

O ye Gentlemen Arabic Studies on Science and Literary Culture

In Honour of Remke Kruk

Edited by

Arnoud Vrolijk and Jan P. Hogendijk



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THE DAWĀDĀR'S HUNTING PARTY

A MAMLUK MUZDAWIJA ṬARDIYYA, PROBABLY BY SHIHĀB
AL-DĪN IBN FADL ALLĀH

Thomas Bauer

Mamluk hunting literature

Since the dedicatee of the present volume has contributed so essentially to our knowledge about the *birth* and the *generation* of animals,¹ I feel compelled to apologize for presenting a text that is so fundamentally preoccupied with the *killing* of animals: 'They emptied the sky from birds, and this provided for the utmost joy!' However, since Remke Kruk combines an interest in animals with an interest in the Mamluk period, I hope that despite the blood that will be shed in the following pages, this contribution on hunting poetry in the Mamluk period will find favour in her eyes.

The main purpose of the following pages is to bring Mamluk hunting literature to the attention of historians of Arabic literature. So far, not even its mere existence has ever been recorded in the modern studies of the *ṭardiyya*. No article or monograph goes so far as to even mention what happened to this genre in the time after the fourth/tenth century.² But Kushājim and Abū Firās were not the last hunting poets in Arabic literature. Rather, after the Umayyad and early Abbasid period (from Shamardal to Abū Nuwās) and the middle Abbasid period (from Ibn al-Mu'tazz to the poets of the entourage of Sayf al-Dawla), the Bahri Mamluk period is a third heyday of Arabic hunting literature. During the seventh and eighth/thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a considerable number of hunting texts, both in prose and poetry, were composed that are in no way inferior or less interesting than those of the earlier

¹ To mention only the articles *Takwīn*, *Tawallud* and *Waham* in vol. X and XI of *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New ed.) and the literature quoted there.

² See T. Seidensticker, 'Ṭardiyya,' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New ed.), X, pp. 223–224 and J.E. Montgomery, 'ṭardiyya (hunting poem),' in J.S. Meisami & P. Starkey (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature* (London [etc.], 1998), II, pp. 759–760, and the titles mentioned in the bibliographies of these articles.

periods, whereas the two preceding centuries, more or less coinciding with the period of the so-called 'Sunni revival,' constitute a crisis within hunting poetry, if not of Arabic poetry in general.

But this situation changed fundamentally after the Ayyubids and Mamluks had established a stable rule over Syria and Egypt, where the civilian elite had thus appropriated the literary culture of the Abbasid *kuttāb* and where countless madrasas provided for a mass education that made it possible for popular literature to thrive with a hitherto unknown intensity. This development also brought about a new (last?) blossoming of Arabic hunting literature, which may have been initiated by the Ayyubid dynasty itself,³ but reached its apogee a few decades later. During the short period examined here, the end of the seventh/thirteenth and the first half of the eighth/fourteenth century, a considerable number of texts on hunting were produced, covering all forms of the *ṭardiyya* known so far and even forms hardly used for this purpose before. Especially remarkable is the great number of prose text in the form of a *risāla* 'epistle,' either called *risāla ṭardiyya* or *ṣaydiyya* 'hunting epistle' or, with a more specific subject, *risāla bunduqiyya* 'epistle on hunting (birds) with the crossbow.' The hunting *risāla* reached the height of its popularity in the Mamluk period, but it had been created much earlier. The earliest hunting epistle known so far is by 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib (d. after 132/750).⁴ Later, epistles of this kind were written by Ibrāhīm b. Hilāl al-Ṣābi' (313–384/925–994)⁵ and Hilāl b. al-Muḥassin al-Ṣābi' (359–448/969–1056).⁶ Another author of a *risāla bunduqiyya* from Ayyubid times is Diyā' al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr (558–637/1163–1239).⁷ Further texts are mentioned by Hämeen-Anttila.⁸

The following literary hunting texts date from the second half of the seventh and the first half of the eighth century:

³ A chapter of *ṭardiyyāt* comprising two qasidas can be found among the poetry of the Ayyubid Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Dāwūd (603–657/1205–1259), see 'Abd al-Ḥasanayn al-Khaḍir, *al-Shu'arā' al-ayyūbiyyīn*, II: *al-Fawā'id al-jaliyya fī 'l-farā'id al-nāṣiriyya* (Damascus, 1996), pp. 313–315.

⁴ See Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, *Maqama. A history of a genre* (Wiesbaden, 2002), pp. 213–215.

⁵ Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umārī, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*, XII, ed. Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ (Abū Ḍabī, 2002), pp. 11–15.

⁶ Hilāl b. al-Muḥassin aṣ-Ṣābi', *Kitāb Ghurar al-balāgha*, ed. Muḥammad al-Dībājī. 2nd ed. (Beirut, 2000), pp. 390–398.

⁷ Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik*, XII, pp. 303–305, see also al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (Cairo, 1923–1998), X, p. 327.

⁸ Hämeen-Anttila, *Maqama*, pp. 214–215.

1. Sirāj al-Dīn al-Warrāq (615–695/1218–1296): A *muzdawija ṭardiyya*.⁹
2. Muḥyī 'l-Dīn Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir (620–692/1223–1292): A *risāla ṣaydiyya*.¹⁰
3. Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-'Attār (626–702/1228 or 1229–1303): A *risāla bunduqiyya*.¹¹
4. Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd (644–725/1246–1325): A long and famous *risāla bunduqiyya*¹² and a *risāla ṭardiyya*.¹³
5. Shihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn al-Šā'igh (645–ca. 722/1247–ca. 1322): A *risāla bunduqiyya* and a *mukhammasa* on the same subject, addressed to Šalāḥ al-Dīn b. Muḥyī 'l-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh.¹⁴
6. Šafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī (677–750/1275–1349 or 1350): A *mukhammasa* in praise of the Artuqid Sultan al-Malik al-Manṣūr Najm al-Dīn Ghāzī, describing a hunt with the *bunduq*;¹⁵ another *mukhammasa* (without a panegyric section) on the same subject,¹⁶ and a series of poems in the form of the *qasida*, the *urjūza*, and the epigram, which form a chapter of his *Dīwān*.¹⁷
7. Ibn Nubāta (686–768/1287–1366): The longest and most ambitious *muzdawija ṭardiyya* of Arabic literature, entitled *Farā'id al-Sulūk fī Maṣā'id al-Mulūk*.¹⁸
8. Tāj al-Dīn al-Bārinbārī (696–756/1296–1355): A *risāla ṭardiyya*.¹⁹

⁹ Text in Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik*, XIX, ed. Yūnus Aḥmad al-Sāmarra'i (Abū Zabī, 1424/2002), pp. 15–306; the *ṭardiyya* is no. 454 (p. 253–258).

¹⁰ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, VIII, pp. 105–106. On Muḥyī 'l-Dīn see J. Pedersen, 'Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir,' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New ed.), III, pp. 679–680.

¹¹ Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik*, XII, pp. 381–385. On Ibn al-'Attār see Khalīl b. Aybak al-Šafadī, *al-Wāfi bi 'l-wafayāt*, ed. Helmut Ritter [et al.], *Bibliotheca islamica*; 6 (Wiesbaden [etc.], 1962–), VIII, pp. 167–172.

¹² Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Salmān b. Fahd al-Ḥalabī, *Husn al-tawassul ilā šinā'at al-tarassul*, ed. Akram 'Uthmān Yūsuf (Baghdad, 1980), pp. 353–367 = al-Qalqashandī, *Šubḥ al-a'shā fī kitābat al-inshā*, (Cairo, 1913–18), XIV, pp. 288–299 = Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik*, XII, pp. 414–429 (including a letter about the text). On the author see also al-Šafadī, *A'yān al-'aṣr wa-a'wān al-naṣr*, ed. 'Alī Abū Zayd [et al.] (Damascus, 1418–9/1998), V, pp. 372–399.

