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The Devil's Advocate: Ibn Dāniyāl's Art of Parody in His *Qaṣīdah* No. 71

Mujūn, or "licentious verse," as a genre of Arabic poetry has always gotten a bad rap and thus tended to be overlooked. Not only have the *mujūn* verses been "cleaned up" from major anthologies, but scholars seem to have shied away as well. This self-imposed ban on the part of the literati elite poses serious obstacles when it comes to dealing with poets like Ibn Dāniyāl (1248–1311), for whom "getting dirty" is an integral, and inseparable, part of their artistry as a whole. As a matter of fact, Ibn Dāniyāl, the flamboyant Cairene eye doctor-turned-entertainer, made a name for himself as a larger-than-life "libertine poet," famous, or infamous, for his profuse output of *mujūn* verses. Paradoxically, it is perhaps for the same reason that he should remain an enigma of sorts; while anecdotal tales about this Marquis de Sade of Mamluk Cairo abound, his works have remained virtually unknown outside a small circle of admirers. Recent research, however, has taken a significant and encouraging turn in examining and reassessing his legacy: not only have his shadow plays been given extensive treatments,¹ but his poetry has begun to receive attention as well.² But when it comes to his *mujūn* verse, the

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¹*Three Shadow Plays by Muḥammad Ibn Dāniyāl*, ed. by Paul Kahle with a critical apparatus by Derek Hopwood (Cambridge, 1992); it contains a bibliography of earlier scholarship on Ibn Dāniyāl as well. For recent studies, see Rosella Dorigo Ceccato, "Un diverso approccio al *Ḥayāl al-ẓill* nella letteratura Araba tra ottocento e novecento," *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 5–6 (1987–88): 208–25; Peter D. Molan, "Charivari in a Medieval Egyptian Shadow Play," *Al-Masāq* 1 (1988): 5–24; Amila Buturovic, "Sociology of Popular Drama in Medieval Egypt: Ibn Dāniyāl and his Shadow Plays," Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 1994; Francesca M. Corrao, "La fantasmagoria delle ombre di Ibn Dāniyāl," Ph.D. diss., Università degli studi di Roma, 1990; idem, "Laughter Festival and Rebirth: Ibn Dāniyāl's Shadow Plays, an Example of Cultural Tolerance in the Early Mamluk Ages," *The Arabist* (Budapest) 18 (1996): 13–28; Everett K. Rowson, "Two Homoerotic Narratives from Mamlūk Literature: al-Ṣafadī's *Law'at al-shākī* and Ibn Dāniyāl's *al-Mutayyam*," in *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature*, eds. J. W. Wright and Everett K. Rowson (New York, 1997); Jacqueline Sublet, "Nom écrit, nom dit: Les Personnages du théâtre d'ombres d'Ibn Dāniyāl," *Arabica* 44 (1997): 545–52.

²Ibn Dāniyāl's *dīwān* is apparently lost. Nearly three hundred poems, or parts of them, have



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taboo is still very much intact. Many questions remain: Just how "dirty" can the poet get? What is the relation of the *mujūnīyāt* to his overall lyricism, and on a larger scale, what can one say about *mujūn* as a literary genre and its place in the medieval Arabic poetic tradition? It goes without saying that an examination of his *mujūn* verses will help to pave the way for a better understanding, and appreciation, of the legacy of Ibn Dāniyāl, arguably one of the finest, and most exciting, poets in the history of medieval Arabic literature.

In this article I take one step in this direction, in an attempt to sample and examine Ibn Dāniyāl's *mujūn* verse. The poem to be analyzed was composed by the poet in response to the Mamluk sultan Lājīn's (r. 1296–99) campaign against vice in Cairo.³ Several factors underscore the choice of this particular poem. First, among a number of poems by the poet on the Mamluk prohibition in Cairo,⁴ the poem in question, listed as *Qaṣīdah* No. 71 in the *Mukhtār* anthology,⁵ is perhaps the "dirtiest" and thus provides an ideal case study for the present purpose. Secondly, in an earlier study I have studied his mock *madīḥ*-panegyric,⁶ while the poem in question, with its unique structure, offers a different angle from which to view the poet's mock *nasīb*, or the elegiac section in a *qaṣīdah*. Finally, the choice is also highlighted by the fate of this poem that illustrates the kind of dilemma that any serious attempt at studying Ibn Dāniyāl's work is to face: replete with bawdy language and overt sexual references, scatological to the point of pornography, the poem is so troublesome that it is doomed to be left outside the bounds of serious scholarship. Preserved in a single manuscript,⁷ the full text was published

survived in his shadow plays and in al-Ṣafadī's *Al-Tadhkirah al-Ṣafadīyah*, vol. 14, Cairo, Dār al-Kutub microfilm 1762. *Al-Mukhtār min Shi'r Ibn Dāniyāl*, ed. Muḥammad Nā'if al-Dulaymī (Mosul, 1979), contains two hundred eighteen poems from *Al-Tadhkirah al-Ṣafadīyah*, and sixty-four more supplemented from other sources. His *Qaṣīdah* No. 69 is the subject of Li Guo, "Paradise Lost: Ibn Dāniyāl's Response to Baybars' Campaign against Vice in Cairo," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121 (2001): 219–35.

³Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, in his *Al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A'yān al-Mī'ah al-Thāminah* (Cairo, 1966), 4:55, cites the opening line of the poem. This is the only mention of the poem, to my knowledge, in a major Mamluk chronicle/anthology. For modern studies of the poem, see Shmuel Moreh, "The Shadow Play (*Khayāl al-zill*) in the Light of Arabic Literature," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 18 (1987): 56; al-Dulaymī, Introduction to the *Mukhtār*, 13–14.

⁴Muḥammad Zaghlūl Sallām, for example, discusses "the two lengthy *qaṣīdah*-odes on two important events," namely *Qaṣīdah* No. 69, on Baybars' prohibition, and *Qaṣīdah* No. 72, on that of Lājīn. Sallām also mentions in passing *Qaṣīdah* No. 71, with a citation from Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī; see Sallām, *Al-Adab fī al-ʿAṣr al-Mamlūkī* (Cairo, 1971), 2:168–70.

⁵*Mukhtār*, 119–21.

⁶Guo, "Paradise Lost."

⁷See Appendix below.



once, but only after one fifth, that is, thirteen lines out of a total of fifty, was omitted on the grounds that the verses were too "obscene and lecherous" (*alfāzuhā badhī' ah*).⁸

Despite such controversy, the poem nevertheless merits serious treatment. Social and historical significance aside, it represents, in my opinion, a high point in the art of satire and parody in the post-classical, or post-Abū Nuwāsian, era. Based on a preliminary reading of the text, which is translated here in its entirety, I will discuss two related issues. First is the overall theme, or "purpose" (*gharaḍ*), of the poem, which I consider to be more parody than social satire. I argue that the outburst of "trash talk" as witnessed in the poem has less to do with the poet's conscientious effort to criticize the Mamluk regime than with his compulsive desire to relive suppressed memories. In literary terms, it represents a mock version of the elegiac *nasīb*, with the eternal theme of the departed beloved and happiness lost. But this time the "beloved" is none other than Iblīs, the Devil, while the yearning is for the forbidden fruits left in the lost garden. The second issue has to do with artistic features, or textual aspects, of the *mujūn* elements in the poem. Through an analysis of selected samples and a comparison with parallels from the poet's predecessors, especially Abū Nuwās (d. ca. 814), the dean of the genre, I propose that Ibn Dāniyāl's, and for that matter Abū Nuwās', *mujūn* verses are perhaps better understood, and appreciated, as parodies of the antecedent idioms and topoi of the *ghazal* genre in the *nasīb* convention. I further suggest that these parodies are operating around a jesting interplay between the language of purification and its antithesis, that of deliberate pollution.

THE POEM

1. Suddenly, in a dream, I saw Iblīs
sad and broken hearted,
2. Blind in one eye, the other red and sore,
tears falling, drop by drop,
3. Screaming, "Woe is me, what a pity,
such pain, like no other!"
4. Around him is a gang of his cronies;
though few, they are plenty.
5. Among them is every queer lad, priceless,
like the full moon in darkest night.
6. He makes his glance victorious over those who love him,
but behind his eyes is sorrow.

⁸*Mukhtār*, 119, note *.



