

Nefeli Papoutsakis – Syrinx von Hees (Eds.)

The Sultan's Anthologist – Ibn Abī Ḥağalah and His Work



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Edited by
Nefeli Papoutsakis – Syrinx von Hees

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The Anthologist's Agenda and Concerns in Ibn Abī Ḥaḡalah's *Maḡnāṭis ad-durr an-nafīs*¹

Nefeli Papoutsakis

From the point of view of literary history, one of Ibn Abī Ḥaḡalah's most important works was his *Muḡtabā al-udabā'* ('The Litterateurs' Pick'), an anthology of contemporary prose and poetry, which he conceived as a chain ring in the long series of anthologies of contemporary literature initiated by aṭ-Ta'ālībī's (d. 1039) *Yatīmat ad-dabr*, but which he was destined not to finish. Presumably he was still working on it when he died of the plague in 776/1375. In his *Iktifā' al-qanū'*, a work on Arabic printed books published in Egypt in 1896, Cornelius van Dyck (1818-95), a nineteenth-century American doctor, missionary and translator of the Bible into Arabic, who spent several years in Syria and Lebanon, notes that *Muḡtabā al-udabā'* was printed in Egypt and that it was a highly esteemed work there. Contrary to his usual practice, however, van Dyck does not give the concrete place and date of the print, a fact which casts doubt over his assertion.² Indeed, no such print is otherwise known to have existed, nor have any manuscripts of that work come to light so far. The *Muḡtabā* is mentioned only in a couple of late sources, starting with Ḥāḡḡī Ḥalīfah's *Kašf az-zunūn*.³ Ḥāḡḡī Ḥalīfah's wording makes clear that he only knew the work from Ibn Abī Ḥaḡalah's own reference to it in his *Maḡnāṭis ad-durr an-nafīs* ('The Magnet for Precious Pearls'), a work which has survived and is the subject of the present article.

In essence, the *Maḡnāṭis* is an open call, or open letter, addressed to contemporary Arabic litterateurs and intellectuals asking them to send Ibn Abī Ḥaḡalah specimens of their literary work, poetry and prose, along with some biographical data, to be included in the *Muḡtabā*, on which he had already started working and from which he quotes extensively in the letter. Apart from a lithographic

¹ I would like to thank Professor Thomas Bauer for drawing my attention to this text.

² Van Dyck, Cornelius, *Iktifā' al-qanū' bi-mā buwa maṭbū'*, Cairo 1896, p. 347: *labū ayḡan kitābu Muḡtabā l-udabā'*[?], *ṭubī'a fi Mišra wa-yuḡlluhū ablu l-Mišr*. This note, which probably relies on Ḥāḡḡī Ḥalīfah (see next footnote), may have been inserted by Muḡammad 'Alī al-Biblāwi, who published van Dyck's manuscript posthumously adding some notes of his own. Van Dyck's book was apparently Yūsuf Ilyān Sarkis's source for his entry on Ibn Abī Ḥaḡalah in his *Mu'ḡam al-maṭbū'āt al-'arabiyyah wa-l-mu'arrabah*, Cairo 1968, pp. 28-29: he lists *Muḡtabā al-udabā'* as one of his printed works, names Egypt as the place of publication but gives no date of publication.

³ Ḥāḡḡī Ḥalīfah, *Kašf az-zunūn 'an asmā' al-kutub wa-l-funūn*, 2 vols., Beirut [Dār Iḡyā' at-turāt al-'arabi] n.d., 2:1592, cf. 2:1748. Al-Baḡdādi, Ismā'il Bašā, *Ḥadiyyat al-'arīfin: Asmā' al-mu'allifin wa-ātār al-muṣannafin*, 2 vols., Istanbul 1951, 1:113.

print made in Cairo in 1305/1887 and which was not available to me,⁴ the *Magnātis* survives in two late manuscripts, one completed on 9 Rabi^c al-Āhir 1274 (=27 November 1857) and kept at King Saud University Library in Riyadh and another completed on 19 Ša^bān 1302 (=3 June 1885) and kept at Yale University Library (Beinecke Library, Carlo Landberg Collection of Arabic Mss, 69). Both manuscripts teem with scribal errors; in the case of the Yale manuscript this is all the more surprising as it was seemingly copied by ʿAbdallāh Fikrī, a renowned late nineteenth-century Egyptian prose writer and statesman.⁵

The *Magnātis* is made up of six parts (*fusūl*), four of which are extracts from the *Muğtabā*. A short introduction in which the author briefly states the epistle's aim, name and contents in the form of chapter headings is followed by Part One, which is also very brief and explains in more detail the letter's purpose: Ibn Abi Ḥağalah composed a book modelled on Ibn Bassām's (d. 1147) *Daḥīrah* and those other anthologies that were conceived as sequels to the *Yatimah*.⁶ Having already gleaned and edited enough material on Egypt, he now invites litterateurs from other regions to contribute to the realization of his project by sending him specimens of their work as instructed in Part Six.⁷ Parts Two to Four are excerpts

⁴ Sarkis, *Muğam al-maḥbūāt*, pp. 28-29. A copy of this print is preserved in the Manuscripts Institute of the Arab League; see: <http://41.32.191.214/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblio number=3283>

⁵ The several explanatory notes in the margins of this manuscript seem to be by the same hand as the text itself. The name of the copyist is not mentioned in the colophon, but the marginal notes are signed by ʿAbdallāh Fikrī or simply Fikrī (e.g. fol. 3v, 5r, 7v, 8v). In the margin of fol. 19r Fikrī refers to a book by his son titled *Ğuğrafiyya Miṣr*. He must therefore be the renowned prose writer and for a short time Minister of Education ʿAbdallāh Pasha Fikrī (Jul 1834-27 Jul 1890), on whom see Jomier, J., "Fikrī", in: *EL* 2 (1965): 892; El-Sherif, Mona, "Fikrī, ʿAbdallāh", in: *EL Three* (online); Goldschmidt, Arthur, *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Egypt*, Boulder Co. 2000, pp. 58-59; Zirikli, Ḥayraddin, *al-ʿĀlām: Qāmūs tarāğim li-ašhar ar-riğāl wa-n-nisāʾ min al-ʿarab wa-l-mustaʿrabin wa-l-mustašriqin*, 3rd. ed., 12 vols., Beirut 1969-70, 4:113; Brugman, Jan, *An Introduction to the History of Modern Arabic Literature in Egypt*, Leiden 1984, pp. 77-80. The son was Muḥammad Amin Fikrī (1856-17 Jan 1899) (Goldschmidt, *Biographical Dictionary*, p. 59; Zirikli, *al-ʿĀlām*, 6:43). The copyist's handwriting differs somewhat from the specimen of the minister's handwriting given in Zirikli, but what corroborates his identification with him is the fact that the Swedish Orientalist Carlo Landberg (1848-1924) knew both ʿAbdallāh and Muḥammad Amin Fikrī, whom he met at the Eighth Orientalist Congress at Stockholm in 1889; he hence perhaps acquired the manuscript.

A large part of the *Magnātis*, from its beginning to the beginning of the section on *mujūn* of the entry on al-Qirāṭi (Part Five, see below), survives also in a manuscript kept at the Library of al-Azhar: no. 7334 – 1186 *Adab*, fol. 62v-74r. I am grateful to Hakan Özkan for bringing this manuscript to my attention and for procuring me copies of the relevant folios.

⁶ Ibn Abi Ḥağalah, *Magnātis ad-durr an-naḥīs*, MS Yale fol. 2r: ...*allaḥa kitāba adabin fi maʿnā Daḥīrati Bni Bassām*... Ibn Abi Ḥağalah's admiration for Ibn Bassām is evidenced by the frequent references to him and the long citations from the *Daḥīrah*'s introduction. In lines 10-13 of fol. 2r he praises the *Muğtabā* playing with the titles of works from the *Yatimah* series; he thus reveals his aim to produce a similar work.

⁷ MS Yale fol. 2r, 13-14: *fa-lammā atraʿtu* (MS Riyadh fol. 2v: *anzaltu*) *min buḥūrībi bi-Miṣra ḥuğānabā wa-aktartu min akuffi sawāğiʿībi marğānabā*... (MS Riyadh: *katūra*... *marğānubā*).

from his introduction to the *Muğtabā* and touch on the following three points respectively: a. the author's reasons for composing the anthology; b. a refutation of 'Antarah's famous saying "have poets left anything to darn?", to the effect that contemporary literature can be as excellent as the early canon; c. a justification for including *muğūn* and wine poetry in the *Muğtabā*. Part Five consists of sample entries from this anthology which are meant to exemplify its quality and, of course, to evidence the author's acumen, erudition and good judgment and thus entice the recipients of the *Mağnāṭis* to respond to his call. Part Six details Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah's request giving specific instructions as to what material to send.