¹³ *Husn al-tawassul*, pp. 347–349 = Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik*, XII, pp. 402–404.

¹⁴ Al-Qalqashandī, *Šubḥ*, XIV, pp. 282–288.

¹⁵ *Dīwān Šafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥawar, ('Ammān, 2000), I, pp. 195–202.

¹⁶ *Dīwān Šafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī*, I, pp. 407–414.

¹⁷ *Dīwān Šafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī*, I, pp. 407–440.

¹⁸ Abbreviated version in *Dīwān Ibn Nubāta al-Miṣrī*, ed. Muḥammad al-Qalqūlī (Cairo, 1905), pp. 585–592 (169 lines) and ed. As'ad Ṭalas in *Majallat al-Majma' al-'Ilmī al-'Irāqī* 2 (1951), pp. 302–310 (177 lines). The probably complete version of 193 lines can be found in the manuscripts Berlin MS 8400, f. 47b–51a (the same MS that contains the *muzdawija* edited here), and in Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥijāzī, *Rawḍ al-ādāb*, Vienna, MS 400, f. 59b–62b.

¹⁹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Šubḥ*, XIV, pp. 165–173. On the author see al-Šafadī, *A'yān*, V, pp. 170–180. A selection of Mamluk and older texts on hunting is given in al-Jazūlī, *Maṭālī' al-budūr fī manāzil al-surūr* (Cairo, 1419/2000), pp. 527–555.

9. The text to be presented here can be attributed to Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Faḍl Allāh (700–749/1301–1349) with a sufficient amount of probability. It is an *urjūza muzdawija* in the tradition of Sirāj al-Dīn al-Warrāq.

The dawādār Nāṣir al-Dīn, the governor Tankiz, and the Syrian hunt

A hunting poem or a hunting *risāla* could not be created until several conditions were fulfilled. (1) A rich and mighty personality arranges sumptuous hunting expeditions that are worthy of immortalization in the form of a literary work. (2) This person or another equally important person from his entourage, who also takes part in these excursions, has a good command of Arabic and is interested in Arabic literature. (3) A writer of poems and/or prose literature is interested in dedicating a literary portrayal of the hunt to this person, and even more cogently if the writer is allowed to take part in the hunt himself. (4) There is a broader general public that is interested in literary texts about hunting. Otherwise the genre of the *ṭardiyya* loses its relevance and neither patron nor poet will expend any effort on the creation of a new text. The absence of one of these preconditions helps to explain the discontinuities in the history of Arabic hunting literature.

At the time of the creation of Shihāb al-Dīn's *muzdawija*, spectacular hunting safaris were conducted by the Sultan himself, by his governors or, more rarely, by other leading Mamluk amirs.²⁰ For the Turkish Mamluks, the hunt offered an opportunity to practise military skills in a time of peace. But contrary to Ibn Ṭughj, Sayf al-Dawla and 'Aḍud al-Dawla, to whom al-Mutanabbī, Abū Firās and their contemporaries directed their hunting poems, these Mamluks had little if any interest in Arabic poetry. By and large, architecture had taken the representative function that poetry had fulfilled during the Abbasid period, and many amirs did not have enough command of the Arabic language to enjoy the subtleties of contemporary literature. On the other hand, poetry had acquired new functions as a privileged means of communication between the 'ulamā' and an opportunity to distinguish oneself, to show one's mastery of the Arabic language and the aesthetic code of literature,

²⁰ See Nabil Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Azīz, *Riyāḍat al-ṣayd fī 'aṣr salāṭīn al-Mamālīk* (Cairo, 1999), pp. 127–203.

and thus to prove worthy to be included among the crème of the cultivated civilian elite. As a consequence, the time-honoured genre of panegyric poetry (*madīḥ*) could survive, but in a more bourgeois form as literature directed by one 'ālim to another 'ālim in a communicative exchange on the same social and intellectual level. For hunting texts, the situation was more complicated, since more often than not (1) the leader of the hunting expedition, and (2) the person interested in hunting literature were not one and the same person. A major exception is al-Malik al-Afdal of Ḥamāh. His father Abū 'l-Fidā', the famous author of a book on geography and another on history, was a scion of the Ayyubid dynasty and governed Ḥamāh for the Mamluks under the title al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad.²¹ His son, who bore the title al-Malik al-Manṣūr before he became the successor of his father as al-Malik al-Afdal in 732/1331, was a great Nimrod before the Lord and used to go on hunting expeditions with the *nā'ib al-Shām* Tankiz.²² At the same time, he was a patron of literature in the footsteps of his father. Ibn Nubāta addressed him with about twenty panegyric qasidas. Around the year 728, when the future al-Afdal was still the heir-apparent al-Manṣūr, Ibn Nubāta composed for him his *muzdawija Farā'id al-Sulūk*, the masterpiece of hunting literature of the period.

But al-Manṣūr/al-Afdal was an exception.²³ The most enthusiastic hunter Tankiz, the powerful governor of Syria between 712/1312 and 740/1340,²⁴ had no pronounced interest in Arabic poetry, nor did most of the sultans in Cairo. Great literary competence, however, was assembled in the chancellery of state, in the *dīwān al-inshā'* of Cairo, Damascus, and Aleppo. It is no accident, therefore, that most authors of Mamluk hunting texts stood in close contact to the *dīwān al-inshā'*. Ibn al-ʿAṭṭār, al-Bārinbārī and Ibn Nubāta were *kuttāb* of renown, and al-Shihāb Maḥmūd and his disciple al-Shihāb Ibn Faḍl Allāh held the office of the head of the chancellery, *kātib al-sirr*, of Damascus for many years.

²¹ See H.A.R. Gibb, 'Abū 'l-Fidā', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New ed.), I, pp. 118–119.

²² See 'Abd al-ʿAzīz, *Riyādat al-ṣayd*, p. 198.

²³ Other possible exceptions are the Artuqid princes to whom al-Hillī addressed panegyric poems.

²⁴ See 'Abd al-ʿAzīz, *Riyādat al-ṣayd*, pp. 197–199, and S. Conermann, 'Tankiz', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New ed.), X, pp. 185–186.

Given the fact that the hunt was led by a person who had little interest in literature and that the most significant literary competence had been assembled in the *dīwān al-inshā'*, a crucial role came to be played by persons who held an office that combined competence in the realm of the civil elite with power in the realm of the military elite. An office in this intermediate position was the vizier, in this time identical with the *nāzir al-dīwān*, 'supervisor of the chancellery.' Another office even closer to the military was the *dawādār*, the 'bearer of the royal inkwell.' His duties and his importance varied a great deal over time. The holders of these offices were close enough to the amirs to take part in their hunting expeditions side by side with the amirs and close enough to the *kuttāb* to be interested in sophisticated literature and pay attention to communication by means of poetry and artistic prose.