7. The noon-day sun, a pliant branch, his stature;
its shadow, the pubic hair at its base.
8. Caressing him is sweet fruit to those who embrace him
and screw the fig with the date.
9. What's money to union with him
whose lucky horoscopes are Libra and Venus?
10. Among them is every seductress, with enchanting eyes,
a soft girl, prettier than the sun.
11. She tells her lovers, "Stroll
amidst streams and green meadows!"
12. If a lover saw her cunt,
he would love to suck her pussy.
13. Every pimp is farting at the mouth,
and following up with a snort.
14. He [i.e., the pimp] would break into the lover's house by force
in his search for the snatch,
15. Saying—farting from his rear,
his breath filled with fennel—:
16. "Weigh out a thousand dinars, if you want her,
though you won't want her shit!
17. "Praise be to the One who created in her pure cheeks,
white with red on top.
18. "Come on, enjoy, take your fill,
let no reveler stay hard!"
19. Every bugger craves
the beefcake in the tablecloth/anus.
20. When a fart is wafted his way,
he would say, "O, fragrant incense!"
21. Every adulterer sees in whore's piss
a charm guaranteeing his health.
22. Every virgin has no excuse for (keeping) her virginity,
though her passion might be of the 'Udhrī type.
23. She is a dyke with a calloused clit
and little pubic hair, thanks to rubbing,
24. While every tavern-keeper holds a cup in hand,
and a jar on his shoulder,
25. Every stoned hashish eater is high,
green sprouts had grown on his mustache.
26. Some Sudanese is having a barley beer,
poured with care by his friend.



27. Every "bottom boy" has a stud,
 who could also screw like a needle,
28. Everyone who jerks off alone
 was aroused by a headscarf.
29. And many shadow play performers, singers,
 and flutists have come in droves.
30. So I said, "O Iblīs,
 what has caused your tears?"
31. "What has upset your dim disciples,
 those wicked ones full of mischief?"
32. And Iblīs replied, "Idiot! You are trapped
 in your sister's cunt – how awful!"
33. "My troops have diminished, my position sapped.
 I am no longer in command!"
34. "The tavern-keeper no longer finds
 cups and jars in his place.
35. "The beer maker's house is leveled,
 upon its roof the yellow sign of disgrace.
36. "The boot-legger is depressed,
 his heart a blazing coal.
37. "The hashish addict is near crazy,
 ready to assault with dagger and knife.
38. "And all the girls working for us
 would rather stay home today.
39. "They would rather have husbands,
 not a whore among them, as if they were free!"
40. "And every gambler, who had her often,
 now pays the dowry!"
41. "How hard I've worked to seduce and mislead.
 How many times I've combed somebody's hair.
42. "How many times I've seen eyes colored with kohl,
 for those who cast bewitching glances.
43. "How many, O how many times have I stayed up at night,
 to serve lovers from dusk to dawn.
44. "But the market of rebellion is stagnant:
 no wine, no revelry, no sex.
45. "Yet I'm inclined to keep pimping,
 and free of charge, no less!"
46. Then I said, "O Iblīs, take us away
 on a long journey, far, far from here.



47. "But do take care, don't live in Egypt!
 Don't even come near, though you know it well,
 48. "For there in that country is a just grand vizier,
 blessed with good looks and a blaze on his forehead.
 49. "His advice helped the sultan
 in his ruling, now famous far and wide,
 50. "And he who breaks this decree
 is disgraced in public and beaten with a whip!"

REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PROHIBITED: POETRY AS MEMORY

The poem is built around a narrative of the poet's dream encounter with Iblīs, the Devil. At first glimpse, the overall structure is a little odd, in that the typical tripartite *qaṣīdah* is proportionally out of balance: the *nasīb*, wherein Iblīs and his "gang" (*iṣbah*) are described as a departing "beloved," occupies most of the space (lines 1–45), while the *rahīl* (line 46) and *madīḥ* (lines 47–50) make up a few meager verses. On the other hand, one may break the poem down to three thematic units: first is a description, through the poet's and Iblīs' voices, of the state of affairs before the prohibition (lines 1–29). Then it is Iblīs doing more talking, in a conversation with the poet, about the situation after the prohibition (lines 30–45). After a hurried *rahīl* transition, the narrative voice switches back to the poet, who, in a quasi-*madīḥ*, lashes out at the ill-advised sultan and his unnamed prime minister (lines 46–50).

The *nasīb* begins with an unconventional tone. Instead of the usual recitative prelude, it cuts to the narrative from line 1. The dramatic tension is immediately felt as the phrase *fī marrah*, "all of a sudden," serves not only as the rhetorical device of partial *jinās* between *marrah* and *murrah*, in *abū murrah*, "Father of Bitterness," the epithet of Iblīs,⁹ but also underscores the unexpected cruelty of the event. This sense of sudden catastrophe is also found in Ibn Dāniyāl's *Qaṣīdah* No. 69, on Sultan Baybars' campaign, which opens with a famous line, "O people! suddenly (*fu' atan*) Iblīs is dead, / his familiar abode now empty."¹⁰

The dramatic moment is further captured by the repetitions, with a typical *nasīb* flavor, in line 2, of tears dropping from the eyes of the departing "beloved" (*qaṭratan qaṭrah*), and, in line 3, of Iblīs' self-inflicted pain and despair (a *jinās* between *ḥasratī* and *ḥasrah*). The odd image of Iblīs being "blind in one eye" is not only a vivid depiction of his pitiful appearance, but also, and more important,

⁹It may have its origin in a hadith wherein the Prophet proclaims that *Murrah* is among "the most hateful" names to God (*abghaḍuhā ilayhi*); see Ibn Ḥanbal, *Al-Musnad* (Cairo, n.d.), 4:178, 345; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. and trans. Muḥammad Ḥasan Khān (Beirut, n.d.), 8:134, 144.

¹⁰Guo, "Paradise Lost," 220.



a warning for his followers of the grim future that lies ahead. Bodily mutilation as a result of catastrophe and divine punishment is a recurrent motif in medieval Arabic literature. One famous example is the three "one-eyed" dervishes and the forty "one-eyed" ghostly wandering figures who paid an uninvited night visit in the tale of "The Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad" in the *Arabian Nights*, a corpus of tales that took its final shape during Ibn Dāniyāl's own time.¹¹ The eerie appearances not only underline the unpredictable vicissitudes in the fate of those who lost their sight but also evoke fear and uneasiness on the part of those who observe them.¹² As for Ibn Dāniyāl's night visitor, Iblīs, and his followers, the punishment cannot be crueler and the horror cannot be more grave: the ability to see is essential to Iblīs' enterprise; it is his "enchanted gaze" that provides the ultimate protection for his followers.¹³ The fact that Iblīs is "blind in one eye," while the other eye is covered with tears and unable to see well, suggests that all the good things under his "gaze/protection" must pass away.

In the medieval Arabo-Islamic tradition, dreams are "signs" to the dreamer, and dreams depicted in literary texts can be, therefore, the focal point for the interaction of various codes and different meanings, in our case of punishment and redemption. The poet's dream rendezvous with Iblīs also works on yet another level of the *adab* tradition, and that is the night visit by the phantom of the beloved (*ṭayf al-khayāl*) to the poet. In the classical *nasīb*, the phantom usually appears in the guise of a she-demon (*ghūl*), and the poet is often wide awake, suffering acute anxiety.¹⁴ His evoked memory is more of a conscious effort under

¹¹*The Arabian Nights*, trans. Husain Haddawy (New York, 1990), 66–150. The motif of body mutilation, especially the loss of one eye, and metamorphoses as punishment in the *Arabian Nights* is discussed in Andras Hamori, *On the Art of Medieval Arabic Literature* (Princeton, 1974), 164–80, esp. 174–79.

¹²On the motif of losing sight, in dreams, as punishment in Arabo-Islamic literature, see Fadwa Malti-Douglas, "Dreams, the Blind, and the Semiotics of the Biographical Notice," *Studia Islamica* 51 (1980): 137–62, esp. 154–61. Malti-Douglas has also noted the interaction between losing sight, as punishment, and its recovery, as a mercy, "surrounding an apparent purification with water," in what she calls "the blindness dreams." For the theme of "water of purification," see below.

¹³For "the gaze of Iblīs," see Guo, "Paradise Lost," 220f, 230–31.

¹⁴Michael Sells, "Guises of the *Ghūl*: Dissembling Simile and Semantic Overflow in the Classical Arabic *Nasīb*," in *Reorientations/Arabic and Persian Poetry*, ed. Suzanne P. Stetkevych (Bloomington, 1994), 130–64; John Seybold, "The Earliest Demon Lover: The *Ṭayf al-Khayāl* in *al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt*," in *ibid.*, 180–89, esp. 184. Seybold's claim that "the *ṭayf al-khayāl* is no dream-image or dream-vision" and that "the poet is not sleeping" is perhaps too broad a generalization, for there is an abundance of textual evidence indicating that the *ṭayf al-khayāl* indeed appears in the poet's sleep, or dream; see, for example, Renate Jacobi, "*Al-Khayālānī*: A Variation of the *Khayāl* Motif," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 27 (1996): 2–12, esp. 5–7, 10–11.



control. In our poem, however, the poet is not only in a real dream, as is clearly indicated by the stock phrase *ra'aytu fī al-nawm* (line 1),¹⁵ but also in a "wet" dream, one that is erotically charged. The dream provides a venue for the poet's self-indulgence: it is the dream that triggers his elegy of Iblīs and the latter's outburst of grievance in blatant trash talk. Only in a dream is the poet able to meet the "dead," and more importantly, able to relive the experience passé, and retrieve the memory suppressed. It is this memory, or perhaps fantasies of memory, that stands out as the poem's real theme, or "purpose" (*gharaḍ*).

