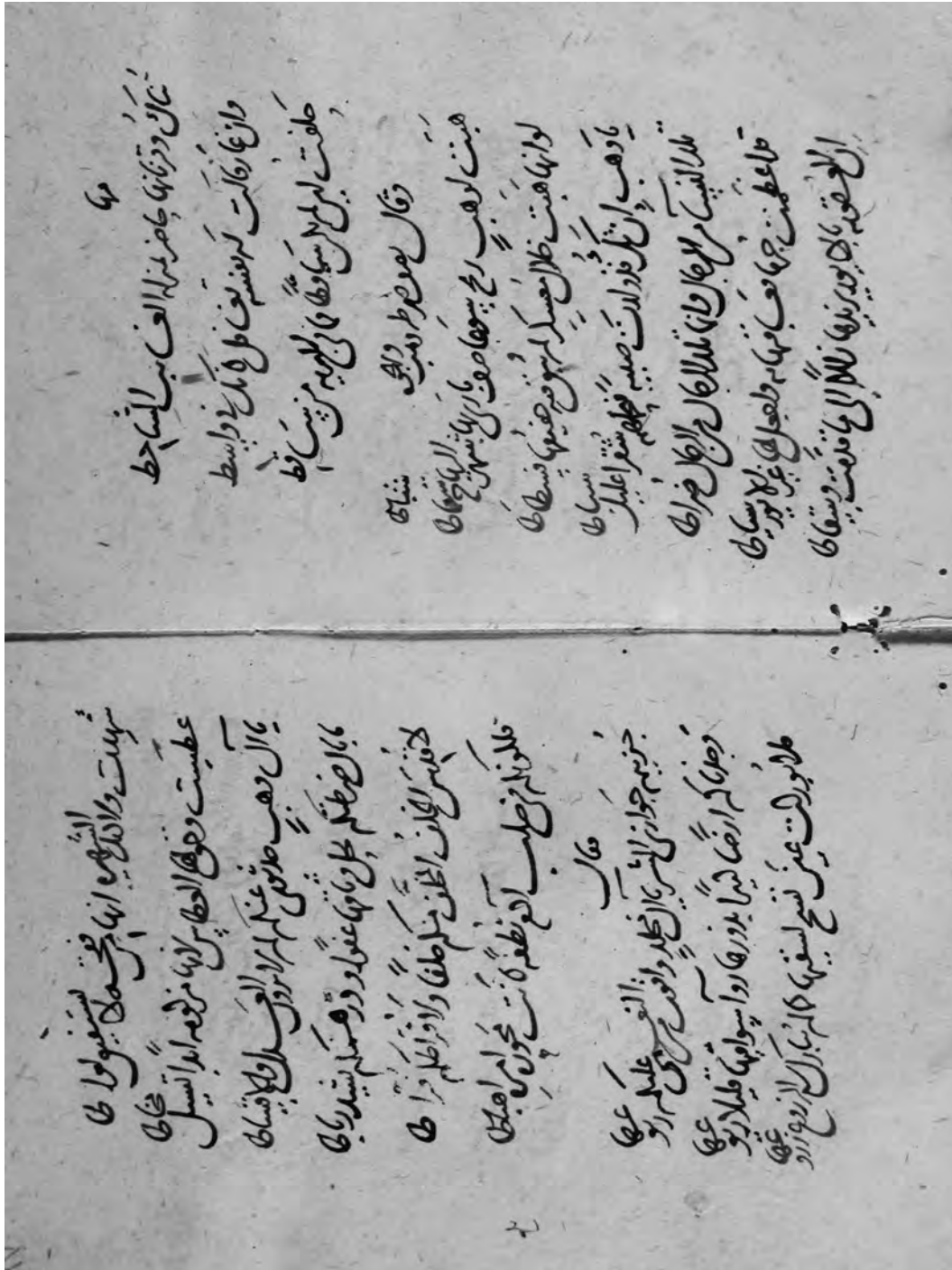


Fig. 2. Two pages from *Mukhtār Shi'r Ibn al-Rūmī*, Ayasofya MS 4261, fols. 96r–97v



