

Ibn Nubata al-Misri His Dewan and Its Place in Arabic Literature^a İbn Nübâte el-Mısırî Divanı ve Arap Edebiyatındaki Yeri

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Ibn Nubata al-Misri His Dewan and Its Place in Arabic Literature*

Abstract

One of the Arab poets of the Mamluk period is Ibn Nubata al-Misri. He lived in Cairo, Egypt in the years 1287-1366. In the first years of his life, he started poetry by writing poems to praise statesmen. However, these praise poems were ignored and did not receive the attention and reputation he expected. The Malik of Eyyubi al-Melik al-Mueyyed Ebu al-Fida liked the praise poems written by Ibn Nubata about him and supported him materially and morally. After this period of his life, he became famous for his poems. Ibn Nubata published works in areas such as travel books, khutba, description, strange words in verse and hadiths. He became famous for his poetry rather than prose works. His work named *Faraid as-Suluk fi Mesaid al-Muluk*, which contains an ode consisting of one hundred and sixty-seven couplets depicting a hunt they went out with the Malik of Eyyubi al-Melik al-Efdal of the time is an important poetic work of the poet. The ode in this work is also included in Muhammed b. Ibrahim el-Beshteki's dewan compiled from Ibn Nubata's poems. In this dewan, where mostly praise poems take place, there are 1.733 odes consisting of 13.385 couplets. In addition to praise-themed poems, there are also poems with the content of elegance, wine, love, gazal and nature depiction on the dewan. In his poems, he used literary arts such as tevriya, pun, similitude and metaphor frequently and in complete harmony. The poet wrote almost all of his poems with Halil b. Ahmad al-Ferahidi's classical bahirs. There is only one poem from modern bahirs written in muvashshah on the dewan. His poems were put on the dewan according to the rewi letters in the order of the Arabic alphabet. It is seen that he uses all Arabic letters as rewi. The longest poem consists of 167 couplets and the shortest poem consists of one couplet. Most of the poems in the dewan are written in ode genre. Besides the odes, there are a few poems written in tahmis genre. The poet's separate poetic work, which includes both the dewan and the hunting depictions, are two important works to be studied. These works should be examined in many aspects such as content, form and style, literary arts, sentence structures, rhythm and rhyme situations and the literary superiority in poems should be revealed.

Keywords: Arabic Language and Rhetoric, Ibn Nubata al-Misri, Poetry, Literature, Content.

* This study is based on the full-text of a paper we presented in 2020 titled "Ibn Nubata al-Misri and His Dewan". İsmail Ekinci, "Ibn Nubata al-Misri and His Dewan", *Usves* (2. International Symposium on Social Sciences and Educational Sciences, Ankara: Asos, 2020), 409-417.