From a narrative viewpoint, it is also a double dream, and thus double memory: one for the poet, and one for Iblīs, whose dream is within the poet's dream, and whose memory is intertwined with the poet's own. Iblīs' raucous dream-vision memory constitutes the building blocks of the entire poem whereas the role of the poet, the "lyric I," is reduced to that of a side-kick, whose main job is to give some feedback, stimulating more from his "lord." From line 5 to line 29, the poet, through Iblīs' "memories," sets out a wild roller-coaster ride, with an outburst of descriptions of the hedonistic underworld in Cairo prior to and during the campaign against vice. Compared with *Qaṣīdah* No. 69, where the lamentations of the victims of the prohibition are limited to a select few,¹⁶ the juxtaposition of the various groups in *Qaṣīdah* No. 71 does not seem to follow any particular order. Here Iblīs' first "list of vices" is on display at random: delectable young buyable boy (lines 5–9); female seductress (lines 10–12); pimp (lines 13–15); female prostitutes (lines 16–18); gay men (lines 19–20); adulterer (line 21); lesbian (lines 22–23); tavern-keeper (line 24); hashish eater (line 25); Sudanese wine-bibber (line 26); male "active" and "passive" prostitutes (line 27); masturbation addict (line 28). Topping the list are, curiously, entertainers (line 29), among them shadow play performers, singers, and flutists (the "flute" seems to have some sexual connotation as well).¹⁷ The mosaic-like collage is effective in depicting the chaotic atmosphere, and conveying a sense of lax morality, which were perhaps the order of the day.

To incorporate bawdy material in a "high" *adab* context is one of Ibn Dāniyāl's trademarks. This is seen in the use of the *muqābalaḥ*, or opposition, between the contrasting images of Iblīs' followers who are "few" in number but "plenty" in spirit and enthusiasm (*qillah/kathrah*, line 4); between "white" (makeup powder?

¹⁵The use of these phrases is discussed in Malti-Douglas, "Dreams," 144; also Jacobi, "*Al-Khayālānī*," 5–7, 11.

¹⁶In *Qaṣīdah* No. 69, the lamentations are confined to four subjects: wine, beer, hashish, and prostitution; see Guo, "Paradise Lost," 220–24.

¹⁷Cf. Abū Nuwās, "Wanna have some fun? / I'll bring you my 'flute'" [Fa-in aḥbābtum laḥwan / ataynākum bi-mizmār], *Al-Fukāḥah wa-al-I'tinās fī Mujūn Abī Nuwās* (Cairo, 1316/1898), 8. The poet is boasting that he has the "tool" to entertain, be it musical instrument or penis.



sperm? pure cheeks?) and “red” (lipstick? makeup? blood? tongue?) on the lover’s cheeks (*bayād/ḥumrah*, line 17). It can also be seen in the intricacy of the *jinās*, or paronomasia, such as the sexually-accessible boy being portrayed as a “full moon” and a “priceless treasure” (*badr/badrah*, line 5); in his company, money has lost “weight” (i.e., value), while his zodiac sign Libra is rising (*wazn/al-mīzān*, line 9). At times, the *jinās* is no more than a recycled cliché, such as the contrast of the ‘*udhrī* and ‘*udhrah*, in line 22. But more often one is struck by Ibn Dāniyāl’s brilliant imaginative innovation and rhetorical prowess. This is best illustrated in verses 26–29, which mark the end of the poet’s nostalgic laments. Herein every line is endowed with one pair of the *jinās*. The mouthful, tongue-twister kind of juxtaposition of the cognate words with different, sometimes contrasting, meanings helps bring about an intensity that pushes the tempo to a climax. To be sure, there is a lot of word play here, where deliberate ambiguity and intentional sabotage of balance seem to be the rule. In line 26, the joy of beer (*mizrah*) is now reduced to very undesirable soaked millet (*mizrah*). In line 27, the contrast is between *baghghā*, a male prostitute who plays the “passive” role in sex, and the cognate superlative/comparative *abghá*, whose exact meaning, derived either from *baghī* (“whore”) or from *bāghin* (“desiring, striving, oppressive, tyrant”), remains ambiguous until it is compared with “needle” (*al-ibrah*), perhaps a reference to the penis and its size, a universal butt for locker room jokes, or perhaps alluding to the penetrating power of a needle. This interplay is a recycled idiom that was used by al-Jurjānī (d. 1089) in his famous “vice list.”¹⁸ An even more outlandish word play is seen in the ensuing line 28, where the contrast is between one’s daily habit of masturbation (‘*umayrah*) and the annual “lesser pilgrimage” (‘*umrah*), during which any sexual act is strictly forbidden. The word ‘*umrah* also means, according to Edward Lane, “a visit in which is the cultivation (‘*imārah*) of love or affection.” Moreover, this may well be a triple pun in that the reading of the word can also be ‘*amrah*, “turban.” So in the final analysis, the fellow would be aroused and seek to relieve himself, be it during the pilgrimage, or at the thought of a rendezvous with a lover, or simply seeing somebody’s headwear.

The poet then proceeds to a conversation with Iblīs. His presumptuous “moral” point of view would surely further infuriate the bitter Old Man: “What has upset your dim disciples, / those wicked ones full of mischief?” To this Iblīs angrily replies: “Idiot! You are trapped / in your sister’s cunt—how awful!” The rhetorical

¹⁸ Al-Qāḍī Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Jurjānī, *Al-Muntakhab min Kināyāt al-Udabā’ wa-Ishārāt al-Bulaghā’* (Hyderabad, 1983). A detailed discussion of the vice list in al-Jurjānī’s book is found in Everett Rowson, “The Categorization of Gender and Sexual Irregularity in Medieval Arabic Vice Lists,” in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, eds. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York, 1991), 64. Rowson rendered the phrase *abghá min al-ibrah* as “He is more devoted to *bighā* than a needle,” i.e., which is threaded (64, 78, n. 41).



question raised by the fictionalized "lyric I," the poet, is designed for multiple purposes. With regard to the poem's overall structure, it serves as a transit point to sum up the first round of lamentation and move on to the next, which is more or less a revisiting of the same theme, with more twists, thus giving the supposedly polythematic *qaṣīdah* a tangible rhythm. This transition is also aimed at the changing of mood and tone, from one of lamenting to one of provoking, from one of pity to one of confrontation, from one of narrative to one of recitation. Further, from a narrative viewpoint, by posing seemingly "stupid" questions, the poet is providing ammunition for Iblīs.

And shoot he does. The reference to "Manichaeism," as Iblīs so labels the poet in line 32, denotes a ridiculed sense of "heresy," "pagan," or "Satanic cult," and it was used by earlier poets such as Abū Nuwās.¹⁹ In both Ibn Dāniyāl's and Abū Nuwās' uses, the expression occurs in the *qultu-wa-qāla*, or question-and-response, discourse as a rebuttal to someone who is obviously pathetic or simply stupid as is often seen in the *hijā'*-invective verses. Obviously, it is Abū Nuwās' and Ibn Dāniyāl's way of saying "O you moron!" or "O you idiot!"

For Iblīs, it is not an option to admit to self-loathing or express a desire for purification and deliverance, a topic to be discussed below. The poet's question simply gives him another opportunity to cry and whine. The strategy here is the old tried-and-true one: a random display of the suffering endured by Iblīs' "troops" (line 33), the victims of the prohibition. The reader and audience watch spectral figures jerk into place, expose themselves one more time, and disappear. The cumulative picture of idleness, frustration, and nostalgia is etched in acid. Thus the reader is invited, again, to peruse the painful experiences of Iblīs' "vice list": tavern-keeper (line 34), beer maker (line 35), bootlegger (line 36), hashish addict (line 37), call girls (lines 38–39), and gambler (line 40). The reader is well aware that the list here is more than a mechanical juxtaposition: the "categories" actually interact, and, occasionally, overlap with each other. The gambler, for example, was also a John, and his effort to "free" one call girl, by paying her "dowry," is itself a re-working of the existing topos,²⁰ which adds more cynicism: that a gambler should be relied upon for, of all things, money!

¹⁹See, for example: "I said: 'Praise be to my Lord!' / And he replied: 'Praise be to my Manes!' I said: 'Jesus is a prophet!' / And he replied: '[But] sent by Satan!'" [Fa-qultu subḥāna rabbī / fa-qāla subḥāna mānī; fa-qultu 'īsā rasūlun / fa-qāla min shayṭānī], *Dīwān des Abū Nuwās*, ed. Ewald Wagner (Stuttgart, 1958–), 2:79; "If the joke is to be reversed, then you would be [considered] the moral one, / a secret believer in the religion of Manes, the last drop of cream" [Idhā quliba al-hijā' u fa-anta khulqī / wa-muḍmiru dīna mānī zubdu baqqī], *ibid.*, 2:145.