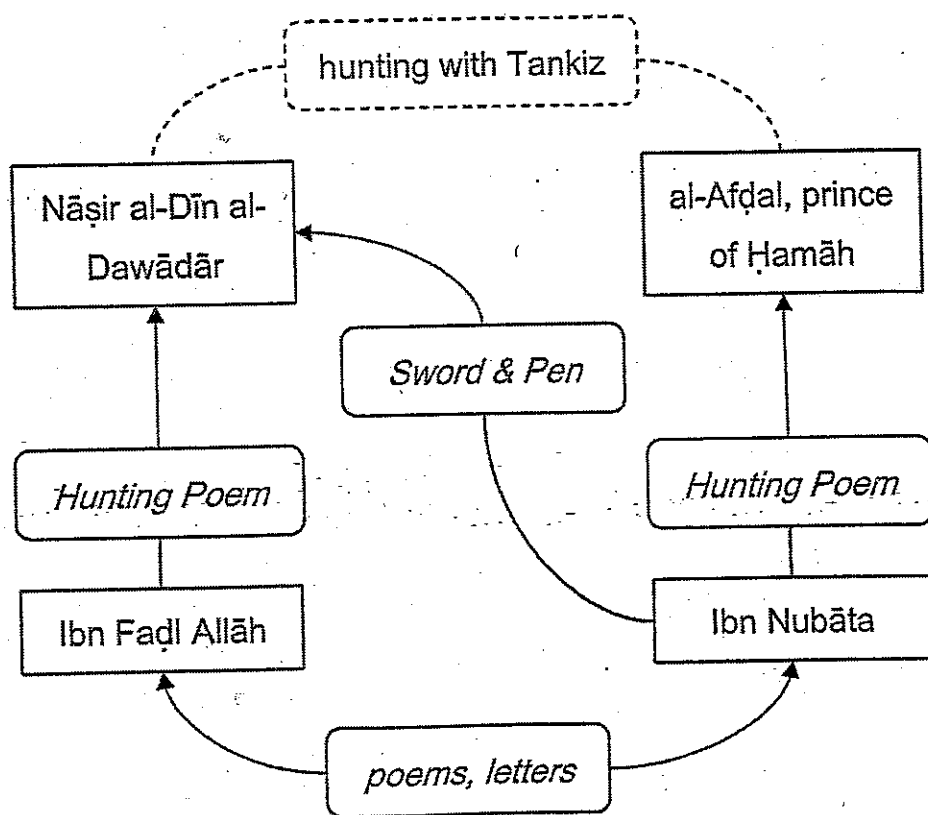
The first *urjūza muzdawija* of the Mamluk period was composed by al-Warrāq for the vizier al-Ṣāhib Tāj al-Dīn Ibn Ḥinnā and his brother.²⁵ Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh composed his *urjūza* for the *dawādār* Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Kawandak. From 712/1312–1313 to 734/1333–1334, Nāṣir al-Dīn was an intimate friend of the governor Tankiz and the most powerful man in the office of the *dawādār*. 'People never saw a *dawādār* like him.'²⁶ When Nāṣir al-Dīn came to office, Shihāb al-Dīn's uncle Sharaf al-Dīn was *kātib al-sirr* of Damascus (712–717). Ten years later, his father Muḥyī 'l-Dīn was appointed to the same office, which he held between 727–729 and again between 732–733. In the years between and after 733, he held the same office in Cairo. Muḥyī 'l-Dīn, born 645, was already aged at that time and assisted by his son, who was the éminence grise of the *dīwān* even before he came to hold the office himself between 741 and 743.²⁷ It is quite natural that al-Shihāb Ibn Faḍl Allāh should have an interest in the mighty and well educated *dawādār*. But the network of relations was even more complicated as a result of the presence of Ibn Nubāta as well as the prince of Ḥamāh. The picture thus presented is much like a tableau: Tankiz, the governor of Syria, liked to go on hunting expeditions with the prince of Ḥamāh. Ibn Nubāta had close relations to the Ḥamawī court and dedicated many poems and other works to al-Mu'ayyad and his son. Among these works

²⁵ Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik*, XII, p. 258; see also al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, I, pp. 217–228.

²⁶ Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān al-'aṣr*, V, p. 105.

²⁷ See K.S. Salibi, 'Faḍl Allāh,' *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New ed.), II, pp. 732–733; idem, 'Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī,' *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New ed.), III, pp. 758–759; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, VIII, pp. 252–70, XXVIII, pp. 267–272; idem, *A'yān*, IV, pp. 417–434, V, pp. 571–576.

is a *Mufākhara bayna 'l-Sayf wa 'l-Qalam* 'Debate between the Sword and the Pen,' first dedicated to al-Mu'ayyad. He accompanied his son al-Manṣūr on one of his hunting safaris and immortalized it in his hunting *urjūza*. However, Ibn Nubāta was also in close contact with the *dīwān al-inshā'* of Damascus, especially with the Banū Faḍl Allāh. He addressed poems to Muḥyī 'l-Dīn and exchanged poems and letters with Shihāb al-Dīn and his brothers.²⁸ But he also approached the *dawādār* himself. We know of an epigram addressed to him,²⁹ and the Berlin manuscript, which contains both al-Shihāb's hunting *muzdawija* and Ibn Nubāta's *mufākhara*, shows that Ibn Nubāta dedicated his *mufākhara* not only to al-Mu'ayyad, but also to the *dawādār* Nāṣir al-Dīn.³⁰ The *muzdawija* that is presented here is therefore much like a knot within a rather complex network that can be visualized as follows:



²⁸ See Bauer, 'Ibn Nubāta al-Miṣrī (686–768/1287–1366). Life and works,' in *Mamlūk studies review* (forthc.).

²⁹ Ibn Nubāta, *Dīwān*, p. 253 (Munṣariḥ, -āṣiri), see also Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS arabe 2234, f. 162b.

³⁰ See Bauer, *Ibn Nubāta* (forthcoming).

Not visible in the chart is the general public, which is nonetheless always present in the mind of both poet and addressee. As the many sources for Ibn Nubāta's hunting *urjūza* show, the literary public of the time had a vivid interest in hunting literature of this kind. Ibn Nubāta's *muzdawija* was praised as a model for *insijām* 'fluency'.³¹ This fluency is without doubt also prominent in the poem by Ibn Faḍl Allāh.

The manuscript Berlin 8400 and the authorship of the urjūza

The only source of the *urjūza* known so far (at least to me) is a Berlin manuscript that bears the title *Tadhkirat al-Nawājī*.³² This manuscript is an important, if not the only, source for several literary texts, among them a satirical criticism of Abū Tammām's poetry by one of the Khālidī brothers (*Zulāmat Abī Tammām*), Ibn Nubāta's *Dīwān* of epigrams, entitled *al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī*, his *Mufākhara bayna 'l-Sayf wa 'l-Qalam* and, finally, his hunting poem *Farā'id al-Sulūk fī Maṣā'id al-Mulūk*. The author of the compilation, however, is clearly not al-Nawājī. The title, which is written by a third hand, is nothing but the guess of a bookseller. Instead, several remarks make it clear that its author is al-Ṣafadī, and that we probably have a volume of the *Tadhkirat al-Ṣafadī* before us.³³

The text of the *urjūza muzdawija* published below can be found on f. 42b–43b. The preceding page, f. 42a, starts with the headline *al-Qāḍī Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. al-Mawlā al-Makhdūm al-Qāḍī Muḥyī 'l-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh*. Several poems and prose passages by this author fol-

³¹ See Ibn Hījja, *Khizānat al-adab*, III, pp. 102–115 and G.J. van Gelder, 'Poetry for easy listening,' *Mamlūk studies review* 7/1 (2003), pp. 31–48, esp. p. 41.

³² Berlin MS 8400; see also Wilhelm Ahlwardt, *Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften*, (Berlin, 1887–1899), VII, p. 383.