İbn Nübâte el-Mısırî Divanı ve Arap Edebiyatındaki Yeri

Öz

Memluk dönemi Arap şairlerinden birisi de İbn Nübâte el-Mısırî'dir. 1287-1366 Yıllarında Mısır'ın Kahire şehrinde yaşamıştır. Ömrünün ilk yıllarında devlet büyüklerine medih şiirleri yazarak şairliğe başlamıştır. Ancak bu medih şiirleri önemsenmemiş ve beklediği ilgi ve itibarı görmemiştir. Eyyûbî Emîri el-Meliku'l-Müeyyed Ebu'l-Fidâ, İbn Nübâte'nin kendisi hakkında yazdığı medih şiirlerini beğenmiş ve onu maddî ve manevî olarak desteklemiştir. Hayatının bu döneminden sonra şiirleriyle meşhur olmuştur. İbn Nübâte seyahatname, hutbe, tasvir, ayet ve hadislerdeki garip kelimeler gibi alanlarda eserler neşretmiştir. Mansur eserlerinden ziyade manzum türündeki eserleri ile meşhur olmuştur. Zamanın Eyyûbî Emîri el-Meliku'l-Efdal'le beraber çıktıkları bir avı tasvir eden ve yüz altmış yedi beyitten oluşan bir kasidenin yer aldığı *Ferâ'idu's-Sulûk fi Mesâ'idi'l-Mulûk* isimli eseri şairin önemli bir manzum eseridir. Bu eserde yer alan kaside ayrıca Muhammed b. İbrâhim el-Beşteki'nin İbn Nübâte'nin şiirlerinden derlediği divanında da yer almaktadır. Çoğunlukla medih şiirlerinin yer aldığı bu divanda 13.385 beyitten oluşan 1.733 kaside bulunmaktadır. Divanda medih temalı şiirlerden başka mersiye, şarap, aşk, gazel ve tabiat tasviri muhtevalı şiirler de bulunmaktadır. Şiirlerinde edebi sanatlardan tevriye, cinas, teşbih ve istiare gibi sanatları sıkça ve tam bir ahenkle kullanmıştır. Şair şiirlerinin neredeyse tamamını Halil b. Ahmed el-Ferâhîdî'nin klasik bahirleriyle yazmıştır. Divanda modern bahirlerden muvaşşah ile yazılmış sadece bir şiir bulunmaktadır. Şiirleri revî harflerine göre Arap alfabesi sırasına göre divana konulmuştur. Bütün Arap harflerini revî harfi olarak kullandığı görülmektedir. En uzun şiir 167 beyitten, en kısa şiir ise bir beyitten oluşmaktadır. Divandaki şiirlerin büyük çoğunluğu kaside türünde yazılmıştır. Kasidelerin yanında az sayıda tahmis türünde yazılmış şiir de yer almaktadır. Şairin gerek divanı gerekse de av tasvirlerinin yer aldığı müstakil manzum eseri, üzerinde çalışılması gereken iki önemli eserdir. Bu eserler muhteva, şekil ve üslup, edebi sanatlar, cümle yapıları, vezin ve kafiye durumları gibi birçok yönden incelenmeli, şiirlerdeki edebi üstünlükler ortaya konulmalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arap Dili ve Belagatı, İbn Nübâte el-Mısırî, Şiir, Edebiyat, Muhteva.

Introduction

Poetry is an important literary genre in Arabic literature. Many literary figures in almost every period were engaged in poetry. In addition to independent poetry dewans, poems were also included in prose genres. Ibn Nubata al-Misri, one of the Islamic scholars of the Mamluk period, was a poet who had a dewan in which all of his poems were compiled, as well as a detached poetry verse of 167 couplets containing poems depicting hunting and who included many poems in his manuscripts. The dewan compiled by Mohamad b. Abraham al-Bashtaki from Ibn Nubata's poems and Ibn Nubata al-Misri's poem *Ferâid as-Suluk fî Mesaid al-Muluk* are works that should be analyzed in many aspects such as the content of the poems, verse forms, language and stylistic features. In this study, Ibn Nubata al-Misri's life, literary personality, works, and dewan are presented in detail. Biographical and bibliographical works have been reviewed and scattered information on the author has been collected.

1. His Life and Literary Personality

Ibn Nubata, whose full name was Abu Bakr Jamaluddin Muhammad b. Shamsiddin Muhammad b. Nubata al-Fariki al-Misri (d. 768/1366), was born in Cairo, Egypt in Rabi al-Awwal 686 (May 1287). It is known that he was originally from Meyafarikin. His lineage goes back to Ibn Nubata al-Khatib (d. 374/984), the court orator of Sayf al-Dawla. He spent the first years of his life in a scholarly environment in Cairo. His father, Shams al-Din Muhammad, was a renowned scholar of hadith. He studied various sciences, especially hadith, fiqh and literature, from his teachers Baha al-Din Ibn al-Nahhas al-Nahwi, Taqiyy al-Din Ibn Daqiq al-id, Alemuddin Qays b. Sultan al-Darir and received his ijazat from them.¹