²⁰Al-Bādhānī al-Iṣbahānī: "My bride is a slave girl set free; / I got her without paying a penny for dowry" [Lī 'irsun ḥurrah mamlūkah / ḥuztuhā min ghayri mahrin wa-thaman], *Al-Fukāhah*, 17.



In addition, the two “vice lists” provide vivid descriptions of various people and their outrageous acts and scurrilous behavior, and so amount to mimics of the conventional practice in medieval Arabic literature of composing verses for the purpose of conveying specific information or knowledge. In a wicked sense, these “lists” could thus be read as a how-to manual of sorts, another attempt on the poet’s part to poke fun at traditions.

The second round of lamentation, and the second “vice list,” end with a string of *ubi sunt*, from line 41 to line 43, each led by a rhetorical question (How hard I’ve worked . . . ! How many times I’ve . . . !), through which Iblīs cries out forcefully, reflecting on his “hard work” at the service of the revelers. Iblīs’ praise to himself ends on a high note, more self-congratulatory than self-pitying. The reality is painful, and the Old Man is cranky, but he is not ready to give up and he never will. Indeed, his sense of dark humor is intact and his defiance more evident than ever: “But the market of rebellion is stagnant; / no wine, no revelry, no sex. / Yet I’m inclined to keep pimping, / and free of charge, no less!” (lines 44–45). The blunt declaration of being “rebellious and reckless” (*al-ma‘āṣī*) may be a commonplace Abū Nuwāsian cliché,²¹ but the brilliant imagery of “the market of rebellion is stagnant” is definitely Ibn Dāniyāl’s own.

Iblīs’ bitter and wry outcry prompts a visceral response from the poet: “Then I said, ‘O Iblīs, take us away / on a long journey, far, far from here’” (line 46). Here one may note the attempt at a *raḥīl* transition toward the *madīḥ* panegyric proper in the classic *qaṣīdah* tradition,²² but it is too little, too late. The sense of exhaustion and frustration is clearly felt here as far as the overall structure of the poem is concerned: the poet seems to have lost interest and energy to go on. Instead of a full-blown *madīḥ*, a mere four lines (lines 47–50) were rushed into place, bringing the poem to an end. The panegyric itself employs the same strategy utilized repeatedly by the poet, namely, the rhetorical game of *ta’kīd al-dhamm bi-mā yushbihu al-madh* (blame through what looks like praise).²³ Nevertheless, it is not without its own values and novelty. From a historical perspective, the quasi-panegyric contains references, some vague and some explicit, that may shed light on the historicity of the poem and other related issues.²⁴ One also learns some

²¹For example, *ibid.*, 106; *Dīwān Abī Nuwās* (Cairo, 1322/1904–5), 324.

²²Compare *Qaṣīdah* No. 69, where the “going-away” call is raised much earlier, in line 22, and then reiterated in line 30; see Guo, “Paradise Lost,” 223.

²³*Ibid.*, 230.

²⁴A curious discrepancy is observed in that the poem, which is on Lājīn’s (r. 1296–98) prohibition, also appears in a slightly different version in the shadow play *Tayf al-Khayāl*, which is believed to describe street life under Baybars’ reign (1260–77), thus raising the issue of who was the exact target of the *madīḥ*. I plan to address this issue in a separate study, with special references to historical reality vs. poetic truth in Ibn Dāniyāl’s writings, his relationship with the Mamluk



details concerning the events that led to the prohibition, as well as what may have actually happened during the prohibition. The sultan, we are told, listened to the vizier's "advice" and issued a "decree" (*marsūm*) to launch the prohibition. Any offender caught would be paraded on the back of a horse, wine jars hanging from his neck, and would be beaten by "huge sticks." A sad finale to a dark, chaotic, and scabrous episode in Cairo's never-ending saga. But the poet would not let the audience leave without a last laugh. For the general audience, the fact that the revered vizier in fact resembled a horse, "that is blessed with good looks and a blaze on his forehead" (line 48), is funny enough, but for Ibn Dāniyāl's pals, there is more: riding on horseback has long been, in Arabic poetry, associated with sexual, especially homosexual, intercourse. The punch line is, therefore, in the final analysis, a "fuck you" note to the authoritarian establishment, Ibn Dāniyāl-style. And the vizier is the sultan's queer!

SATIRE OR PARODY? THE ART OF *MUJŪN*

Although some problems still remain regarding the interpretation of certain rare words and vague expressions, the above reading still allows a general appreciation of the poem. It is obvious that the quasi-*madīḥ* panegyric targeting the sultan, or the vizier, or whoever was responsible for the prohibition, is reduced to a minimum of four lines and is never fully developed; the focus is exclusively on the quasi-*nasīb*, that is, on Iblīs', and the poet's, memory. In other words, it is less a political allegory, or social satire, than a parody where the game is wordplay and rhetoric.

Some recent studies of pre-modern Arabic literature and popular culture have challenged, and moved away from, the traditional approach of treating certain texts of the so-called "adab of transgression"²⁵ as mainly social satire. These texts range from al-Ḥarīrī's (d. 1122) and al-Ḥamadhānī's (d. 1008) *Maqāmāt*, Ibn Dāniyāl's shadow plays and poetry, and al-Nafzāwī's (d. 1422) erotica, to Ibn Sūdūn's (d. 1464) and al-Shirbīnī's (fl. seventeenth century) colloquial poetry and prose. Armed with the Freudian notion of "repetition compulsion" and Mikhail Bakhtin's conception of parody, these studies propose new readings of the aforementioned texts as psychic drama in the form of parody, "whose purpose," in Daniel Beaumont's definition, "is the consumption and reshaping of antecedent texts," and whose "key concepts will be repetition and rhetoric."²⁶ In providing a theoretical conceptual focal point for this new approach, Mohamed-Salah Omri

patrons, and his working method in recycling existing texts.

²⁵The term was coined by Mohamed-Salah Omri, defined as "literature that goes beyond the normal conventions and codes by representing them in a parodic manner"; see "Adab in the Seventeenth Century: Narrative and Parody in al-Shirbīnī's *Hazz al-Quḥūf*," *Edebiyāt* 11 (2000): 182, 193 (note 27).

²⁶Daniel Beaumont, "The Trickster and Rhetoric in the *Maqāmāt*," *Edebiyāt* 5 (1994): 1–14.



begins by making the distinction between satire and parody, in that, according to *The Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics*, “[W]hile satire has as a purpose to make the object of the attack abhorrent or ridiculous,” parody “usually makes its point by employing a serious style to express an incongruous subject thus disturbing the balance between form and matter.”²⁷

Inspired by this theoretical framework and dealing with one of the banner-carriers of this “*adab* of aggression,” I intend to look at Ibn Dāniyāl’s socially-conscious poetry from *both* sides, that is, from historical *and* literary readings of the text. My premise is that these poems, unlike the more fictional shadow plays, undeniably bear specific historical elements, as they were prompted by certain actual events and were therefore meant to comment on certain issues, or send certain messages in the first place. At that level, to treat them as expressions of public sentiment in the form of social satire is indeed a helpful concept to work with. However, close reading of these poems has revealed that besides the poet’s social consciousness, there is something more pressing and more urgent for him to react to and speak out against. Instead of being obsessed with a sultan, or a vizier, or the Mamluk regime, the poet is more concerned about *himself*, about his memories of the now-prohibited sensual pleasures in his lost paradise, his lost garden. If the universal theme of “sensual pleasure vs. repression”—and in the Islamic context, the mantra of “commanding right and forbidding wrong (*al-amr bi-al-ma’rūf wa-al-nahy ‘an al-munkar*)—is at play here, then the poem in question is more about celebrating the forbidden pleasures, the *munkars*, than condemning the “righteous” repression, the *ma’rūfs*. True to Ibn Dāniyāl’s poetic persona, it is more about joy than about anger, about having a good time than about staging a protest. In literary terms, this hardly fits in a conventional *hijā’*, where the target is always the enemy. Here in the *mujūn*, the joke is on everybody.

The fact that the poet was, as the above reading of the poem has amply demonstrated, indeed working within the high *adab* domain further allows us to compare him with his predecessors in the same domain. An attempt will be made to show how by means of reprocessing and reshaping the antecedent themes, idioms, and topoi in the Abū Nuwāsian *mujūn* tradition,²⁸ Ibn Dāniyāl was able to

²⁷Omri, “*Adab*,” 193, n. 28.