³³ F. 6a: The author quotes Ibn Sayyid al-Nās (d. 734/1334) and adds: '*wa-sami'tu dhālika min lafzihi*'; al-Ṣafadī mentions several titles of Ibn Sayyid al-Nās he had heard from him (*Wāfi*, I, p. 292). f. 8a: *wa-anshadanī al-shaykh... Ibn Muṣaddaq... li-nafsihi... fī 15 dhī 'l-qa'da sanata 728...*; the same verses are cited also in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, XIII, pp. 24–25, introduced by the words *anshadanī jumlatan min shī'rihi, min dhālik...* The author entered Cairo in the year 727 (f. 55b), he met Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī in Cairo in the year 728 (f. 27b), and he met Ibn Nubāta in Damascus (f. 52a). He heard Ibn Nubāta's *Mufākhara bayna 'l-sayf wa 'l-qalam* from the author himself in the year 729 in the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. All these events of al-Ṣafadī's life can be corroborated by other sources. Since on f. 73a Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh is called *kātib al-sirr*, the work may have been written between 740 and 743.

low. At the very end of the page, the writer added another headline, saying: *al-Mawlā al-Shaykh al-Imam al-Adīb al-Fāḍil Jamāl al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh b. al-Shaykh al-Imām al-Muḥaddith Muḥammad Ibn Nubāta*. The words '*Ibn Nubāta*' are crossed out and substituted by the words '*Muhyī 'l-Dīn Faḍl Allāh*'. This error can be explained by the following hypothesis: The *urjūza* is still part of the section comprising texts by al-Shihāb Ibn Faḍl Allāh. The writer, however, realised that the following text is a hunting *urjūza*. At this time, the most famous hunting *urjūza*, was, of course, Ibn Nubāta's poem, a text that is also included in this very collection a few pages later. Further, the writer must have realised that several leaves of his source were in disorder. This is very obvious in the text of *al-Qaṭr al-Nubātī*. Obviously, he thought that Ibn Nubāta's hunting *urjūza* had already started even in these earlier pages. Therefore he added the headline appropriate for this text. Later, perhaps when he reached f. 47b, he realised his error. On that page, Ibn Nubāta's *urjūza* begins, and it is introduced with exactly the same headline as the bottom of f. 42a. Having realised his error, the writer crossed out the words '*Ibn Nubāta*' and substituted them with the last words of the headline at the top of the page. Even so, he still did not realise that not only the end of the headline was wrong, but also its beginning. I conjecture that the original headline at this place was either a simple *wa-lahū (ayḍan)* or a repetition of the headline at the top of the page. The writer of the title page, which contains a list of the principle texts included in the *Tadhkira*, refers to our text as *Urjūzat Ibn Faḍl Allāh fī 'l-Ṣayd*.

This is corroborated by internal criticism. The poem presented here cannot be a work of Ibn Nubāta. A comparison between this poem and Ibn Nubāta's *Farā'id al-Sulūk* reveals a clear stylistic contrast. Whereas Ibn Nubāta repeatedly uses the *tawriya* (double entendre), this stylistic device hardly plays a role in the *urjūza* published here. Instead, its author makes ample use of all kinds of *jinās*. This corresponds exactly to what we are told by Ibn Hījja al-Ḥamawī, who mentions al-Shihāb Ibn Faḍl Allāh among the poets who possess no virtuosity in the field of the *tawriya* and make only sporadic use of it.³⁴ In favouring *jinās* instead of the *tawriya*, his style is closer to that of al-Ḥillī than to that of Ibn Nubāta. Other sources corroborate that the *urjūza* is a literary

³⁴ Ibn Hījja, *Khizānat al-adab*, III, p. 522.

form that was practiced by Shihāb al-Dīn. Though he mentions no titles, al-Ṣafadī explicitly states that al-Shihāb is the author of 'many qasidas, *rajaz* poems, epigrams and *dūbayts*.'³⁵

Finally, Ibn Faḍl Allāh's relation to the *dawādār* that resulted from his position in the *dīwān al-inshā'* and his place in the literary system of his period, as sketched above, make him the most likely candidate for the authorship of the *urjūza*. The most probable dates for its creation would be the years 727–729 and 732–733, when Shihāb al-Dīn acted as a deputy for his aging father, the official *kātib al-sirr* of Damascus.

Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh as a poet

In Western sources, the author to whom the *muzdawija* can be attributed is normally called 'Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī.' But there were more famous members of the Banū Faḍl Allāh, including his father Muḥyī 'l-Dīn and his younger brother 'Alā' al-Dīn. Therefore, it is appropriate to use no other form of his name than the form used in all contemporary sources, Shihāb al-Dīn (or al-Shihāb) Ibn Faḍl Allāh. Today, Shihāb al-Dīn's manual on penmanship (*al-Ta'rīf bi 'l-Muṣṭalah al-Sharīf*) and his encyclopaedia *Masālik al-Abṣār* are used as essential sources for the history of the period. But his contemporaries saw Shihāb al-Dīn principally as a man of letters, an author of poetry and prose literature. Paradoxically, his achievements in the field of literature are not even mentioned in the entry on him in the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*.³⁶ For al-Ṣafadī, however, our author was the *imām ahl al-ādāb*.³⁷ According to this statement, al-Shihāb Ibn Faḍl Allāh reached the absolute summit as a prose author (i.e. as an author of *inshā'*). No *munshi'* after al-Qāḍi al-Fāḍil could ever reach his level, despite such prominent writers as Ibn al-Athīr, Muḥyī 'l-Dīn Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, al-Shihāb Maḥmūd and Ibn al-'Aṭṭār.³⁸ Note that three of them also appear in our list of Mamluk authors of hunting literature! Al-Ṣafadī also finds warm words for his

³⁵ Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, I, p. 419.

³⁶ C.E. Bosworth, 'Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī,' in *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature*, I, pp. 322–323.

³⁷ This and the following according to al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, VIII, pp. 252–253.

³⁸ Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, VIII, p. 253.

poetry, though there is a light reserve here. Whereas in prose nobody can ever attain his level, he says, in his poetry 'only single poets' (*al-afrād*) can equal him.³⁹ Another contemporary, the scholar Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, leaves no doubt that Ibn Nubāta is unassailable both in poetry and prose.⁴⁰ But in another place he tries to promote Ibn Qāḍī 'l-'Askar by calling him 'one of the three *udabā'* of their time in the realm of prose, in addition to Ibn Nubāta and Ibn Faḍl Allāh, being superior to both in scholarship (*al-'ulūm*), whereas they are superior to him in poetry.'⁴¹ Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, himself a poet of renown and a great admirer of Ibn Nubāta, contradicts vehemently, saying that Ibn Nubāta and Ibn Faḍl Allāh do not belong in the same category of poets.⁴² Though he speaks highly of Shihāb al-Dīn's prose, he is less enthusiastic about his poetry and remarks that al-Shihāb 'composed very much poetry, but of an average quality (*wasat*).'⁴³ Nevertheless, al-Shihāb Ibn Faḍl Allāh remains one of the most respected *udabā'* of his time, and this should be reason enough to turn attention to his poetic production as well.

Al-Shihāb Ibn Faḍl Allāh belongs to the sphere of the chancellery, and his literary production reflects the aesthetics of the chancellery rather than that of other milieus of poetic activity. It may be no accident, therefore, that one of the few major poetic works of Ibn Faḍl Allāh that has been preserved is a hunting *urjūza*. The above list of Mamluk literary hunting texts demonstrates quite clearly that the proper domain of Mamluk hunting literature was the chancellery. The texts are either *rasā'il*, the chancery genre *par excellence*, and/or they are composed by authors who were professional secretaries or held a leading position of the chancellery, if only temporarily. A major exception is Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī, who, despite his intensive engagement in hunting literature, conspicuously wrote neither a narrative *urjūza* nor a *risāla* on this subject.

³⁹ Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, VIII, p. 253.

⁴⁰ See Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi'iyya al-kubrā*, (Beirut, 1420/1999), V, pp. 111, 153.

⁴¹ See Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī a'yān al-mi'a al-thāmina*, (Ḥaydarābād, 1929-1931), IV, p. 49.

⁴² Ibn Hajar, *Durar*, IV, p. 49.

⁴³ Ibn Hajar, *Durar*, I, p. 395.