Ibn Nubata wrote many eulogies for prominent Ayyubid state officials in Egypt for a period, but these eulogies did not attract attention and respect. In 716/1316, he settled in Damascus. While in Damascus, he often traveled to Hama and visited the Ayyubid Emir al-Malik al-Muayyed Abu al-Fida and a friendship was established between him and the Emir. He wrote eulogies for him and wrote various works on his behalf. In return, he received great material help and support from him. He not only stayed in Hama, but also visited other cities in Syria, wrote eulogies to the statesmen there, and received a lot of material aid and support. In 735/1335, he was appointed as a minister by the Vizier Amin al-Dawla Abdullah al-Amini to look after the cleanliness of Jerusalem and the Church of the Resurrection, which was considered sacred by Christians. He

¹ Abdulwahhab b. Ali b. Abd al-Qafi Tajaddin al-Subki, *Tabaqat* (Aleppo: Faisal Isa, 1964), IX: 273; Khalil b. Abdullah Salahaddin Safadi, *al-Wafi bi al-Wafayat* (Beirut: Dar Ihya at-Turas al-Arab, 2000), I: 234-235; Yusuf b. Jamaluddin al-Mahasin Ibn Taghriberdi, *al-Nujumu al-Zahirah* (Egypt: Vizaret al-Sekafi, 1963), XI: 95-97; Abu al-Fellah Abd al-Hayy b. Ahmad Ibn al-Imad, *Shezeratu al-Zahab fî Ahbari men Zeheb* (Beirut: Daru Ibn Kathir, 1987), VIII: 364; Mohamad b. Ali b. Mohamad b. Abdullah Shawkani, *al-Badru al-Tali* (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiya, 2012), II: 252-254; Hüseyin Tural, "Ibn Nubate al-Misri", *Encyclopaedia of Islam of the Religious Foundation of Turkey* (Istanbul: Turkey Religious Foundation Islamic Research Centre, 1999), XX/233-234; Ekinci, "Ibn Nubata al-Misri and his Dewan". (Ankara: Asos, 2020), 409-417.

traveled to Jerusalem every year during the visiting season until 743/1342. In the beginning of the same year, he was appointed as the clerk of the dewan, and two years later he was dismissed from this position, but he was reinstated in 748/1347.²

In 761/1360, he returned to Cairo after a fifty-year absence upon the invitation of the Mamluk Sultan al-Malik al-Nasser Hassan b. Muhammad. The Mamluk Sultan showed great interest in Ibn Nubata and gave him the position of secret clerk in the dewan. Ibn Nubata was exempted from this position due to his advanced age, but he continued to be paid his salary. Ibn Nubata wrote many eulogies to the Sultan and also wrote a book on his behalf for the imams to recite during Friday sermons. When Sultan al-Malik al-Nasir was assassinated in 762/1361, Ibn Nubata's glorious life came to an end and he lived in hardship until his death in Cairo in the fall of 768/1366. His body was buried in the Sufi shrine outside Bab al-Nasr.³

Ibn Nubata was famous in poetry, prose and writing, and Ibn Hajar notes that he surpassed both his peers and his predecessors in these fields. Tajeddin al-Subki, speaking of Ibn Nubata's literary personality, says that he was the standard-bearer of the poets of his time and that he did not know anyone who was superior to him in poetry, prose, calligraphy, and writing. Among Ibn Nubata's students were well-known poets and writers such as Salah al-Din al-Safadi, Zayn al-Din Ibn al-Wardi, Burhan al-Din al-Kirati, Ibn al-Saiq al-Zumhurridi, Ibn Habib al-Khalabi, Bedr al-Din Ibn al-Sahib, Yahya al-Habbaz al-Hamawi, Shahabed al-Din al-Hajib and Firuzabadi. In his poetry, Ibn Nubata, who mostly focused on themes such as wine, love, ghazals, and the description of nature, was famous for his poetry, but he also attracted attention with his prose, especially his literary writings in the form of letters. In his works, he used literary arts, especially tawriya, puns, metaphor, and allegory, and he made many quotations from Qur'anic verses and hadiths.⁴