Given that the *Mağnāṭis* primarily consists of extracts from the *Muğtabā*, I should here like to address two sets of questions: questions related to the *Mağnāṭis* itself and questions concerning the *Muğtabā al-udabā'*.

The *Mağnāṭis* itself is all the more interesting since it is – as far as I know – the only extant letter of this sort. As said, *Muğtabā al-udabā'* was conceived as a link in the series of anthologies of contemporary literature initiated by aṭ-Ṭa'ālibi's *Yatīmah* and which was aimed at updating and extending the literary canon. This series includes al-Bāḡharzi's (d. 1075) *Dumyat al-qaṣr*, al-Bayhaqī's (d. 1170) lost anthology *Wiṣāḡ Dumyat al-qaṣr*, 'Imād ad-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī's (d. 1201) *Ḥarīdat al-qaṣr*, and Ibn aṣ-Ṣa'ār's (d. 1256) *'Uqūd al-ğumān fi ṣu'arā' hādā z-zamān*, all of which predate the *Muğtabā*, as well as the later, Ottoman anthologies *Rayḡānah al-alibbā'* by al-Hafāğī (d. 1659), al-Muḡhibbī's *Nafḡat ar-Rayḡānah* (d. 1699) and Ibn Mas'ūm's *Sulāfat al-ʿaṣr* (d. 1692), to name but a few well-known works. These anthologies aspired to cover the Arabic literary production of all Muslim domains and were, with one exception, arranged geographically, as is the case with their prototype, aṭ-Ṭa'ālibi's *Yatīmah*. Anthologies of contemporary literature with a limited geographical scope, such as Ibn Bassām's *Daḡīrah* or Ibn Ḥāqān's (d. 1134) *Qalā'id al-ʿiqyān*, which focus on al-Andalus, can also be said to belong to the same series in that they followed aṭ-Ṭa'ālibi's example in selecting contemporary or relatively contemporary literature and publishing original literary work, especially in the case of lesser figures whose work had not been collected previously. Besides aspiring to complement aṭ-Ṭa'ālibi's work, they also adopted the format of the *Yatīmah*'s single entries and, to a certain extent, its organizational principles.⁸

More precisely, as can be deduced from a reference to his former patron, Sultan an-Nāṣir Ḥasan (MS Yale fol. 3r, MS Riyadh fol. 4r), he composed a first draft of the introduction to the *Muğtabā*, which he quotes in the *Mağnāṭis*, after the latter's death in 762/1361. Evidently the *Mağnāṭis*, too, was composed after this date.

⁸ See the long list of such anthologies in Ibn aṣ-Ṣa'ār, *Qalā'id al-ğumān fi farā'id ṣu'arā' hādā z-zamān* (al-maṣhūr bi-*'Uqūd al-ğumān fi ṣu'arā' hādā z-zamān*), ed. Kāmil Salmān al-Ğubūrī, 9 vols., Beirut 2005, 1:61-64; cf. Orfali, Bilal, "The Sources of al-Tha'ālibi in *Yatīmat al-Dabr* and *Tatimmat al-Yatīma*", in: *Middle Eastern Literatures* 16/1 (2013), pp. 1-47, 2-3; *idem*, "A Sketch Map of Arabic Poetry Anthologies up to the Fall of Baghdad", in: *JAL* 43 (2012), pp. 29-59, 55-57; Bauer, Thomas, "Literarische Anthologien der Mamlukenzeit", in: Conermann, Stephan, & Anja Pistor-Hatam (eds.), *Die Mamluken. Studien zur ibrer*

Starting with at-Taʿālibī, many of Ibn Abī Ḥaḡalah's predecessors inform us of their sources, oral and written, and how they went about the formidable task of collecting their material; they sometimes also point at the existence of previous drafts of their anthologies in circulation.⁹ They normally provide such information in their introductions as well as in various entries throughout the anthologies. For instance, in his introduction to the *Yatimah*, at-Taʿālibī informs us that the great success of an earlier version of this work had prompted contemporary litterateurs to send him their writings. In addition, in several entries he tells us how he managed to get hold of a *ḍirwān* or other document, either from the author directly or through some intermediary, and he also names his informants who had provided orally transmitted poetry.¹⁰ ʿImādaddīn al-Iṣfahānī gives particularly precise details about how and when he gained access to his data, often noting the exact place, occasion and date on which he had heard or copied a poem or piece of prose. In an equally meticulous way, he names his written sources, from which most of his material on Egypt, the Maghreb and al-Andalus was drawn.¹¹ Most of the anthologists that engaged in such large-scale projects were well-connected men who managed to amass their material through acquaintances and other informants or enjoyed access to libraries and did so over long periods of time, sometimes during their travels. Ibn Abī Ḥaḡalah apparently collected his Egyptian material in similar ways. The course of action he took with regard to the other areas was rather uncommon. True, Ibn Bassām occa-

Geschichte und Kultur. Zum Gedenken an Ulrich Haarmann (1942-1999), Hamburg 2003, pp. 71-122, 84-85; Hamori, Andras, & Thomas Bauer, "Anthologies. A. Arabic Literature", in: *EI Three* 2007/1: 118-28.

On the organizational principle of the *Yatimah*, see Orfali, *Sources*, p. 2; *idem*, *Sketch Map*, p. 55.

⁹ A pioneer of Quellenforschung concerning these anthologies is Maḥmūd ʿAbdallāh al-Ġādir: see his "Maṣādir Ibn Bassām fi kitābihi d-Ḍaḡīrah", in: *al-Mawrid* 13/3 (1984), pp. 29-62, and his three previous studies on the *Yatimah* (1981), the *Tatimmat* (1980) and the *Dumyab* (1982) mentioned there, pp. 29, 59 (not available to me).

¹⁰ Orfali, Bilal, "The Works of Abū Maṣṣūr al-Thaʿālibī (350-429/961-1039)", in: *JAL* 40/3 (2009), pp. 273-318, 276-77; *idem*, *Sources*, pp. 6-9, 8, 9-11.

¹¹ Richards, Donald S., "ʿImād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī, Administrator, Litterateur and Historian" in: Shatzmiller, Maya (ed.), *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-Century Syria*, Leiden 1993, pp. 133-46, 135, 140-41. The detailed information ʿImādaddīn gives about his sources and informants in the *Ḥarīḍab* has been admirably mined by Lutz Richter-Bernburg with the aim of reconstructing the anthologist's broad network of acquaintances among contemporary intellectuals and the political elite and supplementing his biographical data: see his "Funken aus dem kalten Flint: ʿImād ad-Dīn al-Kātib al-Iṣfahānī", in: *Die Welt des Orients* 20-21 (1989-90), pp. 121-66, 22 (1991), pp. 105-41.

On Ibn Bassām's sources, in addition to al-Ġādir's article, see Soravia, Bruna & Mohamed Meouak, "Ibn Bassām al-Ṣantarīnī (M. 542/1147): Algunos aspectos de su antología Al-Ḍajira fi maḥāsīn ahl al-ʿYazīra", in: *Al-Qantara* 18/1 (1997), pp. 221-32, 227-30.