Structure and content of Shihāb al-Dīn's muzdawija ʔardīyya

The structure of the poem is clear-cut and well-balanced. The poem may be said to consist of three parts, each part divided into two subsections. The first part starts with an introductory section of eleven couplets, primarily of a descriptive nature. The second section, the 'parade of the horses,' is again a descriptive section and again comprises eleven lines. The central section of the poem is constituted by two hunting episodes that combine both descriptive and narrative elements. Each of these sections has the length of twelve couplets. A transition of five lines, the *takhalluṣ*, leads up to the concluding panegyric section, which with its thirteen lines is again one couplet longer than the central sections. A chart may illustrate this structure:

Lines	Subject	Length
1-11	1-3: frame: address to the audience; 4-11: description of nature	11
12-22	the huntsmen and their horses: 'parade of the horses'	11
23-34	<i>episode 1: hunting gazelles and onagers with arrows, dogs and cheetahs</i>	12
35-46	<i>episode 2: hunting birds with falcons and the crossbow</i>	12
47-51	<i>takhalluṣ</i> : return from the hunt; transition to the panegyric section	5
52-64	praise (<i>madiḥ</i>) of the <i>dawādār</i>	13

(1) *Introduction and description of nature*. With its reference to *surūr* 'joy' the first couplet may allude to the *urjūza muzdawija* by Abū Firās al-Ḥamdānī (320-357/932-968), in which we read *al-'umru mā tamma bihī l-surūru* 'life is when joys are complete'.⁴⁴ But there are only few similarities between both poems, apart from their form. Abū Firās's poem, for instance, is more than twice as long as Shihāb al-Dīn's. Consequently, Shihāb al-Dīn cannot give as detailed a record of the events

⁴⁴ *Diwān Abī Firās*, ed. Sāmī al-Dahhān, (Beirut, 1944), III, p. 435. See also James E. Montgomery, 'Abū Firās's Veneric *Urjūzah Muzdawijah*,' *Arabic and Middle Eastern literatures* 2 (1999), pp. 61-74.

of the hunt as Abū Firās. Further, Mamluk authors seem interested less in a narration of events than in an endeavour to transform the events into a sequence of literary images. In any case, the aesthetics of Mamluk literature were less dependent on their Abbasid predecessors than is often assumed. Shihāb al-Dīn's principal model as regards structure and style was not that of Abū Firās, but Sirāj al-Dīn al-Warrāq. This is clearly demonstrated by the lines that follow the frame motive of the first three couplets, the description of nature. Nearly all Mamluk hunting texts, both poetry and prose; start with a description of an idyllic landscape in the early morning light before sunrise.

(2) *The parade of the horses.* The background of time and place is set now and the attention turns to the protagonists, the huntsmen and their horses. The hunters are introduced only briefly. The greater part of the paragraph is dedicated to a very popular motive of Ayyubid and Mamluk literature, which I call 'the parade of the horses.' It occurs in hunting poems, in *rasā'il ṭardiyya* (but not in *rasā'il bunduqiyya*), but also in *rasā'il* on horses and other texts, in which horses are treated in a literary fashion. In these 'parades,' the author stages horses of different colours, one after the other, and provides a (shorter or longer) description for each of them.

The principal colour terms for Arabian horses that were used at that time were *ashhab* 'white,' *adham* 'black,' *akhḍar* 'seal brown,' *aḥmar* = *kumayt* 'bay,' *ashqar* 'chestnut,' *asfar* 'dun,' and *ablaq* 'dappled.' Horse colours are treated in several works of the Mamluk period.⁴⁵ At that time, the meaning of these terms was not necessarily exactly the same as it is today or even as it was in ancient Arabia. The terminology of horse colours was very detailed. All authors of theoretical texts know several subtypes of every basic colour, but these subtypes do not play a role in the literary texts. One of the theorists considers *akhḍar* a subtype of *adham*.⁴⁶ This may be the reason for the fact that only four of the nine texts mentioned below differentiate between *adham* and *akhḍar*. If both are differentiated, *adham* is equated with *aswad*, whereas al-Nuwayrī's description of the type *akhḍar adgham* is that of the English 'seal brown':

⁴⁵ See al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, X, pp. 5–12; 'Alī b. 'Isā al-Fahrī al-Bastī, *Zahrat al-ādāb wa-tuḥfat ulī 'l-albāb*, Alexandria, al-Maktaba al-Baladiyya MS 1676 ب, pp. 33–36; al-Malik al-Ashraf 'Umar b. Yūsuf, *al-Mughnī fi 'l-bayṭara*, ed. Muḥammad Altūnjī (Abū Zabī, 1425/2004), pp. 33–42. A good modern study on horses, shooting, and hunting in classical times is 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Salāma, *al-Riyāḍa al-badaniyya 'inda 'l-'Arab*. 2nd ed. (Tunis, c. 2000).

⁴⁶ Al-Bastī, *Zahrat al-ādāb*, p. 34.

wa-huwa al-akhtabu lawni wajhihī wa-udhunayhi wa-manākhirihi.⁴⁷ Other shades of dark may also be subsumed under the term *adham*. The difference between *ashqar* and *aḥmar/kumayt* is explained by al-Bastī as follows:

والفرق بين الكميت والأشقر بالعرف والذنب فان كانا أحمرين أو أصهبين فهو أشقر وان كانا أسودين فهو كميت.⁴⁸

This is exactly the difference between the bay with its black mane, tail, and points, and the chestnut. Five of our nine authors differentiate between both. Dappled horses may be reckoned among the one or the other colours according to the dominating colour. This is the reason why only three of our authors treat *ablaq* as a category of its own.

The following chart lists the horse colours (note that *kumayt* = *aḥmar*) portrayed in nine 'parades' of the late Ayyubid and the early Mamluk period. The lines are arranged according to the date of birth of the author. The numbers indicate the sequence in which the different colours are treated.

	ashhab	adham	akhḍar	aḥmar	ashqar	aṣfar	ablaq
Ḍiyā' al-Dīn al-Qurṭubī (*602) ⁴⁹	4	3		1	2		
Sirāj al-Dīn al-Warrāq (*615) ⁵⁰	2	1		3			4
Ibn al-ʿAṭṭār (*626) ⁵¹	2	4			1	3	
al-Shihāb Maḥmūd (*644) ⁵²	1	2	6	4	3	5	7
al-Makhzūmī (*680) ⁵³	1	5		3	2	4	

⁴⁷ al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, X, p. 7.

⁴⁸ Al-Bastī, *Zahrāt al-ādāb*, p. 33.

⁴⁹ A letter in al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, VIII, pp. 67–68. On al-Qurṭubī see *Wāfi*, VII, pp. 339–346.

⁵⁰ In his *muzdawija*, Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik*, XIX, p. 253.

⁵¹ In his *risāla* on the postal service, *Rasf al-farīd fī waṣf al-barīd*, *ibid.*, XII, p. 368.

⁵² Not in his hunting letters, but in a *Risāla fī awṣāf al-khayl*, see Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd, *Husn al-tawassul*, pp. 343–347 (the 'parade' on p. 344) and al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, X, pp. 70–75.

⁵³ Tāj al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Bāqī b. ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Makhzūmī, see *Wāfi*, XVIII, pp. 23–28, is the author of a *risāla* on horses, see al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, X, pp. 75–78.

Table (cont.)

	ashhab	adham	akhḍar	aḥmar	ashqar	aṣfar	ablaq
Ibn Nubāta (*686) ⁵⁴	3	5	4	1		2	
al-Bārinbārī (*696) ⁵⁵	1	3		2			
al-Shihāb Ibn Faḍl Allāh (*700)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bādr al-Dīn Ibn Ḥabīb (*710) ⁵⁶	1	2	6	4	3	5	7

A comparison between these texts would give interesting insight into the descriptive styles of the period. Here it must suffice to note that obviously al-Shihāb Maḥmūd was the first to arrange a parade of horses of seven different colours. The author of our *muzdawija* emulated him in poetic form, and Ibn Ḥabīb followed this model even in the sequence of the colours. Shortly afterwards, Ibn Hījja al-Ḥamawī included four 'parades of the horses' in his *Qahwat al-inshā'*: the well-known text by al-Shihāb Maḥmūd and three *mu'āraḍāt* by Ibn Nubāta, Ibn Faḍl Allāh and Ibn Hījja himself (see ed. R. Veselý, Beirut 2005, pp. 86–108).