2. His Works

1. *Dewan Ibn Nubata al-Misri*: This work, which was published in Cairo in 1288, 1289, 1323 Hijri and in Beirut in 1304 Hijri, is a work compiled by Ibn Hajar's teacher Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Bashtaki from Ibn Nubata's poems. Ibn Hajar wrote an addendum to this work entitled *ez-Zayl ala ma Jamaahu al-Bashtaki min Nazmi Ibn Nubata (al-Itiraf wa al-istidraq ala men Jamaa Diwana Ibn Nubata al-Misri)*.

2. *Hazirat al-Uns ila Hadrat al-Quds*: It is a treatise describing the author's journey to the city of Jerusalem. It was published in Ibn Hijjah's *Samarat al-Awraq*.

² Safadi, *al-Wafi bi al-Wafayat*, I: 234-235; Ibn Taghriberdi, *al-Nujumu al-Zahirah*, XI: 95-97; Shawkani, *al-Badru al-Tali*, II: 252-254; Tural, "Ibn Nubata al-Misri", XX/233-234; Ekinci, "Ibn Nubata al-Misri and his Dewan", 409-417.

³ Mohamad b. Ibrahim Besteki, *Dewan Ibn Nubata al-Misri* (Beirut: Dar Ihya at-Turas al-Arab, 1886), 6.

⁴ Safadi, *al-Wafi bi al-Wafayat*, I: 234-235; Ibn Taghriberdi, *al-Nujumu al-Zahirah*, XI: 95-97; Tural, "Ibn Nubata al-Misri", XX/233-234; Ekinci, "Ibn Nubata al-Misri and his Dewan", 409-417.

3. *Hubzu al-Shair*: It is a treatise on the explanation of the Arabic proverb meaning "Barley bread is both eaten and reviled".

4. *Dewân al-Hutab al-Minberiyye*: It is a work containing fifty-two sermons written in the name of Mamluk Sultan al-Malik al-Nasser Hassan b. Muhammad.

5. *Sharḥ al-Uyun fi Sharh Risaleti Ibn Zaydun*: It is a commentary on the sarcastic treatise written by Ibn Zaydun to the Vizier Ibn Abdus by the mouth of his lover and the daughter of the Umayyad Caliph of Andalusia, al-Mustaḥfi Billah. The work which was printed many times (Istanbul 1275; Cairo 1278, 1290, 1305, 1321, 1348, 1377), was edited and published by Muhammad Abu al-Fazl Ibrahim (Cairo 1383/1964). This work was also translated into Turkish by Karahalilzade Mahmed Said (d. 1168/1754) (Istanbul 1257).

6. *Feraid al-Suluk fi Masaidi al-Muluk*: In this verse of 167 couplets, the poet describes a hunt he and al-Malik al-Afdal went on together. The ode is included in the dewan and was also published independently by Muhammad Esad Tales.

7. *Matlau al-Fawaid wa Majmau al-Faraid*: In the first part of the work, which consists of three parts, the strange words in some hadiths are explained, and in the second and third parts, the innovations and inventions of poets and writers are mentioned.

8. *al-Mufahare beyna al-Seyf wa al-Kalem*: It is a small treatise. Ibn Hijjah quoted this treatise in *Hizanat al-Adeb* because of the literary arts it contains. This work was published in Beirut (1312) and Cairo (1934).

9. *Muntehab al-Hadiyya min al-Madaihi al-Mueyyediyya (al-Mueyyediyyat)*: It contains the author's eulogies about al-Malik al-Mueyyed Abu al-Fida. It was published in Cairo (1289, 1323) and Beirut (1304).

10. *Mukhtaru Dewan Ibn Kalaqis*: Published by Khalil Mutran in Cairo (1323).