On Ibn aṣ-Ṣāʿar's sources, see the editor's introduction in *ʿUqūd al-ḡumān*, 1:31-40 (what enabled him to collect his material, apart from several journeys, was the fact that he spent six years in Arbil at a time when the city was flourishing and managed to attract numerous scholars and litterateurs: *ibid.*, p. 36).

sionally quotes from the letters he addressed to contemporary litterateurs requesting that they send him their works, as well as from the letters he received in reply. But these were private letters.¹² The same was apparently true of the letters of Ibn Ḥāqān, whose case is notorious. According to Yāqūt, when Ibn Ḥāqān decided to compile his *Qalā'id al-'iqyān*, he wrote to several prominent Andalusians, who were also reputed to be men of letters, informing them of his project and asking them to send him some of their prose and poetry to include in his book. Those who accepted and sent their documents along with some gift or money were made the subject of panegyrics, while the others were passed over in silence or criticised adversely. This was the treatment meted out to Ibn Bāḡḡah in particular, an extremely derogatory entry on whom Ibn Ḥāqān placed at the very end of the *Qalā'id*. Ibn Bāḡḡah thereupon sent Ibn Ḥāqān ample gifts and thus received an entirely different albeit very short entry in the latter's second anthology, the *Maṭmaḥ al-anfus*.¹³

To return to Ibn Abī Ḥaḡalah, the *Maḡnāṭis* documents that very practice, but with a crucial difference: it does not address any specific individual. It is worded as an open call,¹⁴ even though, like Ibn Bassām's and Ibn Ḥāqān's letters, it may have been intended to be sent or forwarded to specific recipients. Yet information on how Ibn Abī Ḥaḡalah planned to circulate the *Maḡnāṭis* is entirely lacking. Imaginably, one could circulate such a letter at the *ḥaḡḡ* or entrust it to friends to be carried with them on their travels, but Ibn Abī Ḥaḡalah says nothing on this point. At all events, couching his letter as an open call allowed him to skip the formalities of private correspondence and to focus on and advertise the book he was working on, by way of a prepublication. Evidently his aim was to provide information about the project and his own credentials in such a way as to persuade his addressees to respond positively. Ibn Abī Ḥaḡalah's competence and culture are indeed amply

¹² See Ibn Bassām aš-Šantarīnī, *ad-Daḥīrah fi maḥāsīn abl al-ḡazīrah*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās, 4 vols., Beirut 1975-79, 2:536-41 (on his correspondence with Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Dī l-Wizāratayn Abi Marwān Ibn 'Abdal'azīz; he quotes from his letter to him and the latter's reply); 3:654-55 (on the letters he sent to Abū Ḥātim al-Ḥiḡārī prompting him to send him his work; he quotes from one of them); 3:787-92 (he reports that, having no specimen of Ibn Abi Ḥiṣāl's prose and poetry, he asked a common friend to contact him and ask him to send Ibn Bassām samples of his work, and that he himself did so too; he quotes from Ibn Abi Ḥiṣāl's reply letters to both of them); cf. al-Ġādir, *Maṣādir*, pp. 47-50.

¹³ Bencheneb, M., & Ch. Pellat, "al-Fath b. Muḥammad b. 'Ubayd Allāh b. Khāqān", in: *EP* 2 (1965): 838; Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muḡam al-udabā': Iršād al-arīb ilā ma'rīfat al-adīb*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās, 7 vols., Beirut 1993, 5:2163-65; Ibn Ḥāqān, *Qalā'id al-'iqyān wa-maḥāsīn al-'ayān*, ed. Ḥusayn Ḥaryūš, 2 vols., az-Zarqā' 1989, 2:931-47; idem, *Maṭmaḥ al-anfus wa-masrah at-ta'annus fi mulah' abl al-Andalus*, ed. Muḥammad 'Alī Ṣawābīkah, Beirut 1983, pp. 397-99; on this and similar cases cf. the editor's introduction, *ibid*, pp. 38-46.

Ibn Ḥāqān too refers to his practice of writing to ask for specimens of a litterateur's work: e.g. in *Qalā'id*, 1:521-25, he quotes Ibn Abi Ḥiṣāl's reply to his request (on this letter, which might originally have been sent to Ibn Bassām, see the editor's comments in Ibn Bassām, *Daḥīrah*, 3:788, note 2); in *Qalā'id*, 2:614, he cites Abū 'Abdallāh Ibn Ḥamdīn's reply to his request.

¹⁴ *Maḡnāṭis*, MS Yale fol. 2r: ...an ad'awa li-ma'dubatibi l-ḡafalā.

demonstrated throughout the letter, which is also typical of his scintillating rhyming prose. To paraphrase Thomas Bauer, apart from ‘fulfill[ing] a purpose in the mode of pragmatic communication’ this ‘occasional text’ was also ‘intended to be read as a literary text’.¹⁵ But in this case, the aesthetic/literary qualities of the text were meant to enhance its pragmatic/communicative impact. Hence, besides singing the praises of both the *Mağnātīs* and the *Muğtabā* on several occasions, Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah concludes Part Five – the sample entries section – with a short entry on himself (edited here in the appendix), where he again boasts about his literary output and its excellence. Obviously this was not the place for false modesty; the work had to operate, in accordance to its suggestive title, as a ‘Magnet for Precious Pearls’.

If the sample entries were meant to testify to the high quality of the *Muğtabā* and the author’s fine literary taste, the extracts from its introduction apparently addressed issues of special importance to the anthologist which stood at the top of his agenda: namely, his reasons for compiling the work, the excellence of contemporary literature, and the permissibility, if not necessity, of including *muğūn* and wine poetry. The first two points – the reasons for compiling the work and the excellence of contemporary literature – are clichéd topics in introductions to such anthologies. The salvage of contemporary literature, the very best of which risked being lost due to scholars’ inattention to it, and the lack of similar anthological endeavours are the reasons which anthologists typically invoke for embarking on projects of this kind. The excellence of contemporary literature, which makes it a subject worthy of attention, preservation and study, is a presupposition of this argument; nevertheless, starting with aṭ-Ta‘ālibī, most of Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah’s predecessors deemed it necessary to elaborate on this point, too, and even declared contemporary literature superior to that of earlier times.¹⁶ In a way, this was a continuation or recast of an earlier discussion on the poetry of the *muḥdatūn*, the early Abbasid poets, and their stylistic innovations.¹⁷ In Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah’s view, the salvage operation was made necessary by the overwhelming quantity of contemporary literary production. Excellent poetry was at risk of

¹⁵ Bauer, Thomas, “Mamluk Literature as a Means of Communication”, in: Conermann, Stephan (ed.), *Ubi sumus – Quo vademus: Mamluk Studies – State of the Art*, Göttingen 2013, pp. 23-56, 24-25.

¹⁶ See Orfali, Bilal, “The Art of the *Muqaddima* in the Works of Abū Maṣṣūr al-Tha‘ālibī (d. 429/1039)”, in: Behzadi, Lale & Vahid Behmardi, *The Weaving of Words: Approaches to Classical Arabic Prose*, Beirut 2009, pp. 181-202, 183; *idem*, *Sketch Map*, p. 55; Soravia-Meouak, *Ibn Bassām*, p. 228, notes 27 and 28 (on Ibn Bassām and Ibn Ḥāqān respectively); van Gelder, Geert Jan, “Shihāb al-Dīn al-Khafājī”, in: Lowry, Joseph E., & Devin J. Steward (eds.), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography II: 1350-1850*, Wiesbaden 2009, pp. 251-61, 258 (‘partisanship for one’s time is one of the signs of chivalry’), 260; Lowry, Joseph E., “Ibn Ma‘ṣūm”, in: *ibid*, pp. 174-83, 178; more generally, Freimark, Peter, *Das Vorwort als literarische Form in der arabischen Literatur*, Münster 1967, pp. 68-71.

¹⁷ On this dispute, which has often been compared to the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns, see van Gelder, G.J.H., “*Muḥdatūn*”, in: *EL*² Supplement 9-10 (2004): 637-40, and *idem*, “Ancients and Moderns”, in: *EL Three* 2007/1: 113-14.

being engulfed in its own copious billows / masses (*buhūr*, also meaning 'metres'), and exquisite prose (*mantūr*, which also means 'gillyflower') was on the point of vanishing just as flowers are concealed by lush leafage (*waraq*, also meaning 'sheets of paper') – all the more so as contemporary historians did not bother recording this literature systematically.¹⁸

Already in Part Two Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah comments that earlier literature has been studied and discussed so extensively that it has become a tedious topic. Part Three,¹⁹ which was aimed at refuting 'Antarah's maxim that previous poets hadn't left anything unsaid, consists mainly of a series of prose and poetic citations to the effect that wisdom and excellence are not the prerogative of any given time period. After a long citation from Ibn Bassām's introduction to the *Dahīrah* along this line of thinking, Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah points to what he sees as a proof of his thesis, to wit, the fact that with his *Maqāmāt* al-Ḥarīrī (1054-1122) outshone Badi' az-Zamān al-Hamaḡānī (968-1008), the originator of that genre. A short quotation from Ibn Mālik's (renowned grammarian, 1204-1274) *Tashīl al-fawā'id*, a manual of grammar, intimates that what is true of literature is true of other disciplines as well. His point is further corroborated by a series of thirteen poetic fragments by Abbasid, Ayyubid and Andalusian poets as well as the author himself, to the effect that late poets are not necessarily less gifted; one's last love is better than the first, just as Muḡammad is the last but most revered prophet; the most beautiful flowers are those that blossom last; thoughts and conceits are inexhaustible. Surprisingly, however, Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah concludes in a reconciling tone with a couplet of his that acknowledges the input of both earlier and contemporary poets and highlights literary continuity.