(3) *The first hunting episode.* Different forms of the hunt were combined in a single hunting excursion. The first episode narrates a hunt with bows, dogs and cheetahs on gazelles and onagers. Our author creates a succinct text by combining narrative and descriptive elements in a compact and dense way. The episode may be read as a narrative sequence, but it is at the same time a sequence of descriptions of actions and movements. A general narrative line (line 23) introduces lines on (1) the hunters, their bows and arrows (lines 24–26), (2) the dogs (lines 27–28), which are in their turn compared with arrows, and (3) the cheetahs (lines 29–30). Another general narrative line on the quarry in general (line 31) introduces lines on the (4) gazelles (lines 32–33) and on the (5) onagers (line 34). The Syrian onager, *Equus hemionus hemippus*, is now extinct.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Ibn Nubāta, *Dīwān*, pp. 588–589.

⁵⁵ In his *risāla ṭardiyya*, al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, XIV, p. 169.

⁵⁶ Badr al-Dīn Ibn Ḥabīb, *Nasīm al-ṣabā*, (Alexandria, 1289/1873), pp. 65–66 = Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS arabe 3362, f. 52a–53b.

⁵⁷ See Thomas Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst. Eine Untersuchung ihrer Struktur und Entwicklung am Beispiel der Onagerepisode* (Wiesbaden, 1992), I, pp. 13–14.

(4) *The second hunting episode.* A hunt with the crossbow and hunting birds (sakers and goshawks) follows. This form of the hunt was also the subject of the *rasā'il bunduqiyya* that were so popular in these days. The episode in this *muzdawija* is of a predominantly narrative character. Descriptive lines are dedicated to the crossbow (line 37) and the hunting birds (lines 41–42). The hunted birds, which are described in detail in the *risāla bunduqiyya* by Ibn al-'Aṭṭār, are mentioned only in the act of fleeing (line 40), and no further description is dedicated to them. The first verse of couplet 45 is a near verbatim quotation of al-Warrāq, line 17a: وأخلى بها الجو من طيور⁵⁸ The reference to the sunset in line 46 closes the time frame that was opened in the first paragraph with the description of the daybreak. This does not necessarily mean that the hunt lasted a single day only. Instead, it is quite probable that hunting expeditions of this kind extended over more than one day and included bivouacking, as the following line shows.

(5) *The takhalluṣ.* The hunting party returns to their bivouac full of joy and starts to praise the *dawādār*, who appears as the master of the hunt, though probably its real master was the governor Tankiz. Just as the *muzdawija* poems by al-Warrāq and Ibn Nubāta, this is a panegyric poem. *Husn al-takhalluṣ*, a good transition between the first part and the panegyric section, is one of the main requirements of panegyric texts. In this field, Ibn Hija considered the achievements of 'modern' poets like Ibn Nubāta much superior to that of Abbasid and older authors.⁵⁹ Shihāb al-Dīn's *takhalluṣ* creates an atmosphere of joy and enthusiasm after a successful hunt. In this situation, the desire to thank and praise its master comes in quite naturally, most typically within the frame of a concluding banquet.

(6) *The panegyric section.* The concluding *madīḥ* rounds off the poem. Despite its new subject, it is not felt like an alien element. This is mainly due to the fact that it is a perfect echo of the description of nature in the first paragraph. In the introduction, dew, rain, bounty and beauty set the mood of the hunting expedition. In the conclusion, we learn the true nature of nature: it is nothing but the *dawādār* himself. Nearly all key words from the first section are repeated in the last one or substituted by near synonyms: compare *muzn*, *ghamāma* (lines 5, 10) – *saḥāb*,

⁵⁸ Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik*, XIX, p. 255.

⁵⁹ See Ibn Hija, *Khizānat al-adab*, II, pp. 399–433.

ghamām (lines 54, 61); *ṭall* (line 6) – *nadan* (line 54); *nūr*, *shams* (line 7) – *shams*, *nūr* (lines 55, 56); *rīḥ*, *ṣabā* (lines 8, 10) – *nasīm* (line 58); *tab'ath* (line 8) – *tuḥyā* (line 53); *ghayth* (line 9) – *ghayth* (line 61); *al-najm fī āfāqihī* (line 11) – *al-mirrikh fī samā'ihī* (line 57).

The last lines characterize the position of a *dawādār* between the civil and military elite. He is praised for his bounty and his good governance, yet he may also behave as angry as a lion – the hunter par excellence – against his enemies. But he is also part of the world of the '*ulamā*'. This is stressed in the two last couplets. Therefore, he is a bearer of both sword and pen. Shihāb al-Dīn's concluding words may be understood as a reference to the *Mufākhara bayna 'l-Sayf wa 'l-Qalam* that Ibn Nubāta dedicated to the *dawādār*. This *ṭardiyya* is Shihāb al-Dīn's gift to the 'bearer of the royal inkwell.'

Edition

Notes to the edition: Although I do not reproduce all vowel signs, I also do not add any vowel signs that are not already in the manuscript. I add a few *shadda* and *hamza* signs where appropriate. I differentiate between *ي* and *ي* (the manuscript has always *ي*). In the following cases, I add dots that have been omitted in the manuscript: Line 10: أذْيَالَه instead of ادْيَالَه, line 29: ثَارَتْ instead of تَارَتْ, line 33: قَرْنِيَه without dots under the *ي*, line 49: يَمْدَحْه without dots under the *ي*. In line 62 *لِكُلِّ مَنْ* is written *لِكُلِّ مَنْ*. Three emendations (lines 9, 19 and 24) are explained in the annotations to the translation.

وَمُجْتَبِي لَطَائِفِ الْحُبُورِ	*	إِنْ شِئْتَ يَا مَقْتَطِفَ السُّرُورِ	- 1
بِالطَّيْرِ وَالْكَلَابِ وَالْفُهُودِ	*	أَنْتَ تَرَوِي خَبَرَ الصُّيُودِ	- 2
كَيْفَ تَخَاطَلُ الطُّيُورُ وَالظُّبَا	*	فَاسْمَعِ حَدِيثَ مَنْ رَأَى وَجَرًّا	- 3
وَكُلَّ غُصْنٍ جَيِّدٍ مُحَلًى	*	لَمَّا خَرَجْنَا وَالرِّيَاضُ تُجَلَّى	- 4
وَأَسْبَلَ الزَّهْرُ عَلَيْهَا ثَوْبَهُ	*	قَدْ تَرَى الْمَزْنَ عَلَيْهَا جَنِيَهُ	- 5
جَوَاهِرًا تَرِيدُ فِي حُلَاهَا	*	وَكُلَّ الطَّلِّ عَلَى رُبَاهَا	- 6
شَمْسٌ ضَحَى قَدْ وَقَفَتْ لِيُوشَعَ	*	تَخَالُ نُورَ بُرْدِهَا الْمَوْشَعَ	- 7
تَمِيَّتُهُ طَوْرًا وَطَوْرًا تَبَعْتُ	*	وَالرِّيحُ فِي عَقْدِ الزُّهُورِ تَبَعْتُ	- 8
صَافِي النِّطَافِ يَخْرُجُ الضَّمِيرَا	*	كَمْ غَادِرَ الْغَيْثِ مَهَا غَدِيرَا	- 9
وَقَرَّكَ رِيحُ الصَّبَا أَكْمَامَهُ	*	قَدْ صَقَلَتْ أَذْيَالُهُ الْغَمَامَهُ	- 10
وَالصُّبْحُ فِي مَضْجَعِهِ وَسَنَانُ	*	وَالنَّجْمُ فِي آفَاقِهِ حَيْرَانُ	- 11