²⁸Editions of Abū Nuwās’ *dīwān* usually omit the *mujūnīyāt* altogether. The few exceptions I have come across are (1) *Dīwān Abī Nuwās bi-Riwāyat al-Šūlī*, ed. Bahjat ‘Abd al-Ghafūr al-Ḥudaythī (Baghdad, 1980). It contains a sanitized *mujūnīyāt* section (899–937) wherein all the “dirty” words were omitted; (2) *Al-Fukāhah*, a slim volume printed privately by one Maṣṣūr ‘Abd al-Muta‘āl and one Ḥusayn Afendi Sharaf; (3) *Dīwān Abī Nuwās* (Cairo, 1322/1904–5), published by Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī; less than ten pages (339–47) contain a section entitled “verses blending [*jā’ a bayna*] *khamrīyāt* and *mujūn*,” which turns out to be largely of the *khamrīyāt* genre. As for the editorial efforts in the West, the long-awaited fifth volume, the *mujūnīyāt*, of *Der Diwān des Abū*



stay ahead in this rhetorical game. It is further argued that many of the *mujūn* elements had their roots in *ghazal* conventions.

Abū Nuwās²⁹ influence, and, more accurately, the tradition he represents, is unmistakably traceable in Ibn Dāniyāl's poetry. In addition to the examples cited above, such as the curse of "Manichaeism" (line 32), the analogy of "dowry/fee" paid to "bride/whore" (line 40), and the simile of "flute/penis" (line 29), there are many more. Some items on his "vice lists," for example, such as tribadism (lesbian sex act), were attributed to Abū Nuwās as well.³⁰ Ibn Dāniyāl's parodies of the Quranic verses were directly inspired by, or simply borrowed from, Abū Nuwās. One example is his *Qaṣīdah* No. 69, line 7: "Many a rake declares: 'This is a day that is, / as they say, 'Dismal and calamitous!'" (*yawm qamṭarīr 'abūs*).³¹ A paraphrase of Quran, 76:10, it is found, verbatim, in Abū Nuwās' *dīwān*.³² In the present poem, a mimicking of the Quranic phraseology is seen in line 17, "Praise be to the One who created . . ." (*subhāna man wallada . . .*), the like of which occurs frequently in Abū Nuwās' vocabulary.³³ The parody of the Quranic verses is particularly significant for the present discussion in that the intrinsic link between it and the *mujūn* is underlined by the fact that such attempts by Abū Nuwās are considered as of the *mujūn* type and are therefore classified, by medieval Arab anthologists, in the category of the *mujūnīyāt*.³⁴

In what follows, samples of Ibn Dāniyāl's *mujūn* verses will be compared with the parallels from Abū Nuwās. After the thematic and linguistic linkage between the two is established, the discussion will proceed on two levels: first, the *ghazal* conventions, such as "the enchanting/enchanted gaze" and "the amorous union," used by Abū Nuwās and Ibn Dāniyāl as they are *supposed to be*, that is, as descriptions of the beloved,³⁵ although, as we are already aware, in this anything-goes

Nuwās, edited by Ewald Wagner, is to this day still in manuscript form. For further information, see Amidu Sanni, *The Arabic Theory of Prosification and Versification: On Ḥall and Nazm in Arabic Theoretical Discourse* (Beirut, 1998), 167; Gregor Schoeler, "Iblīs in the Poems of Abū Nuwās," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 151 (2001): 43–44, n. 1.

²⁹Here Abū Nuwās is treated as a name under which a reservoir of texts was formed; thus the issue of the authenticity of some poems attributed to him is not important. For more on this issue, see Schoeler, "Iblīs," 43, n. 1.

³⁰Some medieval critics believed that Abū Nuwās was the first Arab poet to deal with the topic; see *Al-Fukāhah*, 17.

³¹Guo, "Paradise Lost," 221.

³²"Wa-law fī yawmi hurmuza zurta mūsá / la-ṣayyarahū 'abūsan qamṭarīran," *Diwān des Abū Nuwās*, 2:89.

³³See, for example, text cited in note 22 above.

³⁴Amidu Sanni, *Arabic Theory*, 163–67.

³⁵Some scholars, especially those of the "Chicago school of Arabic literature," have long challenged



territory, the "beloved" may be a girl or a boy for Abū Nuwās, a phantom or a devil in Ibn Dāniyāl's case. But overall the parody remains metaphorical, that is, it does not go beyond the language boundary, in that a kiss really is a kiss, and a gaze a gaze. Second, Abū Nuwās' and Ibn Dāniyāl's re-working of the *ghazal* elements, in that farting, urinating, and excrement replace the typical *ghazal* topoi such as the lover's "fragrant smell" and "sweet saliva," and so forth. Here everything is turned upside down, and the parody is operating on both metaphoric and linguistic levels.

MOCKING THE *GHAZAL* CONVENTION: THE "ENCHANTING/ENCHANTED GAZE"

In a quasi-*nasīb* style, with the conventions of the *ghazal*, the "departing beloved" is first introduced to the audience as, among other things, a "full moon," a "noon-day sun," and a "pliant branch," whose "enchanted gaze" is all over the place, to be witnessed through the lovers' "enchanted gaze." Not only do the motifs remain the same, but the wordings are in accordance with the stock repertoire as well: the *badr al-dujā* (line 5), the *shams duḥá* (line 7), the *ghuṣn naqan* (line 7), the *lahẓ* (line 6), the *suhūr al-'ayn fattānah* (line 10), the *'ayn wa-al-naẓr* (line 42), and the list goes on and on.

Abū Nuwās uses the same stock similes of "full moon," "shining sun," "enchanted gaze," and so forth, in describing his beloved:

His figure is like the full moon, his joyful face a shining sun;
he has a gazelle's eyes and chest.

Charm is his gaze, fine wine his saliva;
his forelock is dark night and his skin is gold.

[Al-badru ṣūratuhū wa-al-shamsu bahjatuhū
wa-lil-ghazālati minhu al-'aynu wa-al-lubab
Wa-al-siḥru laḥẓatuhū wa-al-khamru rīqatuhū
wa-al-laylu ṭurratuhū wa-lawnuhū dhahab³⁶]

How come? O you with enchanting
gaze and charming bright eyes!

the traditional interpretation of the descriptive function of the *nasīb*; see, for example, Jaroslav Stetkevych, "Toward an Arabic Elegiac Lexicon: The seven words of the *nasīb*," in *Reorientations*, 58–129; Sells, "Guises of the *Ghūl*." But this is beyond the scope of this study, for Ibn Dāniyāl's *nasīb* here is already in the form of parody; it nevertheless does reaffirm the point in that what is presented in these *ghazal* similes "is not in fact the beloved as an object of description," but rather "the mythopoetic world of the lost garden or meadow," to quote from Sells ("Guises of the *Ghūl*," 130).

³⁶*Al-Fukāhah*, 85.



[Wa-kayfa yā fātira al-laḥẓi sāḥira al-‘ayni aḥwar³⁷]

O [you] the heart-throb whose charm
radiates from his enchanting gaze!

Don't let me suffer
from your enchanting gaze!

[Yā sāliba al-adhhāni
bi-ṭarfīhi al-fattān

lā tatrūknī mu‘nan
bi-ṭarfīki al-fattān³⁸]

MOCKING THE *GHAZAL* CONVENTION: THE "AMOROUS UNION"

The influence of Abū Nuwās on Ibn Dāniyāl's poetic imagination and lyric expression can also be observed in descriptions of the acts of love-making. In the classical *ghazal* tradition, the notion of *al-waṣl* (or *al-wiṣāl*), "amorous union," is usually associated with the lover's tender touch, in the formulaic contrast with the painful experience of *al-hijrān*, "departure." Although the term does imply sexual intercourse, this function is not overtly emphasized (we will come back to this point later). However, in Abū Nuwās' vocabulary, not only is the term *al-waṣl* used explicitly for sexual intercourse, but it is also frequently paired with *al-tajmīsh*, a vague term that denotes a wide range of sex acts, from flirtation to rough foreplay and violent fondling. The juxtaposition of *al-tajmīsh* with *al-waṣl* and, occasionally, *naql* ("sweet" [kiss, hug, etc.]), became a fixation in Abū Nuwās' love-theme verses; and this is seen in Ibn Dāniyāl's poem as well.

8. Caressing him (*tajmīshuhu*) is sweet fruit (*naql*) to those who embrace him
and screw the fig with the date.
9. What's money to union with him (*fī waṣlihi*)
whose lucky horoscopes are Libra and Venus?

Abū Nuwās:

For ordinary folks ever since the Creation, it's foreplay before
fuck.

But in Moses' household, they fuck first, then fondle!

³⁷Ibid., 51.

³⁸Ibid., 55.



[Al-jamshu fī al-nāsi qabla al-nayki mudh khuliqū
wa-al-nayku fī bayti mūsá qabla tajmīsh³⁹]

Whenever you were aroused by an urge,
or desired an intimate union . . .

[Kullamā jammashaka al-ilhāh
aw an rumta waṣlaka⁴⁰]

And he said, "Fuck me! Blow me down!
Keep quiet to your servant, and don't reveal the secret!"
So I began to mess around with him,
joking and flirting.

[Fa-qāla ṣilnī wa-aqilla 'athratī
wa-iktum 'alá 'abdika lā tufshī
Fa-qumtu bi-al-li'bi fa-māzahtuhū
'alá ṭarīqi al-mazḥ wa-al-jamsh⁴¹]

Sweet as fruit is his kiss:
ripe, to be harvested from his cheek;
Waiting for watering,
inviting a fuck!