Noticeably more space is devoted to the vindication of his choice to also anthologize *muḡān* and wine poetry. In MS Riyadh this part takes up nine pages as opposed to four and a half and five pages of Parts Two and Three respectively.²⁰ Here too Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah's views are underpinned by invoking earlier authorities. His argument is based on the widely circulating saying *raḡwīḡū l-qulūba ta'ī d-dīkr* ('rest the hearts so that they [can] understand the lecture/Quran'). Al-Ġāḡīz and some later authors attribute this maxim to Qasāma b. Zuhayr, a 'successor' (*tābī'ī*, i.e. of the Companions of the Prophet) and *ḡadīḡ*-transmitter.²¹ Other authors claim that it was a Prophetic *ḡadīḡ*, but this is apparently wrong. At any rate, this adage occurs repeatedly in introductions to *adab* works, especially works on an entertaining subject matter, usually among other similar sayings and reports on the Prophet's Companions and their approval of laughter, humour and amusement as

¹⁸ See Part Two, MS Riyadh fol. 3r-5r; MS Yale fol. 2r-3v.

¹⁹ MS Riyadh fol. 5r-7v; MS Yale fol. 3v-5r.

²⁰ MS Riyadh fol. 7v-12r; MS Yale fol. 5r-7v.

²¹ Ibn Ḥaḡar al-Asḡalānī, *Tabḡīb at-taḡḡīb*, ed. Ibrāḡīm Zaybaḡ & 'Ādil Muḡsid, 4 vols., Beirut 2014, 3:440; *idem*, *al-Isāḡab fī tamyiz aḡ-ḡaḡābah*, ed. 'Ādil 'Abdalmawḡūd & 'Alī Mu'awwad, 8 vols., Beirut 1995, 5:397.

a means to reinvigorate the soul.²² In Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah's view *adab* books in general are composed with a view to entertaining and thus relaxing and reviving the mind, which gets weary of serious work and thinking. *Zarāfab* ('wittiness, elegance') and the writer's craft itself require this course of action, to which only ignoramus object. Those who are well-versed in the ways of polite society and in elegant conversation know that an *adīb* adheres to variety and mixes jest with earnest and that for every kind of discourse there is a right time and a right place. Having argued thus, he quotes an array of sayings by various widely respected figures, such as 'Abdallāh b. 'Abbās, Abū l-'Atāhiya, al-Ġāḡiz, Abū Firās al-Ḥamdānī, 'Atīq b. Muḡammad (a Maghribī preacher and traditionist, contemporary of Ibn Rašīq)²³ and the thirteenth-century poet al-Is'irdī,²⁴ who sanction – by example – the indulgence in joking and frivolous entertainment. Among his citations, there are two remarkably long quotes: the first, from al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baḡdādī's *Tārīḡ Baḡdād*, is a story about al-Mubarrad and his visit to a mental hospital. The gist of this story, it seems, is that even lunatics understand the author's point, for the madman with whom the grammarian conversed outdid al-Mubarrad in honesty (and thus shamed him) by openly declaring his liking for wine and love poetry and implicitly defending their legitimacy.²⁵ The longest and most important citation, the last of this array, comes from *aṭ-Ṭālī' as-sa'īd al-ḡāmi' asma' nuḡabā' aṣ-Ṣa'īd*, a biographical work on the prominent men of Upper Egypt, by al-Udfuwī (1286-1347), an early fourteenth-century Egyptian scholar. This is a passage from his entry on the distinguished religious scholar and caḡī Ibn Daḡīq al-'Īd, who to some was the greatest religious authority of the eighth Islamic century. Various reports attest to

²² See al-Ġāḡiz, *al-Bayān wa-t-tabyīn*, ed. 'Abdassallām Muḡammad Ḥārūn, 4 vols., Cairo 1998, 1:327; *idem*, *Rasā'il al-Ġāḡiz*, ed. 'Abdassallām Muḡammad Ḥārūn, 4 vols., Cairo 1964-79, 1:290; Iṣḡāq b. Ibrāḡim al-Kātib, *al-Burbān fi waḡūb al-bayān*, ed. Ḥifnī Muḡammad Ṣaraf, Cairo 1969, p. 199 (quoted anonymously); [an-Naysābūrī] Abū l-Qāsim al-Ḥasan b. Muḡammad, *'Uqalā' al-maḡānin*, ed. 'Umar al-As'ad, Beirut 1987, p. 238 (cited as a prophetic *ḡadīṭ*); Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣḡāhānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, 10 vols., Beirut 1996, 3:104 (cited as a *ḡadīṭ* transmitted by Qasāma b. Zuhayr on the authority of Abū Mūsā al-Aṣ'arī and Abū Hurayrah); al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baḡdādī, *at-Taṭfīl*, ed. Bassām 'Abdalwahḡāb al-Ġābī, Beirut 1999, p. 44 (attributed to Qasāma b. Zuhayr); Ibn al-Ġawzī, *Abḡār al-ḡamqā wa-l-muḡaffalīn*, ed. 'Abdalāmīr Muḡannā, Beirut 1990, p. 15 ('an Usāma b. Zayd, a companion of the Prophet); *idem*, *Ṣayd al-ḡāṭir*, ed. 'Abdalḡādir Aḡmad 'Aṭā, Beirut 1992, p. 97 (quoted anonymously); az-Zamaḡṣarī, Muḡammad b. 'Umar, *Rabī' al-abrār wa-nuṣūṣ al-abḡār*, ed. 'Abdalāmīr Muḡannā, 5 vols., Beirut 1992, 1:23 ('an Qasāma b. Zuhayr). In his introduction to *Ummūdaḡ al-qīṭal fi naql al-'awāl* (ed. Mu'ḡib al-'Adwānī, Beirut 2012, p. 5) Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah refers to this saw (*al-qulūb ta'ī d-dīkr kamā warada fi l-aṭār*) in the context of his justification of writing a book on chess (for chess itself relaxes and reinvigorates the souls).

²³ See al-Kutubī, Muḡammad b. Ṣākir, *Fawāṭ al-wafayāt wa-d-ḡayl 'alayḡā*, ed. Iḡsān 'Abbās, 5 vols., Beirut 1973-74, 2:436-37; aṣ-Ṣafadī, Ḥalīl b. Aybak, *Kitāb al-wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, ed. Aḡmad Arnā'ūt & Ṭurki Muṣṭafā, 29 vols., Beirut 2000, 19:296-98.

²⁴ Rosenthal, Franz, "al-Is'irdī", in: *EP² Supplement 7-8* (2003): 462-63; Ibn Faḡlallāh al-'Umārī, Ṣīḡābaddīn, *Masālik al-abṣār fi mamālik al-amṣār*, ed. Kāmīl Salmān al-Ġubūrī et al., 27 vols., Beirut 2010, 16:154-75.

²⁵ MS Riyadh fol. 8v-9v; MS Yale fol. 5v-6r. Cf. al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baḡdādī, *Tārīḡ Madīnat as-Salām*, ed. Baṣṣār 'Awwād Ma'rūf, 17 vols., Beirut 2001, 4:607-8.

the fact that the amiable and unpretentious scholar never hid his liking for music and poetry, especially those light genres that were composed in the vernacular (*marwāliyyā*, *zağal*, etc.) notwithstanding their frequently licentious contents.²⁶ Ibn Abi Ḥağalah rounds up by invoking Quran 26:225 which states that 'poets say what they do not do', and by repeating that the mind needs rest so that it [can] grasp religious teaching, that *adab* books are composed for the refreshment and recreation of bored and weary souls and that only bores and ignoramus fail to understand this. His arguments were of course not new. Most authors who quote licentious literature discuss it in terms of comic entertainment, instead of obscenity, thus appropriating the arguments that were invoked to legitimize *hazl* ('jesting').²⁷ Serving as it did a serious purpose, *hazl* was itself serious and useful. *Zarf / zarāfab* ('wittiness') was a positive quality routinely attributed to the *māğīn*, the 'libertine', as well as to the *adīb* and, more generally, the consumer of licentious literature.²⁸

Let me now turn to Part Five, the sample entries:²⁹ What is very interesting here is the anthology's alphabetic arrangement, for it breaks with the organizational principles of the *Yatīmah* and its sequels. As I have said, these anthologies were arranged geographically. On a lower level, however, that is to say, within the overarching geographical divisions and subdivisions, anthologists also took social criteria into consideration, viz. named rulers first, then viziers, then cadis and other '*ulamā*', then lower bureaucrats and, finally, free-lance litterateurs. Only rarely did literary talent and excellence play a role and upset the purely hierarchical ordering. Aṭ-Ta'ālībī was the first to apply such social criteria, but his successors seem to have observed them even more strictly. Ibn Ḥāqān even abandoned the geographical arrangement in favour of the hierarchical social one.³⁰ Ibn Abi Ḥağalah notes that in adopting an alphabetic arrangement he followed in the footsteps of al-Udfuwī in his aforementioned work on the prominent men of Upper Egypt.³¹ This arrangement brings the work closer to biographical dictionaries. Nevertheless, the author's choice seems to reflect the literary and social realities of the Mamluk era, rather than simply to adopt a

²⁶ MS Riyadh fol. 10v-11v; MS Yale fol. 6v-7v. Cf. al-Udfuwī, Ġa'far b. Ta'lab, *aṭ-Ṭālī' as-sa'īd al-ğāmi' asmā' nuğabā' aṣ-Ṣa'īd*, ed. Sa'd Muḥammad Ḥasan, Cairo 1966, pp. 583-84.