- 12 - حتى إذا أسفر وجه الشرق *
- 13 - في فتية كأنهم الظلام *
- 14 - قد ركبوا الجياد للطراد *
- 15 - من كل سلهب جميل الوصف *
- 16 - فأشهب يقبل كالنهار *
- 17 - وأدهم مبتسم المحيا *
- 18 - وأخضر كمسقط الغمام *
- 19 - وأحمر يفيض كالمدام *
- 20 - وأشقر كقذحة البروق *
- 21 - وأصفر منتسب أصيل *
- 22 - وأبلق يجمع في ألوانه *
- 23 - فلم يقف حتى أتانا القنص *
- 24 - فابتدر الرماة بالقسي *
- 25 - كم قمر في يده هلال *
- 26 - وانقضت السهام كالنجوم *
- 27 - وأطلقوا الكلاب من أطواقها *
- 28 - من كل كلب راشق كالسهم *
- 29 - وثاربت الفتنة بالفهود *
- 30 - من كل فهد فيه يضرب المثل *
- 31 - فلم يدع صيدا يصاد إلا *
- 32 - فكم غزال عن كناسه كنس *
- 33 - فكم به ذرع دم تحيط *
- 34 - وكم رمينا من حمار وخش *
- 35 - ثم انثنت إلى مرامي الطير *
- 36 - فكم أصابت من قسي البندق *
- 37 - كأنها في شكلها عقارب *
- 38 - وزهزت ما بيننا الرماة *
- 39 - فأشرقت برميناء الوجوه *
- 40 - وطارت الطيور كما تجفلا *
- 41 - من كل صقر خافق الجناح *
- 42 - ومن بزة فائقات في الرتب *
- 43 - تهتز وسط كفها المناسر *
- 44 - وكل جفة لها تنقض *
- 45 - فأخلت الجو من الطيور *
- 46 - وأصغت الشمس إلى الغروب *
- قمنا جميعاً لابتغاء الرزق *
- الحاظهم أمضى من السهام *
- كمثل أطواد على أطواد *
- يسبق في الجري ارتداد الطرف *
- كأنه طير من الأطيوار *
- كالليل في جنبته الثريا *
- قد خلط الصباح بالظلام *
- ملتهب [الغرة] كالضرام *
- لسبقه رضح بالخلوق *
- كأنما ذاب به الأصيل *
- ما يجمع الأزهار في بستانه *
- ساحة لكل من يقتنص *
- ترمي بها شاكلة الرمي *
- طلوعه تقضى به الآجال *
- وفاضت الدماء كالغيوم *
- تبتدر السباق من أسباقها *
- أو كوكب منحدر للرجم *
- تنهب الأرض إلى الصيود *
- قد افتدت منه الضباء بالمقل *
- في قبضة السكين أو في المقل *
- وخلفوه في الفلاة محتبس *
- إبرة قرنيه له تخطيط *
- كمثل دينار بغير نقش *
- طالبة منها وفور الخير *
- ما تشتهي في مغرب أو مشرق *
- تسقط من قبضتها الكواكب *
- حتى تعالى الصوت والصيحات *
- وانصرف المرء بما يرجوه *
- فأرسلوا لها بلاء مرسلا *
- مصور من عنصر الرياح *
- فضية الجسم بعين من ذهب *
- كأنها في فعلها بواتر *
- كمثل سلك لؤلؤ يرفض *
- وكان هذا منتهى السرور *
- مصقرة كوجنة المريب *

ويعد ذا عُدْنَا إِلَى الْخِيَامِ	- 47	* باوفر الحُظوظ والأقسام
تَلْهِجُ بِالشُّكْرِ وَالدُّعَاءِ	- 48	* وأفخر المديح والثناء
لَخَيْرٍ مَنْ يَمْدَحُهُ الْأَنَامُ	- 49	* وترتدي بفضلِه الأَيَّامُ
لِنَاصِرِ الدِّينِ الَّذِي يَطِيبُ	- 50	* بذكره المديح والنسيبُ
هُوَ الدُّوَادَارُ الَّذِي كَمْ دَارُوا	- 51	* فما روتَ مِثْلًا لَهُ الْأَخْبَارُ
يَا وَاقِفًا أَمَامَهُ أَمَا تَرَى	- 52	* فِي وَاحِدٍ يُجْمَعُ مَجْمُوعُ الْوَرَى
أَوْحَدُ أَهْلِ الْعَصْرِ فِي الصِّفَاتِ	- 53	* تحيى به المني من الرِّفَاتِ
أَجْدَى مِنَ السَّحَابِ فِي نَدَاهُ	- 54	* وَمِنْ وَضُوحِ الْبَدْرِ فِي هُدَاهُ
كَأَنَّمَا الشَّمْسُ الَّتِي تَنْيرُ	- 55	* مِنْ فَهْمِهِ شَرَارَةٌ تَطِيرُ
كَأَنَّمَا الْبَدْرُ الَّذِي تَكْمَلَا	- 56	* نُورُ مَحْيَاهُ إِذَا مَا سُئِلَا
كَأَنَّمَا الْمَرِيخُ فِي سَمَائِهِ	- 57	* قَطْرَةٌ سَيْفٍ مِنْ دِمَا أَعْدَائِهِ
أَخْلَاقُهُ كَهَيْئَةِ النَّسِيمِ	- 58	* وَهَزَّةِ الْمَدَامِ لِلنَّدِيمِ
حَتَّى إِذَا مَا هَجَّتْهُ أَوْ غَضِبَا	- 59	* تَحْسِبُهُ لَيْثَ الشَّرِّ قَدْ وَثَبَا
قَدْ أَتَقَنَ الْمَلِكُ بِمَا يَسُوسُ	- 60	* سِيَاسَةً طَابَتْ بِهَا النُّفُوسُ
تَدْبِيرُهُ أَفْعَى لِلشَّامِ	- 61	* مِنْ مُسْقِطِ الْغَيْثِ مِنَ الْغَمَامِ
فَكَمْ غَدَا يَفِيءُ أَوْ يَفِيدُ	- 62	* لِكُلِّ مَنْ يَطْلُبُ مَا يُرِيدُ
يَفِيضُ بِالْعُلُومِ وَالرَّغَائِبِ	- 63	* فَلَا خَلَّتْ أَبْوَابُهُ مِنْ طَالِبِ
لَا بَرَحَتْ فِي طَوْعِهِ الْأَحْكَامُ	- 64	* وَفِي يَدَيْهِ السَّيْفُ وَالْأَقْلَامُ

Translation

1. Oh gatherer of joy, oh collector of subtle delight: if you wish
2. to tell stories about hunting with birds, dogs and cheetahs,
3. then listen to the report of one who witnessed and experienced how
- birds and gazelles outwit each other!
4. As we started off – at a time when the meadows lay disclosed and the
- necks of all twigs were adorned (with dewdrops) –,
5. a cloud had just emptied its pockets on them, and blossoms had made
- their clothes hang down over them,
6. and dew decked their hills with jewels that added to their ornament.
7. You would take the glow of the hill's variegated garments for the
- morning sun, which stopped its course to bring forth flowers.⁶⁰
8. And the wind plays among the necklace of the flowers, once destroy-
- ing, once enlivening it.