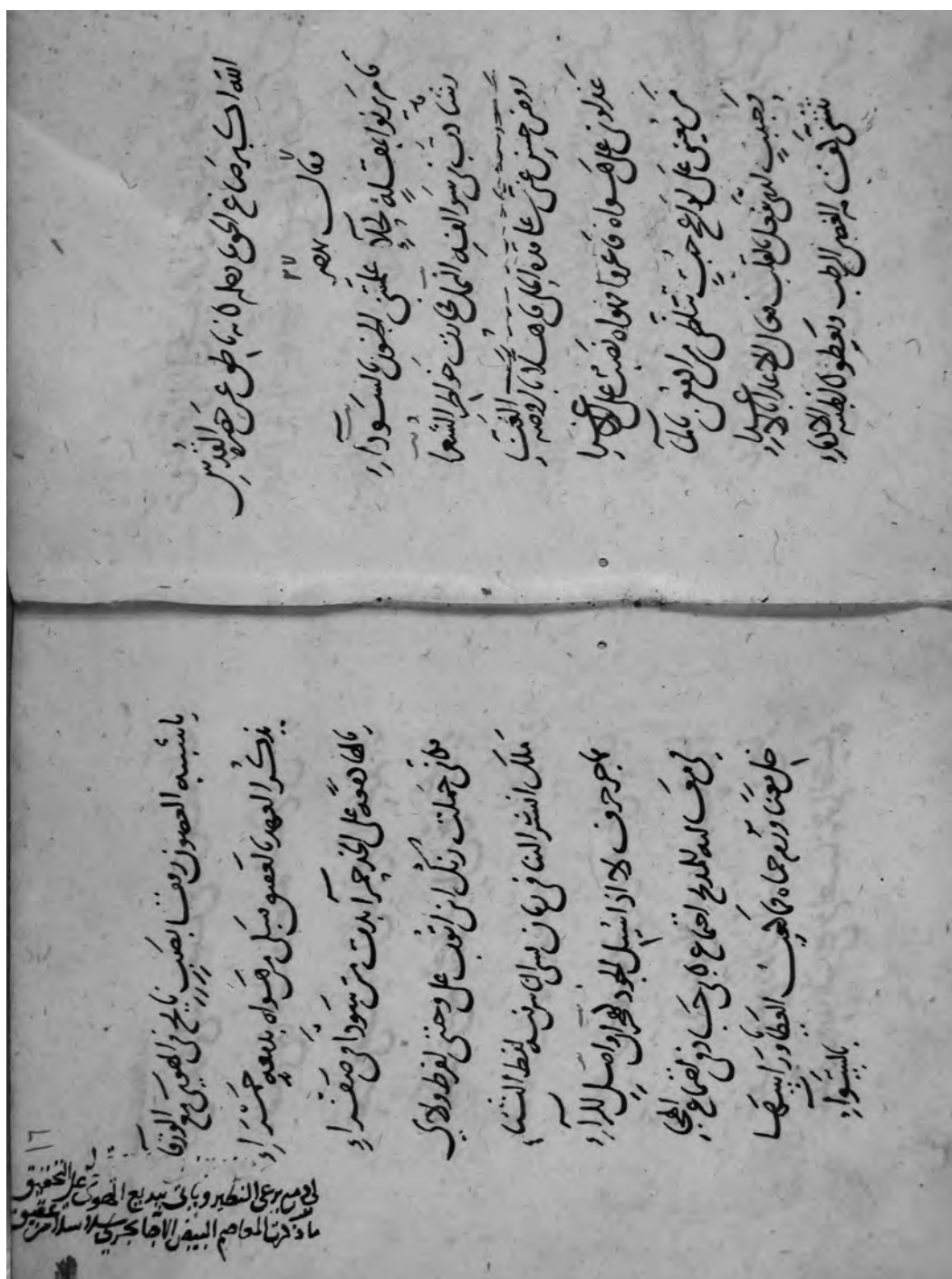


Fig. 3. Beginning of the *Mu'ayyadiyah Khaṭīf/-ā'ī* in the autograph manuscript of *Muntakhab al-Hadiyah*, Köprülü MS 1397, fols. 15r-16v



٢  
تجمع الاضراس السود والكسوف الفصح والمردود  
قامه الالف  
قام برنومفله حج ان مبر المحنوك السودا  
رشادتي في سوالفها فها من خواطر المشغرا  
جاير الحكر طيبه في صخره في لوعده الحنيسا  
عدلون عسيل هواه فاعزوا فهاولة نصد على الاعرا  
من معني على رشادتي في ما دوتني عنده مثل النسا  
ضيق العيس ازنه وابسم حنا وعما تسير الذكرا