11. *al-Katru al-Nubati*

12. *Suk ar-Raqîk*

13. *Muhtaru Dewan Ibn ar-Rumi*

14. *al-Saju al-Mutavvak*

15. *al-Fazil min Inshai al-Fazil*

16. *al-Ajwibat al-Mutabara ani al-Futya al-Mubtekara*

17. *Taliku al-Dewan*

18. *Taltifu al-Mizaj min Shiri Ibn al-Hajjaj*
19. *Khutba fi Tazimi City of Rajab*
20. *az-Zahru al-Mansur*
21. *Suluk Duvel al-Muluk*
22. *Muraselat Ibn Nubate*
23. *Ibraz al-Ahbar*
24. *Celaset al-Katr*
25. *al-Sabatu al-Sayyara*
26. *Shaa'ir al-Bayti al-Taqwa*
27. *Zaraif az-Ziyada*
28. *Muhtaru Dewan Ibn Senailmulk*
29. *Muhtaru Devan Şerefiddin al-Ansari*
30. *al-Matali al-Sitta*
31. *al-Mufahare beyna al-Ward wa an-Narjis*
32. *al-Muntehab al-Mansuri*
33. *al-Nihletu (al-Tuhfetu) al-Unsiyya fi ar-Rihleti al-Qudsiyya.*⁵

3. His Dewan

Dewan Ibn Nubata al-Misri, a work compiled from Ibn Nubata's poems by Ibn Hajar's teacher Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Bashtaki, was published in Cairo in 1288, 1289, 1323 Hijri and in Beirut in 1304 Hijri. The evaluations and analyses made here are based on the copy of the work published by Muhammad Kalkilya in Beirut in 1304/1886. Also included in this dewan is a work of 167 couplets containing poems describing a hunt with al-Malik al-Afdal, which was published independently by Muhammad Esad Tales under the title *Feraid al-Suluk fi Masaidi al-Muluk*.

The 603-page dewan, which is a voluminous work, begins with the introduction of Muhammad Kalkilya. This introduction is followed by the introduction of Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Bashtaki who compiled the dewan. In this introduction, al-Bashtaki states that this dewan was compiled from the poems of

⁵ Ibn Taghriberdi, *al-Nujumu al-Zahirah*, XI: 95-97; Shawkani, *al-Badru al-Tali*, II: 252-254; Omar Mosa Basha, *Ibn Nubata al-Misri Amiru Shuara al-Sharq* (Cairo: Dar al-Maarif, 1998), 50-490; Tural, "Ibn Nubate al-Misri", XX/233-234; Ekinci, "Ibn Nubata al-Misri and his Dewan". 409-417.

Ibn Nubata after praising and praising Allah and saluting the Prophet. Here he gave a brief account of Ibn Nubata's life. After this introduction, the poems are given in order according to the rewi letters starting with the letter hemze. The dewan contains 1,733 qasida consisting of 13,385 couplets in total. The distribution of the poems according to the rewi letters is as follows:

Rewi Letters	Poem Count	Rewi Letters	Poem Count
ا	20	ط	17
ب	160	ظ	5
ت	61	ع	90
ث	6	غ	6
ج	26	ف	55
ح	56	ق	88
خ	11	ك	39
د	140	ل	160
ذ	11	م	163
ر	228	ن	180
ز	17	و	11
س	40	ي	60
ش	9	ء	24
ص	9	ه	20
ض	21	Total	1.733

Table 1: Distribution of Poems According to Rewi Letters

As can be seen from the table, the poet mostly wrote poems with the letter ر as the rewi letter. It is seen that he wrote poems with the letters ث and غ the least. The distribution of the poems of the poet, who wrote poems with the modern bahir muvashshah in addition to the classical bahirs in the dewan, which he wrote with fourteen bahirs in total, is as follows:

Bahr Name	Poem Count	Number of Couplet
Basit	281	2.922
Recez	36	372
Remel	66	294
Seri	169	947
Tavil	385	3.525
Kamil	353	2.457
Mutekarib	78	393
Muctess	35	223
Medid	7	45
Munserih	84	351
Hezec	3	6
Vafir	107	664
Muvashshah	1	58
Total	1.733	13.385

Table 2: Distribution of poems according to Bahr

As can be seen from the table, the poet mostly wrote poems with the bahr of tavil. In only one poem he preferred the modern bahr muvashshah. The least used classical bahr is the bahr of hezec. The longest poem consists of 167 couplets and the shortest poem consists of 1 couplet.