⁶⁰ The MS explicitly gives the vocalisation *nūr*, not *nawr*. To the different forms of *wsh'* see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, (Beirut, 1388/1968), VIII, p. 394: *washsha'a 'l-thawba: raqamahū bi-'alam wa-nahwihī... awsha'a 'l-shajara wa 'l-baqla: akhraja zahrahū...*

9. How many a pond has been left by the rain, pure its water, so that it cannot keep a secret.⁶¹
10. The cloud had polished its trails, and the east wind's breeze had rubbed its sleeves,
11. and the star stood confused at the horizon while the morning was still sleepy on its bed.
12. But when the face of the east became bright, we all set out to seek the boon,
13. in the midst of a valiant band of men like stars in the darkness, whose glances are more penetrating than arrows.
14. They mounted their coursers to ride in a row, and it seems as if mountains had mounted mountains.
15. All of them long-bodied, of good quality. When they run, they beat the twinkling of an eye.⁶²
16. There is a white horse, which is like the light of the day when it approaches, and which is as if it were kin to the birds,
17. and a black horse with a smiling face, as if the Pleiades shone on the forehead of the night,⁶³
18. and a seal brown horse like deep hanging clouds that blend the morning light with darkness,
19. and a bay horse that pours forth like an old (red) wine, its blaze glowing like a flame of fire (?),⁶⁴
20. and a chestnut as if lightning would strike fire...?...,
21. and a purebred dun with noble pedigree, which appears as if the evening sun had melted in him,⁶⁵
22. and a dappled horse that combines the same colours as the flowers in its grazing ground.⁶⁶
23. Hardly had they started to follow the tracks when the game came to us, presenting its right side to the hunters,

⁶¹ I propose to read (صافي النطاف) instead of (صاف النطاف). *Nutfa* is explained *al-mā' al-ṣāfi*, and the phrase *ṣafā l-nitāf* is attested in an often quoted line, see *Lisān al-'Arab*, IX, p. 335 (s.r. *ntf*) and XII, p. 377 (s.r. *zlm*), resp.

⁶² Note the *ṭibāq* (antithesis) between *sabaqa* 'antecedes/to go ahead' and *irtadda* 'fall back,' which cannot be expressed in the translation.

⁶³ The horse is black and has a blaze that extends to the muzzle or even encompasses it. This facial markings are compared with the Pleiades. If also certain legs of the horse bear a white marking, it fits the Prophet's description of the ideal horse, see Ibn Muflīḥ al-Ḥanbalī, *al-Ādāb al-shar'iyya wa 'l-minaḥ al-mar'iyya*, ed. 'Iṣām Fāris al-Harastānī (Beirut, 1417/1997), III, p. 167: خَيْرُ الْخَيْلِ الْأَدَمُ الْأَفْرَحُ الْأَرْثَمُ الْحَجَلُ طَلَقَ الْيَمِينِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ أَدَمُ فَكَمَيْتَ عَلَى هَذِهِ الشَّيْءِ

⁶⁴ I propose to read (الغرة) or (القرحة) instead of (الغرمه), which does not make sense to me. Note that the Prophet's favoured bay (*kumayt* = *aḥmar*) has the same markings as his favoured black, see the preceding note. *mudām* may also be a 'continuous rain,' but the association with red wine is more obvious, cf. the title of al-Nawājī's anthology of wine poetry, *Ḥalbat al-kumayt* 'The Racecourse of the Bay/Red Wine.'

⁶⁵ The comparison of the dun with the evening before sunset (*aṣīl*) already in Ibn al-ʿAṭṭār's *Risāla*, see Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik*, XII, p. 368. The word is here combined with *aṣīl* 'purebred' to form a *jinās tāmm*.

⁶⁶ *Bustān* here obviously means 'pasture' rather than 'garden.'

24. and every archer hastened to grasp an arrow to shoot with it at the flank of the hunted animal.⁶⁷
25. How many a full moon could you see, a crescent in his hand:⁶⁸ a moon that rises to bring death!
26. And arrows poured down like shooting stars, and streams of blood poured forth like clouds,
27. and they released the dogs from their collars and let them strive to be the first to win the stake.
28. All of them are dogs, slender/shooting⁶⁹ like arrows, or shooting stars coming down (from heaven) to stone (the rebel Satans).
29. And cheetahs, which plunder the earth to hunt, stirred up turmoil.
30. Every cheetah is such that it can well be said: The gazelles will sacrifice their eyes to escape from it;
31. and it lets every animal that is hunted end up in the grip of the knife and in the frying pan.
32. How many a gazelle did these cheetahs sweep away from its covert and left to be captured in the open country!
33. How often was it covered by a bloody coat of mail, which the needle of its horn had sewn for it!
34. And how many onagers, which resemble the pure gold of unstruck coins, did we shoot!
35. Then (the company?) turned to aim at the birds to seek from them a surplus of benefit.
36. And what did they gain from the crossbows from that which they desired in the west and in the east!
37. Their shape is like a scorpion from whose grip the stars fall down.
38. The marksmen among us applauded until the noise and the shouting rose high.
39. This bag of us made faces beaming, and everyone went away with what he desired.
40. And off flew the birds, only to take fright and flee away, for the hunters had sent to them a 'sent' affliction
41. in form of all the sakers with quivering wings, created from the element of wind,
42. in form of all the goshawks of outstanding rank, silver their body, golden their eyes.
43. Their beaks move back and forth between their claws, and in the action they look like sharp swords.
44. And they make every flock swoop down, so that it seems as if a string of pearls was broken, scattering its beads.

⁶⁷ Instead of (فابندر), the MS reads (فابندر).

⁶⁸ The same simile in *Diya' al-Din Ibn al-Athir's* epistle, Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik*, XII, p. 304: *ahillatun ṭālī'atun min akuffi aqmār*.

⁶⁹ A *tawriya* (metalepsis, double entendre) is noted in my translations in the following way: The primarily intended meaning is underlined, the secondarily suggested meaning is written in italics.

45. They emptied the sky from birds, and this provided for the utmost joy!
46. Now the sun inclined towards setting, pale like the cheek of a disconcerted man.
47. Thereafter we returned to our tents, and most plentiful was our fortune and our share,
48. in order to devote ourselves to thank and to bless, to extol and to eulogize most splendidly
49. the best man whom mankind can praise, a man whose lavishness is the clothing of fate:
50. Nāṣir al-Dīn! How pleasant becomes all panegyric and amatory poetry when he is mentioned in the poem!
51. However far one may roam, he will never hear such reports similar to what can be said about this *dawādār*!
52. Oh you who stand before him: Do you not see how in a single person the whole of mankind is summarized?
53. Due to his qualities, he is unequalled among the people of his time; he is the reviver of desires that have decayed.
54. In his magnanimity he is more generous than the clouds. In his guidance he is more pure than the full moon.
55. The shining sun seems to be a floating spark of his intellect.
56. The moon, when it is a full moon, seems to be the light of his countenance when he is asked for a favour.
57. Mars in its orbit seems to be a drop of the blood of his enemies on a sword.
58. His temper is like a gentle breeze and like the briskness, which wine arouses in a drinking companion.
59. But if you provoke him or when he is filled with anger, you will take him for the lion of al-Sharā when it leaps.
60. Thanks to his leadership, the empire establishes governance that brings happiness to the people.
61. His direction brings more benefit to Syria than the clouds' falling rain.
62. How much did he bestow and how much benefit did he bring to everyone who has asked for what he desired!
63. He pours forth knowledge and presents, so that his doors never lack a student/supplicant!⁷⁰
64. May the judgments never cease to be obedient to him, and may the sword and the pen never cease to be in his hands!

⁷⁰ The line contains an *istikhdām*, a form of the *tawriya* in which both possible meanings are intended at the same time. Shihāb al-Dīn, who was no expert in this field, 'borrowed' the whole line from an epigram that Ibn Nubāta once had dedicated to al-Mu'ayyad of Ḥamāh, see Ibn Nubāta, *Dīwān* (Sari', -āxibī) and f. 33a of our MS (Ibn Nubāta, *al-Qaṭr al-nubātī*).