[Wa-al-naqlu min taqbīli mā
yaqṭifu min wajnatihī
Saqyan lahā min da'wati
tud'á ilá naykihī⁴²]

From the seemingly compulsory way of paring and juxtaposing a fixed set of terms, it is evident that the classical notion of *al-waṣl*, the Platonic "amorous union," is transformed, in Abū Nuwās' use, to a synonymy for *al-nayk* (fuck). It is about sex, plain and simple. The same usage is also seen in Ibn Dāniyāl's work; in the shadow play version of the present poem, the two words *waṣl* and *nayk* are used in a virtually interchangeable manner (see Appendix below, line 18).

To make erotic suggestions within the classical *nasīb/ghazal* tradition, the poet often appeals to the senses, and this becomes paramount in the overall texture of the poem.⁴³ For Abū Nuwās, for example, the joy of love, or love-making,

³⁹*Diwān des Abū Nuwās*, 2:90.

⁴⁰*Al-Fukāhah*, 57.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 58.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 28.

⁴³For recent studies of the depictions of the five senses in the *qaṣīdah* tradition, see Michael Sells,



is summed up in a formula that one may call the "smell, taste, and gaze" combination:

In love one enjoys the lover's affection and tenderness,
As well as that [pleasant] smell, [sweet] taste, and [enchancing]
gaze.

[Fa-fīhi mu'ātātu al-ḥabībi wa-'aṭfuhū
'alayka wa-fīhi al-shammu wa-al-dhawqu wa-al-naẓar⁴⁴]

Abū Nuwās makes it clear that these are the fundamental elements for a love affair, and a love poem. Among these, "sight" (seeing the lover's beautiful physique, "enchancing gaze") and "touch" (tender or otherwise) are discussed above. As for "smell," the lover's pleasant smell is usually associated with various fragrant perfumes he/she is wearing, but also the intoxicating smell of alcohol on his/her breath. "Taste" alludes to the sweet taste of the lover's rosy cheek, lips, and saliva, which the poet enjoys through deep kisses. Add "sound," that is, listening to love songs as well as the lover's sweet talk, and the poetic atmosphere is saturated with all five senses, and all aspects of human sensuality. A love affair, in the *ghazal* tradition, even within the Abū Nuwāsian deviation, is such a whole package through which one is sure to get an eyeful, earful, noseful, mouthful, and handful. And in the *mujūn*, this is even more the case, as the glorification of flesh and sensual pleasure in a coarse manner is the *raison d'être* of the genre. Bearing this context in mind, we now turn to the poem in question, which showcases the way Ibn Dāniyāl mimicked and subverted the *ghazal* topoi, turning them into *mujūn* scatological farces.

PARODY OF THE *GHAZAL* TOPOS: FARTING VS. FRAGRANT SMELL

This seems to be a favorite trick of Ibn Dāniyāl. Two verses in the poem depict breaking wind while having sex, a far cry from the lover's "pleasant smell" in the *ghazal*.

13. Every pimp is farting at the mouth (*lahū ḍarṭatun / min shidqihī*),
and following up with a snort.

20. When a fart (*faswah*) is wafted his way,
he would say, "O, fragrant incense!"

Equally coarse and amusing is Abū Nuwās:

"Guises of the *Ghūl*," 139–44, 156–57; Akiko Motoyoshi, "Sensibility and Synaesthesia: Ibn al-Rūmī's Singing Slave-Girl," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 32 (2001): 1–29, esp. 15.

⁴⁴*Dīwān des Abū Nuwās*, ed. Gregor Schoeler (Stuttgart, 1958–), 4:390.



Her breath stinks like farting,
or rather as a bundle of garlic.

Out of my love for her, I broke wind,
scaring away even the Byzantine king!

[Ka-annamā nak'hatuhā faswatun
aw ḥuzmatun min ḥuzami al-thūmi

Ḍaraṭtu min ḥubbī lahā ḍaraṭatan
afza'tu minhā malika al-rūmi⁴⁵]

I surely am getting the smell of that fuck.
Screw that thing before you! It's the aroma of stew.

[Innī ashummu li-hādhā al-nayki rā'iḥatan
fa-irhiz quḍāmaka hādhā rīḥa sakbāji⁴⁶]

It [i.e., his penis] cuts through the wind of asshole like the edge of
a razor,

screwing the balls, like the head of a spear.
[Ashaqqa li-rīḥi al-ust min ḥaddi shafratin
wa-anfadha fī al-khaṣyayni min ra'si mizrāqi⁴⁷]

The imageries are quite similar: to liken breaking wind to having bad breath, farting while having sex, etc. Also similar is the use of words such as *faswah*, *ḍaraṭah*, *rīḥ*, etc. Ibn Dāniyāl, however, adds some new, perhaps more outrageous, twists: the farting described in line 20, for example, involves oral and anal sex performed on men, which is not seen in Abū Nuwās' quotes. Further, in this regard, one may admit that while Ibn Dāniyāl's "farting" scenes are plainly coarse and scabrous, Abū Nuwās' descriptions are more subtle, with a nice touch of dry humor and literary elaboration; the smell of "garlic," the "Byzantine king," and "stew," are just a few examples.

PARODY OF THE *GHAZAL* TOPOS: EXCREMENT VS. SWEET SALIVA

The combination of excremental and the sexual themes has a long, if not quite respectable, tradition in medieval Arabic literature. Examples of the use of the oral-anal-phallus analogy abound in both the *hijā'* and *mujūn* genres. In the mock

⁴⁵Ibid., 2:87.

⁴⁶*Al-Fukāhah*, 23.

⁴⁷Ibid., 39.



ghazal context, it ought to be viewed as an antithesis of the lover's "sweet taste." Furthermore, the excremental elements, urine and dung, were also closely associated with food consumption in literature.⁴⁸ More often, they, and urine in particular (for its "water" imagery), have to do with sexual intercourse as well. When Ibn Dāniyāl veers into this verbal orgy, he surely would not miss the chance to give it a shot:

15. Saying—farting (*al-kīfākh*) from his rear,
his breath filled with fennel—:
16. "Weigh out a thousand dinars, if you want her,
though you won't want her shit (*ba'rah*)!"
-
21. Every adulterer sees in whore's piss (*bawlat / al-quḥbah*)
a charm guaranteeing his health.

Abū Nuwās:

If [your] pussy stretches wider, so will the territory of [my]
sovereignty.

In it, my piss should certainly go a long way!
[Fa-in yaku ṭūlu al-baẓr su'dud
fa-bawlī 'alayhī annahū sa-yaṭūlu⁴⁹]

They end up witnessing wind coming out their assholes,
whose hair is braided with dried dung beetles.

[Natajū yarawna al-rīḥah min astāhihim
wa-bi-hā min al-ji'ri al-yabīsi 'iqāṣ⁵⁰]

The originality lies in the two poets' respective attempts to link excremental movements with many other things. In Abū Nuwās' case, the oral-anal-phallus analogy is translated into one of piss-sperm-shit. The last couplet cited above also sets out a combination of the two topoi, that is, farting and excrement, that involves both "smell" and "taste." Ibn Dāniyāl, on the other hand, has his own idea for pushing the envelope: in line 15, the description of excrement goes beyond the usual sex association, in that he reverses the function of oral and anal in his portrait of a pimp: this time the "shit" is coming from the man's mouth, as he talks

⁴⁸The most recent discussion of the topic of food and sex in Arabic literature is found in Geert Jan van Gelder, *God's Banquet: Food in Classical Arabic Literature* (New York, 2000), 3–4, 78–79, 110–11.

⁴⁹*Al-Fukāhah*, 22.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 21.



trash, while “bubbles (? *al-kīfākh*),” supposedly foaming saliva, come from his ass. In a reversed kind of excremental movement, things come from wrong places. The idea of the wrong kind of stuff coming from the wrong place is also entertained in line 21, where a mother’s milk is replaced by a prostitute’s urine.