²⁷ See van Gelder, Geert Jan, "Mixtures of Jest and Earnest in Classical Arabic Literature", in: *JAL* 23 (1992), pp. 83-108, 169-90; Meisami, Julie Scott, "Arabic *Mujūn* Poetry: The Literary Dimension", in: De Jong, Frederick (ed.), *Verse and the Fair Sex: Studies in Arabic Poetry and the Representation of Women in Arabic Literature*, Utrecht 1993, pp. 8-30, 13-5, 24, 29-30; Hämeen-Anttila, Jaakko, "What is Obscene? Obscenity in Classical Arabic Literature", in: Talib, Adam, et al. (eds.), *The Rude, the Bad, and the Bawdy: Essays in Honour of Geert Jan van Gelder*, Oxford 2014, pp. 13-23, 16, 18-19, 22.

²⁸ Szombathy, Zoltan, *Mujūn: Libertinism in Medieval Muslim Society and Literature*, Cambridge 2013, pp. 247-302, 265-79.

²⁹ MS Riyadh fol. 12r-32v; MS Yale fol. 7v-20v.

³⁰ See Orfali, *Sources*, p. 2; *idem*, *Sketch Map*, pp. 55-57; Soravia-Meouak, *Ibn Bassām*, p. 226 (on social criteria by Ibn Bassām).

³¹ MS Riyadh fol. 12r; MS Yale fol. 7v.

principle used in biographical literature. The spread of education, ‘the increasing participation of traders and craftsmen in literary life’ and the ‘gradual blurring of the boundaries between “elite” and “popular” literature’, are arguably behind the abandonment of the characteristic hierarchical social ordering of the previous anthologies.³² What we do not know of course is whether Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah aimed to retain the overarching geographical division, but this is certainly most probable.

The sample entries are of unequal length and include two Ibrāhims, the poets al-Qirāṭī (1326-1379)³³ and al-Mi‘mār (d. 1349),³⁴ and three Aḡmads, the lesser figures Aḡmad b. Ismā‘il Sumaykah (d. 1349)³⁵ and Šihābaddin Aḡmad b. Muḡammad al-Ḥāḡibi (d. 1349),³⁶ and Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah himself. Al-Mi‘mār’s entry is the longest (10.5 folia = 21 pages), the second longest being that of al-Qirāṭī (6 folia = 12 pages). The Aḡmads were given much shorter notes: Sumaykah one folio (2 pages), al-Ḥāḡibi a page and a half, Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah a folio and a half (3 pages).³⁷ One should bear in mind that the citations from the *Muḡtabā* may be abridged; apparently the introduction to that work was much longer and perhaps unfinished at the time that Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah was composing the *Maḡnāṭis*. The sample entries too may be abridged. The various sections (*fusūl*) of al-Qirāṭī’s entry (see below), for example, seem to me to be too short, but of course there is no way of knowing whether they are abridged or not. Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah’s autobiographical entry also gives the impression of having been shortened, all the more so as it contains no specimens of his works.

³² Bauer, *Mamluk Literature as a Means of Communication*, p. 23; *idem*, “Mamluk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches”, in: *Mamlūk Studies Review* 9/2 (2005), pp. 105-32, 110-11.

The only other work of the series of *Yatimah* sequels that is arranged alphabetically is Ibn aš-Ša‘ār’s *Uqūd al-ḡumān*, which Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah most probably did not know of. Ibn aš-Ša‘ār presumably took over this principle from a previous book of his, *Tuḡfat al-wuzarā‘*, which no longer exists, but which was a sequel to al-Marzubānī’s alphabetically arranged *Muḡam aš-šurā‘* (see Ibn aš-Ša‘ār, *ibid.*, 1:60-61).

³³ Perhaps the best poet of that era after Ibn Nubātah al-Miṣrī (1287-1366); see Ibn Taḡribirdi, Abū l-Maḡāsin Yūsuf, *an-Nuḡūm az-zābirah fi mulūk Miṣr wa-l-Qābirah*, ed. Muḡammad Ḥusayn Šamsaddin, 16 vols., Beirut 1992, 11:160-62; *idem*, *al-Manbal aš-šāfi*, ed. Muḡammad Muḡammad Amin, 13 vols., Cairo 1984-2009, 1:89-95; Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā‘ al-ḡumr bi anbā‘ al-‘umr*, ed. Hasan Habaši, 4 vols., Cairo 1969-98, 1:200-1; *idem*, *ad-Durar al-kāminah fi a‘yān al-mi‘ab at-tāminah*, 4 vols., Hyderabad 1931, 1:31; al-Fāsi, Muḡammad b. Aḡmad, *al-‘Iqd at-tāmin fi ta’riḡ al-balad al-amin*, ed. Muḡammad Ḥāmid al-Fiḡi et al., 8 vols., Cairo [1958]-1969, 3:217-29.

³⁴ See Bauer, Thomas, “Ibrāhim al-Mi‘mār: Ein dichtender Handwerker aus Ägyptens Mamlukenzeit”, in: *ZDMG* 152 (2002), pp. 63-93, and the sources given there.

³⁵ See Özkan, Hakan, “Ein Fischlein mit Lästermaul: Ibrāhim al-Mi‘mār’s liebster Feind, Aḡmad b. Ismā‘il as-Sumayka” (forthcoming), and the sources given there.

³⁶ aš-Šafadi, *al-Wāfi*, 8:106-8; *idem*, *A‘yān al-‘aṣr wa-a‘wān an-naṣr*, ed. ‘Ali Abū Zayd et al., 6 vols., Damascus 1988, 1:366-69; Ibn Ḥaḡar, *ad-Durar al-kāminah*, 1:312-13.

³⁷ The counting is based on MS Riyadh: al-Qirāṭī fol. 12v-19r; al-Mi‘mār fol. 19r-29v; Sumaykah fol. 29v-30v; al-Ḥāḡibi fol. 30v-31r; Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah fol. 31r-32v.

The ordering of the entries is strictly alphabetical: Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbdallāh (al-Qīrāṭī) precedes Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī (al-Mīʿmār), etc., but this seems to be a coincidence, given that at the end of Part Two Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah notes that he arranged litterateurs within each letter according to their closeness to him, placing his acquaintances first:³⁸ al-Qīrāṭī was his colleague and friend; by contrast, he had not met al-Mīʿmār personally.

The format of the entries is typical of the series. As in the *Yatimah*, the litterateur's full name is followed by flowery praise, with little or no biographical data and/or a listing of his works, whereupon follow samples of his poetry and prose, if he had written any, whereas in longer entries these samples are arranged thematically or generically. Al-Qīrāṭī's entry, for example, starts with florid praise of the man and his poetry by way of an introduction. Thereupon follow eight short *fuṣūl*: 1. a *faṣl* on his works and poetry collections, which consists solely of an array of titles (witty titles were in vogue in Mamluk times); 2. a *faṣl* on his praise of the Prophet consisting of a ten-line excerpt from an ode; 3. a *faṣl* on his epigrams (*maqāṭīʿ*: eighteen examples, mostly love and wine epigrams, plus some verses by other poets and some comments); 4. a *faṣl* on love poetry (an excerpt from a long ode plus some verses by other poets resembling the last verse of the Qīrāṭī quote); 5. a *faṣl* on his praise poetry (*al-madāʾiḥ wa-ṣukr al-manāʾiḥ*); 6. a *faṣl* on *riṭāʾ*; 7. a *faṣl* on his prose; and 8. a *faṣl* on *muḡūn*, which only comprises a few lampooning epigrams. Similarly, al-Mīʿmār's entry contains an introduction and five *fuṣūl*.³⁹

Apart from the elegance and wittiness of the anthologist's rhyming prose, typical of the series are also his comments and digressions: the mention of similar verses by other poets – for instance, the series of fifteen epigrams and anecdotes on *ṣifāʿ* (neck-slapping) that follow four epigrams on this topic by al-Mīʿmār or the citation of four excerpts by other poets on a motif found in a verse by al-Qīrāṭī –, references to the anthologist's personal relationship to the men whose work he anthologized, if he had any, quotations from their correspondence or *muʿāraḡāt*, etc.