The content of the poet's poems, who started the dewan with a poem consisting of 69 couplets in the bahr of tavil with the theme of praise for the Prophet Muhammad, is mostly on the theme of praise. The praise poems he wrote for the famous people of the period contributed greatly to his recognition. In addition to the Prophet Muhammad, Shafi scholar and mujtahid Abu al-Hassan Taqiyyuddin Ali b. Abd al-Abdilkafi b. Ali b. al-Tammam al-Subki (d. 756/1355), scribe, poet and writer Abu as-Sena (Abu Muhammad) Shihabuddin (d. 725/1325), Ibn Fadlullah, Aleppo Melik Sahib Sharafettin, Nasser Hassan are some of the people the poet praised. After the praise, the content of the poems in the dewan consists of elegy, wine, love, ghazal and nature description. Although the majority of the poems in the dewan are written in the qasida genre, there are also a small number of tahmis.

4. Contributions to Arabic Literature

Ibn Nubata al-Misri, whose works are mostly in the form of dewan and poetry selections, is a famous scholar who contributed to Arabic Literature in verse, prose and writing. His successful descriptions in his poems are among the most striking elements. The poet, who revived the poetry of eulogy, which was a famous genre of the Jahiliyyah period, revitalized Arabic poetry with his poems on themes such as elegy, wine, love, ghazal, and depiction of nature.

He reached such an advanced stage in verse, prose and writing that it is recorded that he surpassed both his peers and his predecessors in these fields. It is also recorded that he was the flag bearer of the poets of his time, and that no one was known who was superior to him in poetry, prose, calligraphy and writing. The fact that his works have been printed many times in different printing houses and that the literati who grew up after him have quoted his works and poems more than a thousand times in their own works clearly reveals the place and importance of Ibn Nubat al-Misri in Arabic Literature.

Conclusion

Ibn Nubata al-Misri, one of the Islamic scholars of the Mamluk period, was a famous scholar in verse, prose and writing. He also attracted attention with his prose works, especially his literary writings in the form of letters. Ibn Nubata was famous for his poetry in his time. Although he could not attract attention in the early periods, the praise poems he wrote for the state officials of the period show how skilful he was in poetry. He proved that he was a master poet especially in the genre of praise.

In his poems, the poet, who mostly focused on praise and elegy, also skilfully dealt with themes such as wine, love, ghazal and depiction of nature. The fact that he harmoniously rendered the content of his poems from the first couplet to the last couplet in a coherence clearly reveals his poet personality. It is seen that Ibn Nubata, who has a very narrow variety of content, skilfully uses literary arts in his poems. He frequently and harmoniously used such arts as tawria, pun, metaphor and allegory.

The author frequently quoted verses and hadiths in his poems by following the tradition of quotation. While quoting verses and hadiths in his poems, it is seen that he complies with the rules of quotation. The quotations added vitality and beauty to the expression in the poem, reinforced and beautified the word.

The dewan of Ibn Nubata, a master poet of his period, which we have briefly introduced here, is a work that should be studied in detail. In addition, the poet's verse published under the title *Feraid al-Suluk fi Masaid al-Muluk* is also a work that needs to be studied. Analyzing the successful descriptions in the work will make a great contribution to Arabic literature.

Ibn Nubat al-Misri is also a writer who has works in other genres besides his poetry-intensive works. Unfortunately, serious studies on his works mentioned above have not yet been carried out. His works are very valuable both in terms of content and style and occupy an important place in Arabic Literature. The author has an important position in Arabic Literature with all his works.

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