On account of their direct link to physical acts and bodily discharges, these two topoi have a broader implication for the general cultural concern with ritual purity and purification. In his elegant study of the art of simile in the classical *nasīb*, Michael Sells has noted what he calls “a dynamic polarity of sexual union and ablution or purification,”⁵¹ and “the interplay between nature and culture, sense fulfillment and purification,”⁵² in the poet’s memory of the beloved gone and happiness lost:

Not only do the description-of-the-beloved passages present elements that depict, through metonymic association, the lost garden, but they present a series of sense experiences as well. Not all *five senses* are actualized within each depiction of the beloved, but several of them usually are. Mention of the beloved generates a movement from sense to sense of excited rapidity. When this sense of excitement is taken into account, many of the same elements that make up the lost garden can be viewed as part of a performative reenactment of sexual union. Sexual union with the beloved is seldom mentioned and *never described directly*; rather it is intimated by the rapid movement through the sensorium that occurs with mention of her. Key to this series of associations and sensual evocations is the depiction of water that appears at the center of so many of the more erotically charged passages, especially the *dynamic polarity of water as sexual and ablutionary* [italics mine].⁵³

What occurs in the description passages of the *nasīb*, as Sells sees it, is a “four-part movement, from the sense image, through images of purification, of atmospheric ablutions, to a garden scene, to the *ṣaḥw* or awakening from the *dhikr*.”⁵⁴ The “water” metaphor is thus central in this interaction: it is water that runs from the mouth of the beloved (saliva), and the eyes of the lover (tears), to the lost garden (dew, rains), to purification (water for ablution). The sexual suggestions in the *ghazal/nasīb* are, according to Sells, therefore always balanced by the “language of purification.” Coming back to the present poem, the imagery

⁵¹“Guises of the *Ghūl*,” 131.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 144.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 156–57.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 140.



of water, too, is central in that *mā'* "water," and lush greenery, in the lost garden, first occur in line 11 (and twice in the shadow play version, lines 10, 11; see Appendix), together with Iblīs' tears (line 2). The "water," nevertheless, turns bad rapidly as the poem progresses.

The interplay between purity and pollution is also working at another, and more serious, level, for the idea of purity and purification has its deeply-rooted ramifications in the Islamic context: the notion of *ṭahārah*, or ritual purity, is of paramount significance for one's physical and spiritual well being. "Purity is half the faith," as the Prophet Muḥammad declared. *Ḥadath*, that is, ritual impurity caused by, among other things, sexual intercourse, breaking wind, evacuating urine or feces, or intoxication, is thus to be avoided and cursed.⁵⁵ As far as the notion of *ṭahārah* vs. *ḥadath* is concerned, it can be argued that the *ghazal* as a system of lyric expression manages to stay "clean." Activities that frequent the *ghazal* poetry, such as kissing, tender touch, and embracing are not considered of the *ḥadath* type, and bodily discharges, some of which are part of the stock vocabulary, such as the lover's tears, sweat, saliva, mother's milk, etc. should be seen as clean as well.

Needless to say, the boundary is violently, and deliberately, crossed in Ibn Dāniyāl's and Abū Nuwās' verses cited above. Whereas sexual union (*waṣl*, *wiṣāl*) is merely alluded to, but never described directly, in the classical *ghazal*, as Sells has convincingly pointed out, an abundance of violations is to be found in its antithesis, the *mujūn*. Here the *ḥadath* acts, such as fornication, intoxication, farting, urinating, etc., are being accompanied by the *najāsāt*, the unclean wet discharges such as urine, sperm, pus, feces, and blood. Iblīs, and the poet, never met a dirty thing they did not like. With these bad behaviors, bad smells, and bad leaks, all hell breaks loose. It is the domain of Iblīs, the lost garden of the Devil. Here sexual suggestions are not balanced by the language of purification, as in the *ghazal* convention, but are further materialized and enhanced by the language of abuse and pollution. Furthermore, "the water of purification" is a leitmotif in Arabo-Islamic culture; it also carries an apocalyptic message of redemption, with the miraculous power of curing wounded sinners, including those who lost their sight as punishment.⁵⁶ However, this last chance of redemption, by means of "water of purification," is flatly rejected by the wounded sinner, Iblīs, whose escalated swing towards the opposite constitutes a declaration of independence in the face of the religious establishment and authoritarian power. This point was

⁵⁵There is a substantial literature on the subject. For more details and bibliography, see "Ḥadath," "Nadjāsa," and "Ṭahārah," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition. My summary here is based on Frederick M. Denny's synthesis in *An Introduction to Islam* (New York, 1994), 113–18.

⁵⁶See the discussion above, esp. note 12.



surely not lost on Ibn Dāniyāl. This religious context is significant because the motivation of Baybars and Lājīn, and for that matter all other Mamluk sultans, to prohibit vice was largely a political one, in the guise of religion. Their efforts, at least the appearance of them, in enforcing the sharī‘ah law would help to establish their puritanical image as warriors for the holy cause and thus the legitimate leaders of the Muslim community.

In general literary terms, if scatology is, by nature, meant to break the rules and codes of ritual purity and purification, then Abū Nuwās’ and Ibn Dāniyāl’s *mujūn*-topoi of farting and excrement have their share in this universal human farce. All together, here the reader runs into a fantasy land ruled by Iblīs, the Devil, where all the sensual extremes are being tested, moving from one sense to another, but in parodic twist: sight (blindness vs. enchanting gaze), smell (farting vs. fragrance), taste (excrement vs. sweetness), touch (rough sex vs. tenderness), and sound (“shriek” and crying vs. love song and sweet talk). By relentlessly challenging the sense and sensibility of the audiences as they navigate the treacherous path of interplay between *ghazal* and *mujūn*, beauty and ugliness, purity and pollution, the poets’ comic assault on tradition and existing norms is completed.

The assault is also seen on a socio-linguistic level, in that the frequent occurrence of dung, urine, and excrement in poetry is arguably an indication of the poets’ testing of a new poetic vocabulary that would blend the “high” and “low.” “These gross vulgarities,” Jacques Berque writes, “constitute a poor excuse for an approach to what a ‘people’s’ language might be. That they are resorted to indicates *much less a lusty realism than a systematic search for incongruity*, and still more a reaction against the *language’s increasing banality* [italics mine].”⁵⁷ Although Berque’s main concern here is the trend of “new language” in modern Arabic poetry, it does resonate to echoes in the past, in Abū Nuwās’ and Ibn Dāniyāl’s search for the “new” poetic language. But that, of course, is the subject of another study.

CONCLUSION

Ibn Dāniyāl’s *Qaṣīdah* No. 71 combines the force of a manifesto, that deals with the universal theme of sensual freedom versus repression, with the comic relief of a farce, that glorifies all things prohibited through memory. By creating a series of excessively repellent poetic images that amount to parodies of classical and post-classical codes and idioms, the poet triumphed in elevating the art of *mujūn* to a new level. Following his predecessors, especially Abū Nuwās, his central strategy is a constant interplay between the language of purification after erotic suggestions,

⁵⁷*Cultural Expression in Arab Society Today (Langages arabes du présent)*, trans. Robert W. Stookey (Austin, 1978), 299.



in the Platonic *ghazal* tradition, and between that of deliberate impurity and pollution, in scatological *mujūn* parodies. The result is a tour de force that is alternately disturbing and entertaining. The present study is by no means a comprehensive treatment of the development of the *mujūn* genre as a whole, but rather sets out to provide some textual evidence, and observations, for further investigation. In this regard, the poem in question shows not only a continuous development of the *mujūn* genre in the post-classical era, but also the new ways to do it. In that sense, to say that Ibn Dāniyāl was working within the Abū Nuwāsian tradition is perhaps an understatement. He is the one to relentlessly extend the limits, and take the genre to extremes. In many ways, Ibn Dāniyāl might lack Abū Nuwās' elegance and subtlety, and many of his ideas—such as the “wet dream,” the night visit by the phantom (a. k. a. Iblīs), the “vice lists,” and parodies of the Quranic idioms and the *ghazal* topoi—were obviously inherited from the earlier tradition, including that of Abū Nuwās. Yet his unique style, characterized not only by its excessive aggression and intensity but also its adding new elements—such as Iblīs as “the one-eyed beloved”—to the formula, sets him apart from many others writing in the genre. In this regard, and as is true in the general history of literature, the ideas might not always be original, but it is the presentation that matters.



APPENDIX: EDITION AND TEXTUAL NOTES

The edition is based on the sole manuscript of al-Ṣafadī's (d. 1362) *Al-Tadhkirah al-Ṣafadīyah*, vol. 14 (Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, microfilm 1762, ff. 64 recto–65 verso). A slightly different version is to be found in the shadow play *Ṭayf al-Khayāl*.⁵⁸ The Arabic letter *dāl*, in the lower apparatus, stands for the *Mukhtār* edited by al-Dulaymī; and *mīm* for the manuscript.

The abbreviations used in the textual notes are:

Dozy = Reinhart Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* (Leiden, 1927).

Hans Wehr = Hans Wehr, *Arabic-English Dictionary* (Ithaca, 1976).

Hava = J. G. Hava, *Al-Farā'id al-Durrīyah fī al-Lughtayn al-'Arabīyah wa-al-Injlīzīyah* (Beirut, 1915).

K = *Three Shadow Plays by Muḥammad Ibn Dāniyāl*, ed. Paul Kahle (Cambridge, 1992).

Kazimirski = Biberstein Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire arabe-français* (Beirut, 197-).

Lane = Edward W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (Cambridge, England, c1984).

Lisān al-'Arab = Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 15 vols. (Beirut, 1955).

⁵⁸*Three Shadow Plays* (Arabic text), 9–13.