What is not typical of the series, but again reflects the literary developments of the Mamluk era, is the citation of dialectal poetry. Interestingly, Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah did not deem it necessary to comment on the inclusion of such poetry in the *Muḡtabā* – apparently because the vernacular genres had meanwhile been canonized thanks to Ṣafiyaddīn al-Ḥillī's (ca. 1278-1348) *al-ʿĀṭil al-ḥālī*.⁴⁰ Still,

³⁸ MS Riyadh fol. 4v-5r; MS Yale fol. 3r: *ṣadartu kulla ḥarfīn fī l-ḡālībī bi-man ʿāṭaytubū kuʿūsa l-adabī tumma man nazartubū min kaṭabīn tumma man katabtu ʿilayhī fa-kataba tumma man ruwītu ʿanhu, al-aqrabū fa-l-aqrab*.

³⁹ 1. Miscellaneous epigrams; 2. epigrams on the *ʿidār* (first grow of beard) and on beards, as well as 'Berufsepigramme'; 3. epigrams on *ṣifāʿ* (neck-slapping); 4. *muḡūn wa-nawādir*; 5. *mawāliyyā* and *balāliḡ* (=licentious *zaḡals*).

⁴⁰ See al-Ḥillī, Ṣafiyaddīn, *Die vulgäraryabische Poetik al-Kitāb al-ʿaṭil al-ḥālī wa-l-murabbaṣ al-ḡālī des Ṣafiyaddīn al-Ḥillī*, hrsg. und erkl. von Wilhelm Hoenerbach, Wiesbaden 1956.

apart from critical works and thematic anthologies on the new genres, both contemporary and later biographical sources which devote an entry to al-Mi'mār refrained from quoting his *zağals*; by contrast, Ibn Abi Ḥağalah did so uninhibitedly. In any case, his must be the first work of the series of *Yatīmah* sequels to anthologize dialectal poetry.⁴¹

Finally, in Part Six,⁴² Ibn Abi Ḥağalah details his request instructing his addressees to send him their personalia (their name, the names of their father and grandfather, their *nisbabs* and their places of birth and residence), the names of their masters (*šuyūḥ*) and of those litterateurs (*min abli ḥādā l-fann*) from and to whom they transmitted literary material, as well as select poetry and prose of their own composition: he explicitly mentions the various genres that appear in al-Qīrātī's entry, reckoning that all contemporary litterateurs cultivated at least some of these, and advises them to also send him dialectal poetry, if they happen to have composed any. Furthermore, in accordance with the entertaining aspect of his work, he asks them to send any interesting story or anecdote (*ḥikāyah laṭīfah wa-nādirah zarīfah*) which they had heard about or witnessed and might wish to publicize.

Concluding Remarks

With the Mamluk period being 'the golden age' of classical Arabic literary anthologies, as Thomas Bauer has shown, it is indeed very remarkable that the series of *Yatīmah* sequels was almost interrupted in this era – as, again, Thomas Bauer has pointed out.⁴³ Ibn Abi Ḥağalah's assertion that his contemporaries did

⁴¹ In *Dahabīyyat al-ʿaṣr* (ed. Ibrāhīm Šālīḥ, Beirut 1432/2011), a similar anthology by Šihābaddīn Ibn Faḍlallāh al-ʿUmārī (see below), the author mentions three *zağğāls*, ʿAlī b. Muqātil al-Ḥamawī (*ibid*, pp. 177-81), Šarafaddīn Ḥusayn b. Sulaymān (*ibid*, pp. 311-14) and al-Maḥḥār (*ibid*, p. 334, unwritten entry), but does not quote any of their *zağals*. This may be a coincidence, given that this anthology, too, remained unfinished.

On the other hand, in his aforementioned work on the prominent men of Upper Egypt al-Udfuwi extensively cited dialectal poetry; see, e.g., *aṭ-Ṭālīʿ*, pp. 687-89, and the forthcoming study of Hakan Özkan on the Eastern *zağal*.

⁴² MS Riyadh fol. 32v-33v; MS Yale fol. 20v-21r.

⁴³ Professor Bauer (*Literarische Anthologien*, pp. 84-85) has suggested that this may be due to the fact that the percentage of those who participated in literary life had risen so drastically as to almost invalidate one's participation in literary life as a selection criterion and to blur the boundaries between literary anthologies and biographical dictionaries of distinguished contemporaries. Note, however, that Sumaykah and Šihābaddīn al-Ḥāğībī were minor figures and not scholars or otherwise important men, but, significantly, litterateurs. The same is true of Šamsaddīn Ibn al-Fuwayḥ al-Iskandarānī (see aṣ-Šafadī, *Aʿyān al-ʿaṣr*, 4:262-66; Ibn Ḥağar, *ad-Duwar al-kāminab*, 3:365-66), an entry on whom Ibn Abi Ḥağalah announces in Sumaykah's entry. On the other hand, he also includes men primarily known for their scholarly merit and activities, such as Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd, an entry on whom he announces in Part Four. To be sure, both the digressional style and the elegance of the anthologists' prose distinguish the series from biographical literature, but the work does evidence the

not pay due attention to contemporary literature was a false claim and, as I have said, a clichéd reason given by at-Ta'ālībī and his continuators for compiling their works. Some thirty years earlier Šihābaddīn Ibn Faḍlallāh (1301-1349) had started working on a similar project. His *Dababiyyat al-ʿaṣr* remained unfinished but a part of it has recently surfaced and been published.⁴⁴ Apparently, the reduced importance of this series in Mamluk times was due precisely to the bloom of literary anthologies in general, as contemporary literature was extensively anthologized in other kinds of anthologies, especially thematic ones. Nevertheless, as the cases of *Dababiyyat al-ʿaṣr*, *Muḡtabā al-udabāʾ*, at-Tiḡānī's (ca. 1274-1311) lost anthology *ad-Durr an-nāzim fī l-adab wa-t-tarāḡim* on poets and prose writers of the Ḥafsid domains, and perhaps other currently unnoticed works show, the dwindling of the series is also due to purely accidental reasons. As is true of those other anthologies, it is regrettable that *Muḡtabā al-udabāʾ* remained unfinished and its remains have not survived, for to judge from the sample entries cited in the *Maḡnāṭis*, especially those on lesser figures, it would have enhanced our knowledge of the literary life of the period. As to the *Maḡnāṭis*: apart from its literary value, it is a sui generis epistle that offers important insights into the anthologists' methods for collecting their material and advertising their work.

Appendix

The following is an edition of three short extracts from the 'Magnet' as a specimen of the author's style: 1-2. Parts One and Two, stating his reasons for composing the *Maḡnāṭis*, and the *Muḡtabā*, respectively, and 3. the autobiographical entry (from Part Five). I have adapted the text to modern standard Arabic orthographic conventions, adding *hamzabs*, *šaddabs*, dots on *tāʾ marbūṭabs*, and accusative *tanwīn*, when necessary.

Part One, MS Riyadh (=R) fol. 2v-3r; MS Yale (=Y) fol. 2r; MS al-Azhar (=A) fol. 63r-63v

الفصل الأول من هذه الرسالة في السبب الموجب لإثبات فصولها وكتابة¹ وصولها وهو أنّ منشئها أحمد بن² يحيى بن³ أبي بكر بن عبد الواحد المغربي مولدًا دمشقي منشأً نزيل القاهرة الشهير بابن أبي حجلة ألف كتاب أدب في معنى ذخيرة ابن بسّام⁴ المشتملة على فرسان النثر والنظام يشتمل⁵ على غزل ونسيب وذكرى حبيب ومدح وتأيين⁶ وبيان وتبيين وابتداء وجواب⁷ وتعنيف وعتاب وفوائد وزوائد وأخبار وأسفار⁸ ونوادر وبوادر وغير ذلك مما يأخذ بمجامع⁹ القلوب ويحبب نفسه كالغزل بالمحجوب وسميته مجتبي

blurring of the boundaries between 'ulamā' and udabā', which characterizes this period, as Professor Bauer has noted.