Fig. 4. The first lines of the same poem in the autograph manuscript of *Sūq al-Raqīq*, El Escorial MS árabe 449, fol. 2v



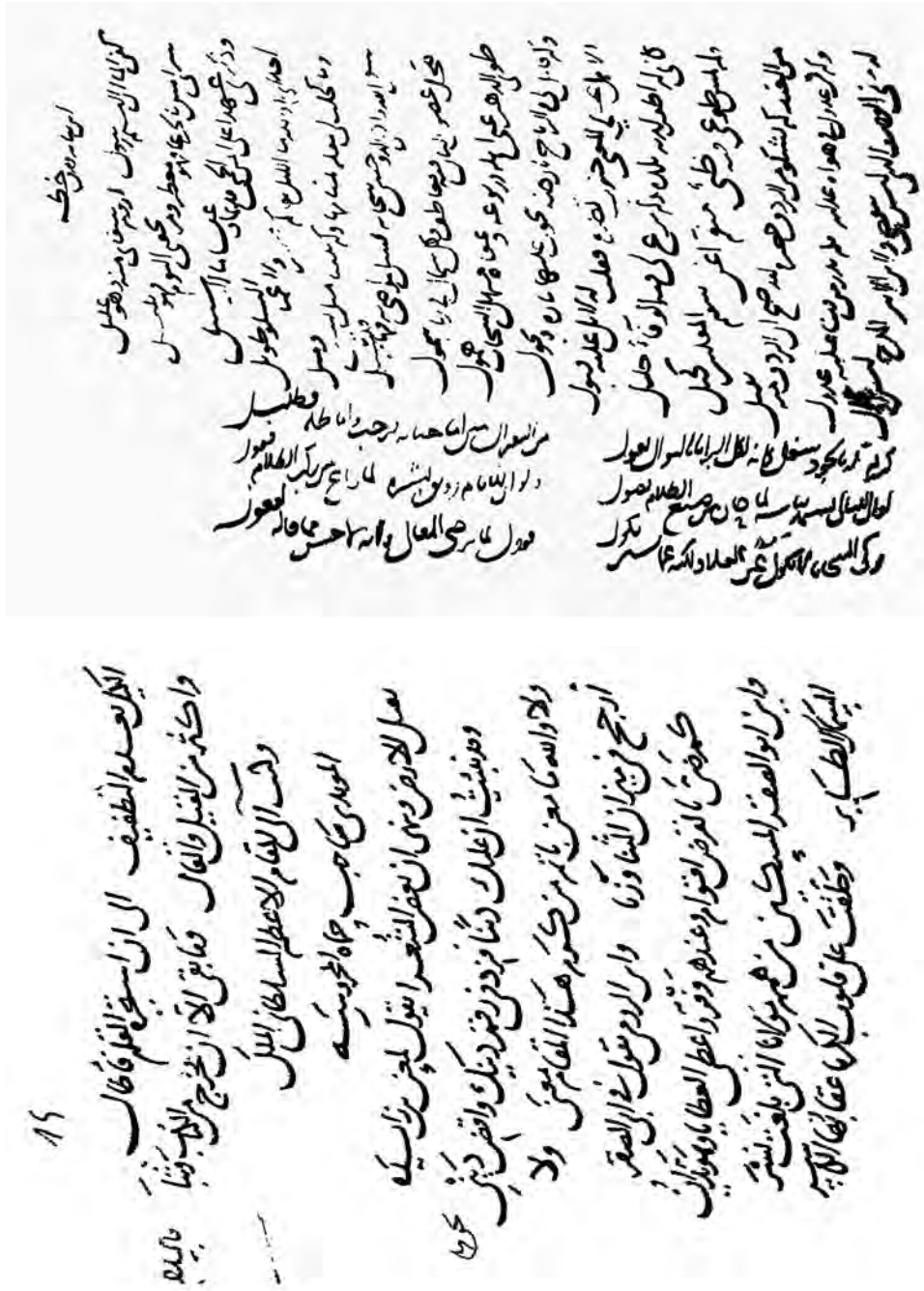


Fig. 5. *Bottom*, beginning of a letter to al-Mu'ayyad, El Escorial MS árabe 548, fol. 15v; *top*, a *lāmiyah* missing in the *Dīwān*, from Ibn Ḥajar's autograph additions to the *Dīwān*, Göttingen MS 8<sup>o</sup> Cod. MS arab. 179, fol. 32v