⁴⁴ See note 41.

الأدبا]ء¹⁰ فهو عند المصريين بالنسبة إلى الذخيرة كالروضة في الجزيرة وعند ناظم القلائد كدرّ بحره الزائد وعند كافل اليتيمة كالدرّة اليتيمة وعند صاحب دُمية القَصْر من محاسن أهل العصر فلما أُثْرِعَتْ¹¹ من بحوره بمصر خلجانها وأكثر¹² من أكَفّ سواجعه مرجانها والتمث¹³ بذكر شعراء الأمصار ومن قطرت سحائب أدبه في سائر الأقطار من أهل هذا القرن وأرباب هذا الفن لزم من ذلك أن أتبع¹⁴ فيه أخبارهم سهلاً وجبلاً وأن أدعُوْ لمأذْبِيته¹⁵ الجفلى وأنشأت هذه الرسالة في استدعاء¹⁶ نسيم ونسيهم وبعيدهم وقريبهم والتمست من الواقف عليها¹⁷ القعود على منصّتها والكشف على قصتها والإصغاء إليها والتوقيع عليها بما يأتي ذكره مفصلاً في الفصل السادس من هذه الرسالة إن شاء الله تعالى

Variants

1. Y: لكتابة - 2. Y: ابن - 3. A: ابن - 4. R: هشام - 5. R: مشتمل - 6. R: تانين - 7. R: أثْرِعَتْ A, انزلت - 10. A: الأدب - 11. R: يؤخذ بجامع - 9. R: أثمار - 8. A: وابتدا واجواب R: - 16. ادعو ما ادبته R: - 15. Y: اتتبع - 14. R: والزمت - 13. R: كوثر A, كثر - 12. R: استدعا A, استدعا R: - 17. Missing in R.

Part Two, MS Riyadh fol. 3r-5r; MS Yale fol. 2r-3v; MS al-Azhar fol. 63v-65r

الفصل الثاني في ذكر صدر من ديباجة خطبة كتابي مُجْتَبَى الأدبا]ء [الباعث على إنشا]ء¹ هذه الرسالة وطلوع بدر هذه الهالة وهو أما بعد فلما كان هذا القرن الثامن والعصر الذي هو بقيام سوق² الأدب ضامن مشتملاً حتى من صغاره على³ كتاب الكتاب⁴ وشعراء يغني تشبيهم بزینب عن الرباب من كل شاعر مفلق وشهاب محرق لا يُصْطَلَى لجرم أقالمه⁵ بنار ولا يؤخذ⁵ لقتيل بنانه⁶ بشار إذ منهم شعراء كالكميت فحول وفرسان حاسية تدور رحاهم⁷ حولهم وتحول ولم أر إلى يومنا هذا من مؤرخي العصر وواصفي دمية القصر من أفردهم بالذكر ولا أمطر على جمعهم سخابة فكر بيد أن تراجم⁸ بعضهم في تواريحهم متبددة⁹ وديباجة طروسهم أخلقتها الأيام المتجددة فأشرف شعرهم من بحوره على الغرق وضاع منشورهم كالزهر بين الورق فخشيت ضيعة الأدب وما¹⁰ يترتب بترك¹¹ أهل الرتب فاستخرت الله تعالى في جمع شملهم في هذا المعجم والغوص في بحارهم¹² التي يلزها من الدرّ ملزم والسكوت عن مثل أم¹³ أم أوفى¹⁴ دمنة¹⁴ لم تكلم فراؤا من ذكر ما اشتهر وأخلق ديباجة كثنانه¹⁵ القمر ولا أذكر إلا من¹⁶ تأخر زمانه وبان في زهر المنشور بانه مما بهر البهار وطلع بدر طرسه وسط النهار لأنه كان يقال قَلَّتْ التعلقات بشعر المعلقات وكثرت الملامة في بغلة أبي دلامة وبطل الاحتجاج بسخف ابن¹⁷ حجاج وقدم طيلسان ابن¹⁸ حرب ومجت الأسماع ضرورة وهب حتى قيل فيها (بسيط)

قد أكثر الناس في وهب وضرطته * حتى لقد مُلّ ما قالوا وما بردا
 لم تعل¹⁹ ضرطة هاجيه كضرطته * في الذاكرين ولم يُحسد كما حُسد
 يا وهب²⁰ لا تكترث للحاسديك بها * فإِثْمًا أنت غيْث رتْمَا رعدا

وقال ابن قلاقس في الحى (رمل)

هي فوق الصدر قد سد * دته من شرق لغرب
 لحيّة ردّته في النسا * س ولا ضرطة وهب

لا جرم أتى عدلت عن ورود تلك الحياض واستحليت ما لأبناء عصري من الإحاض كقول بعضهم في
 حلو الشائل يلقب بالحامض (خفيف)

وبديع الجمال معتدل القا * مة كالغصن والقتا الأملود
 لقبوه بحامض وهُوَ حلُو * قول من لم يصل إلى العنقود²¹

وقد علم الله ما أودعت هذا الكتاب من محاسن أبناء عصري وجلوته عليهم من بنات فكري وعجائب
 نظمي ونثري كقولي في خطبة المقامات التي أنشأتها باسم السلطان الملك الناصر حسن رحم الله شبابه
 وجعل من الرحيق المختوم شرابه تشتمل على فنون مختلفة ومعان مؤتلفة وقبلة أدب محارِب دالتهما عن
 المقام الشريف غير منحرفة فأما الأدب وفنونه والأيك وغصونه والبديع وجناسه والظبي²² وكناسه والشيء
 وضده والعود ونده فلنظمها²³ فيه اليد الطولى ولقرائن سمعها حسن الآخرة والأولى (بسيط)

فالنظم لي فيه عقد كله درر * وفي سكردان ولي في النثر ألوان
 لو كنت في زمن عبد الرحيم به * ما بات نثري لجينًا وهو عقيان
 إني بليت بقوم لا خلاق لهم * عليهم من ثياب اللؤم خلقان
 في الشام منهم وفي مصر فذاك وذا * إذا ربطتها في النير ندان

وقد علم الله ما أودعتها من مسائل علمية ومنازل علوية وساء²⁴ وبروج وأرض ومروج وقطر ونبات ونيل
 وفرات²⁵ وفراصة وقيافة وزجر²⁵ وعيافة وغير ذلك من مُلح ومُدح ونسب ونشب وعند الامتحان يكرم
 المرء أو يهان (بسيط)

لا يكذب المرء إلا من مهاتته * أو عادة السوء أو من قلّة الأدب

فلو كنت كابن الأثير وغيره ممن يقع لمعانيه المبتكرة ويفخر بسحر²⁶ بيانه على السحرة لفضّلت منشوري على البان وقزظته إلى أن يؤوب القارظان فدونك كتابًا بنات أفكاره من أمّات الأدب وكشبانه تلوح من كذب رعيت²⁷ فيه لأبناء عصري الذم²⁸ وتجنبت²⁸ ما نسب إليهم من كباثر الإثم الفواحش إلا اللمم فرت قوم نظرت إلى ذمهم بعين الإغضاء ورتبت مدحهم على حروف الهجاء²⁹ لأنّه³⁰ كان يقال (كامل)

سامح أخاك إذا خلط * منه الإصابة بالغلط

اللهمّ إلا ما ندر من وصف شاعر كبير الهجاء²⁹ أو مبتدع قائل بالإرجاء³¹ فإني أتبه على حيفه وأقتبه بسيفه وصدرت كلّ حرف في الغالب بمن عاطيته كؤوس³² الأدب ثم من نظرت من كتب ثم من كتبت إليه وكتب ثم من رويت عنه الأقرب فالأقرب من يومنا هذا إلى سنة سبعمئة ولم أترك من الشعراء³³ الجياد في سائر البلاد إلا من تخلف في الساقية ولم يكن لوقوفي على بيوته طاقة ورتبًا ارتبطت بشعر الفقيه المنحلّ وإن قلّ وألحقت من علمه وشعره الوابل بالطلّ رغبة في ذكر سيرته الحميدة³⁴ وسرد تصانيفه³⁴ المفيدة

Variants

1. A: انشأ - 2. Y: سوء - 3. Y: عليّ - 4. A: كتاب الكتاب, probably read: كبار الكتاب - 5. R: من - 6. A: نباله - 7. Y: رجاهم, R: رحاهم - 8. A: ترجم - 9. R: مجددة - 10. R: من - 11. Y: بتزال - 12. Y: بجورهم - 13. R: من - 14. A: زمنة - 15. R: كتابة - 16. R: ما - 17. R: بن - 18. Y, R: بن - 19. A, Y, R: تغل - 20. R: هب - 21. A: the two verses are in reverse order - 22. Y: والظبا - 23. A: لنظمه - 24. R: وسما - 25. R: وحرس - 26. Y, R: وقيامه وزحر - 27. R: دعيت - 28. Y: تجنبت - 29. Y, R: هجا - 30. Missing in Y - 31. R: بالارجا - 32. A: كؤوس - 33. R: الشعر, A: الشعراء - 34. R: وسود تصانيفه.

Notes

1. The phrase تدور رحاهم حولهم وتجوّل is the second hemistich of a verse by as-Samaw'al; see *Dirwānā 'Urwah b. al-Ward wa-s-Samaw'al*, ed. Karam al-Bustānī, Beirut²1982, p. 92.
2. أمّن أمّ أوّفى...تكلم.

3. The three verses on Wahb's fart (*qad aktara n-nāsu...*) are from a poem by Ibn ar-Rūmī; cf. his *Dirwān*, ed. Ḥusayn Naṣṣār, 6 vols., Cairo 1973-81, 2:735-6 (no. 569).
4. فالنظم لي فيه...: the verses are from a poem by Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah, see his *Dirwān*, ed. Muḡāhid Muṣṭafā Bahḡat & Aḡmad Ḥamid Muḡlif, Amman 2010, p. 255.
5. لا يكذب...: Cited anonymously in al-Waṣṣā', *al-Muwaṣṣā'*, Cairo 1953, p. 41.
6. سامح أخاك...: the verse is from al-Ḥariri's *al-Maqāmah aš-ši'riyyah*; see his *Maqāmāt*, ed. Saḡbān Aḡmad Murūwah, Beirut 2012, p. 267.

Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah's Autobiographical Entry (MS Riyadh fol. 31r-32v, MS Yale 19v-20v)

ومنه [أ]بن أبي حجة منشئها أحمد بن يحيى بن أبي بكر بن عبد الواحد المغربي مولداً دمشقي منشئاً نزيل القاهرة الشهير بابن أبي حجة مولده بالمغرب سنة خمس وعشرين وسبعائة بزواية جدّه الشيخ الصالح الزاهد أبي حجة عبد الواحد قدس الله سرّه وروحه¹ ونور ضريحه وكتي جدّه بذلك لصلاح حاله وتعلق الحجل والوحوش بأذياله وزاوية جدّه بالمغرب مشهورة وأحاديث بركته مأثورة يؤخذ منها التراب لطلب الدوا[ء] والتاس الشفاء² أي والله <شعر>³

(وافر) تُرابُهُمُ وحقّ أبي⁴ تُرابٌ * أعزُّ عليّ من عيني⁵ اليمين <آخر>⁶
 (كامل) وحمى يُداسُ تُرابُهُ بنعالهم * متي بأفواه الجفون مقبل
 (طويل) وربُّعُ الذي أهواه يُروي شرابه⁷ العِطاش ويشفي تُرْبُهُ الأعين الرمد⁸

قدم من المغرب⁹ مع أبويه وأخواته وأخويه فبلغوا السول¹⁰ بزيارة الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم ثم تنقلت به بعد موتهم الأحوال وشاهد بمصر بعد رؤية أبي الهول الأحوال فصنف كتابه غرائب العجائب وعجائب الغرائب وفيه يقول (كامل)

هذا الكتاب ذكرْتُ فيه عجائباً * تُغني النديم عن المدامة والطرب
 يترّ سامعها لطيب حديثها * إلا حسوداً ليس يعجبه العجب

فهو من¹¹ شاهد العجب وصنف في الحديث والفقّه¹² والنحو والأدب ما ينيف على ثمانين مصنفاً وتأليفاً ظريفاً بشهادة شواهدا وكثرة ألوان موائدها مثل كتابه سكردان السلطان الذي امتد بحضرة الملوك خوانه وناسبته بحسن التسمية إخوانه وسيأتي من أسائها المرضية في الإجازة الشعبية ما يطيب الأسماع وتدلّ مطالعته على كثرة الاطلاع نعم صنف واستهدف وطارح وناخ وقرأ ودرى¹³ وسمع ورأى وسار وطار

وأكثر من¹⁴ النظام والنتار¹⁵ وجود القصيدة والمقطوع وسلك الطريقة الفاضلية في المنثور والمطبوع وقلّ من أجاد في الثلاثة المذكورة على هذه الصورة لأنّ بحرهما زاخر ومن قام بأحدها¹⁶ قعد به الآخر (طويل)

ويا دارها بالخيّف إنّ مزارها * قريبٌ ولكن دون ذاك أهوال

وأعلم أنّي لم أتخذ الشعر حرفة¹⁷ ولا سكنت من بيوته غرفة¹⁸ بناء على أنّه¹⁹ صناعتي وجلّ²⁰ بضاعتي وإنا دعاني إليه حب الأدب وسجّية العرب وقول عمر رضي الله عنه لا بأس بالأبيات يقدهما الرجل أمام حاجته فيستعطف بها الكرم ويستنزل بها اللثيم وقد قلت في كتابي أغاني التهاني وقد اقتضت الحال ذلك على أنّي والحمد لله كالغني²¹ لم أكن من طلاب الرّفد بشعري ولكنه كان يقال ما بي بطني بي قدري والله تعالى يغنيننا من سعة فضله ولا يجعلنا على خوان البخيل خلّ بقله (وافر)

خوان ليس يحضره ضيوف * وعرضٌ مثل منديل الخوان

اللَّهُمَّ! إلا ما كان في مدح الممدوح بكلّ لسان سيّد ولد عدنان صلّى الله عليه وسلّم وتجد وكرم فاتّه وسيلتي الناجحة وبضاعتي الراجحة حيث قلت في ديواني نسمة القبول في مدح الرسول بعد حمد الله الذي ألهمني من مدح نبيه المختار وجعل لي به²² قدرًا على المقدار وأطلع عليّ شموسه وأقماره آناء²³ الليل وأطراف النهار فأثار به قلبي وجعل مدحه ورثا [ء]ه سنّتي ونديي أحمده حمد من²⁴ منّ عليه بجزيل الطاعة ورفع له بمدح نبيه الدرجات في الساعة (طويل)

وإني لأرجو الله حتى كأنني * أرى بجميل الظن ما الله صانع

Variants

1. Y: روحه - 2. R: الشفا - 3. Missing in R - 4. Y: ابو - 5. Y: عين - 6. Missing in R - 7. R: ترابه - 8. Y: الرمد - 9. Y: الغرب - 10. R: السؤال - 11. Y: من - 12. R: والفقيه - 13. R: حروفه - 14. R: في - 15. R: والنشار - 16. R: بأحد - 17. R: حروفه - 18. R: حروفه - 19. R: اني - 20. R: جبل - 21. R: كالمعيني - 22. Missing in R - 23. R: انّا - 24. Missing in Y.

Notes

1. ... *ترايهم*: the verse is by Ibn al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ; see Ibn Faḍlallāh, *Masālik al-abṣār*, 15:265.
2. ... *وزئع الذي*: Cited anonymously in aṣ-Ṣafadi, *al-Wāfi*, 27:138.
3. ... *هذا الكتاب*: the verses are not found in Ibn Abi Ḥaḡalah's *Dīwān*.
4. ... *ويا دارها*: the verse is by Abū l-ʿAlā' al-Maʿarri; cf. *Saqt az-zand*, ed. Dār Ṣādir, Beirut 1957, 229.
5. ... *خوان ليس*: the verse is by a certain Abū l-Ġanā'im ar-Ramli; see aṭ-Ṭaʿālibī, *Tatimmat al-Yatimah*, ed. Mufid Muḥammad Qumayḥa, Beirut 1983, p. 82.
6. ... *واي لأرجو*: the verse is by Lisānaddīn Ibn al-Ḥaṭīb; see his *Dīwān*, ed. Muḥammad Miftāḥ, 2 vols., Casablanca 1989, 2:650.

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