EDITION

وقال وقد أبطلوا المسكرات في أيام حسام الدين لاجين

(من السريع)

(٦٤ أ)

١. رأيتُ في النومِ أبا مُرَّة
٢. وعينه العوراءُ مقروحة
٣. يصيح واولاده من حسرتي

(٦٤ ب)

- وهو حزينُ القلبِ في مرَّة
- تقطُرُ دمعاً قطرةً قطره
- تلك التي ما مثلها حسره

٤. وحولُه من رهطه عُصبة
٥. من كل علقٍ مثل بدر الدجى^{٥٩}
٦. مُظْفَرُ اللَّحْظِ بعشاقه
٧. شمسٌ ضحىً غصن نقاً قدّه
٨. تجميشُهُ نَقْلٌ لمن ضمه
٩. يهونُ وزنُ المالِ في وصله
١٠. ومن سحور العين فتانَه
١١. تقول للعُشاقِ من معصمي
١٢. إذا رأى عاشقها كسَّها
١٣. وكلَّ قوادٍ له شرطه
١٤. يسطو على العاشق في سومه
١٥. يقول والكيفاخ من خلفه
١٦. زن ألف دينار إذا رمتها
١٧. سبحان من وكَّد في خدِّها
١٨. هياً تمتعَ ذي سحوق الوفا
١٩. وكل لوطني له نهمه
٢٠. إن وشوشت في وجهه فسوه

(٦٥ أ)

- فيهم على قلتهم كثرة
- قيمتُهُ في واحدٍ بدره
- وإنما في جفنه كسره
- وظلُّه من خلفه الشَّعره
- وجَوْنُ التينِ بالتمره
- طالعُه الميزانُ والزُّهره
- خود لها شمس الضحى ضره
- تنزهوا في الماء والخضره^{٦٠}
- يودُّ لو تُرضعُه بظره
- من شذقه يتبعها شخره
- مغالباً لما اقتضى جذره
- وعنده في قوله شمرة
- إن كنت ما ترضى بها بعره
- النقي بياضاً فوقه حمرة
- لا تترك القصف على نشره
- على سميط اللحم في السفره
- يقُلُّ لها يا طيبها بخره

^{٥٩}م الدجا

^{٦٠}ثلاثة عشر بيتا (١١-٢٣) ساقطة في د.



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٢١. وكل زناء يرى بولسة
 ٢٢. وكل بنت ما لها عذرة
 ٢٣. سحاقة قد كلكت بظرها
 ٢٤. وكل خمارة وفي كفه
 ٢٥. ومن حشيشي سطيلى على
 ٢٦. ومن بني حام له مزرة
 ٢٧. وكل بغاء به ابنة
 ٢٨. وكل جلال على خلوة
 ٢٩. ومن خيالي ومن مطرب
 ٣٠. فقلت يا إبليس ماذا الذي
 ٣١. وما الذي أزعج أشياك النو
 ٣٢. فقال يا بأبي أنت قد
 ٣٣. قلت جيوشي وهى منصبي
 ٣٤. وأصبح الخمار لا يلتقي
 ٣٥. ومنزل المزار صفر وقد
 ٣٦. وبات قلبي الفار في حسرة
 ٣٧. وكاد أن يسطو الحشيشي وأن
 (٦٥ ب)
٣٨. وسائر الستات من قحبنا
 ٣٩. يطلبن أزواجاً فلا قحبه
 ٤٠. وكل ساكوس قمار وقد
- القحبة في صحبته <ع> شره^{٦١}
 لكن هواها من بني عذره
 وما لها من دلکها شعره
 كأس على عاتقه جرّه
 شاربه قد بقلت خضره
 صفى له صاحبه المزرة
 مبادل أبغى من الابره
 عميرة هاجت به عمره
 وزامر قد جاء في الزمره
 أسال من مقلتك العبره
 كى وإن كانوا ذوي شره
 وقعت في كس^{٦٢} أخت ما أكره
 وعدت لا أمر ولا إمرة
 في بيته كوزاً ولا جرّه
 علته من ذلته صفره
 وقلبه يقلى على جمرة
 يجرح^{٦٦} بالخنجر والشفرة
- أكثرهن اليوم في الحجرة
 منهن إلا أصبحت حره
 أجاد بالعفق بها مهره

^{٦١}<ع> شره الحرف غير واضحة في م.

^{٦٢}د ماني

^{٦٣}د الذي

^{٦٤}ساقطة في د

^{٦٥}د يكتفي

^{٦٦}د يخرج

^{٦٧}ساقطة في د

^{٦٨}ساقطة في د



أَصَفَّ الْمَقْصُوصَ وَالطَّرَهَ
لَمَنْ رَمَى بِالْعَيْنِ وَالنَّظْرَهَ
عَشَّاقٍ فِي اللَّيْلِ إِلَى بُكْرَهَ
شَرِبَ وَلَا قَصْفَ وَلَا عَشْرَهَ
أَقْوَدُ لَا أَجْرَ وَلَا أَجْرَهَ
وَطَوَّلَ الْغَيْبَةَ وَالسَّفْرَهَ
تَقْرِبَهَا إِنْ كُنْتَ ذَا خَبْرَهَ
مِبَارِكَ الطَّلَعَةَ وَالغُرَهَ
لَمَلِكِهِ مَا شَاعَ بِالشَّهْرَهَ
تَجْرِيْسُهُ وَالضَّرْبُ بِالدرَهَ

٤١. كم جهد ما أغوي^{٦٩} وأعوي وكم
٤٢. وكم أرى العينين مكحولة
٤٣. وكم وكم أسهر في خدمة الـ
٤٤. قد كسدت سوق المعاصي فلا
٤٥. هذا على أني من غيبي
٤٦. فقلت يا إبليس سافر بنا
٤٧. إياك أن تسكن مصرأ وأن
٤٨. فإن فيها صاحباً عادلاً
٤٩. قد علم السلطان من نصحه
٥٠. جزاء من خالف مرسومه

٦٩ د اعوي



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TEXTUAL NOTES

2. *Maqrūḥah*, lit., "covered with ulcers"; one MS in K has *maftūḥah*, "open."
3. *Yaṣīḥu*, one MS in K has *yaqūlu*, "he said."
4. This line perhaps implies that although Iblīs' followers are few, they represent a large section of the Cairene underworld. Or perhaps it implies that they are so bad that a few are enough.
5. *ʿIlq*: a slang word for "a sexually accessible boy"; the term is still used in Egypt. See Clifford Bosworth, *The Medieval Islamic Underworld: The Banū Sāsān in Arabic Society and Literature* (Leiden, 1976), 138, 361. I thank Everett Rowson for the reference.
- 6–7. The order of the two lines is reversed in K.
6. *Kasrah*, lit., "his eyelid is contracted," i.e., "languid." See Lane, *kasara*.
7. For *al-shi'rah* as "the hair of the pubes," or "the pubes" itself, see Lane.
8. *Al-tajmīsh*: *jammasha* is given in the *Lisān al-ʿArab* as a synonym of *ghāzala*, "flirt, dally with some one" (A. F. L. Beeston, *The Epistle on Singing-Girls by Jāḥiẓ*, [Warminster, England, 1980], 59, 65), whereas Hans Wehr has "to make love, caress, pet." From Abū Nuwās' use it is obvious that *al-tajmīsh* denotes some sex acts but not necessarily intercourse. Beeston thus translates Jāḥiẓ's phrase *wa-jammashat'hu bi-ʿuḍūḍ tuffāḥihā* as "[she] teases him with bites of her apples"; see *Epistle*, 33 (translation), 19 (Arabic text). *Naql*: "sweet fruit," specifically the "munchies" that were a standard part of a drinking party. I thank Everett Rowson for the reference. *Ḍammahu*: K has *dhāqahu*, "tasted it," with variant of *ḥāzahu*, "got hold of him." *Jawwana*, a standardized version of the Egyptian *gawwin*, "to cause to go deep or far" (El-Said Badawi and M. Hinds, *Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic* [Beirut, 1986]), derived from the basic meaning of the word *gaww*, "inside." K has *jawwaza*, that is, sodomy. The metaphor of "fig" for "anus" is quite common in medieval Arabic literature; see Rowson: "Two Homoerotic Narratives," 176, 189 (note 60).
9. In K, one MS has *ḥubbihi*, "his love," "his compassion," while all the three other have the same *waṣlihi*. This line is perhaps saying that one's association with Iblīs is priceless for the fun and pleasures that money cannot buy. The significance of the two zodiac signs, Libra (*al-mīzān*) and Venus (*al-zuhrah*), is not clear; for *al-mīzān*, see Paul Kunitzsch, *Untersuchungen zur Sternnomenklatur der araber* (Wiesbaden, 1961), 81; for *al-zuhrah*, see Paul Kunitzsch and Manfred Ullmann, *Die Plejaden in den Vergleichen der arabischen Dichtung* (München, 1992), 109–10. The verse perhaps



- means it is appropriate to have Venus (love) and the Balance (weighing out money) in the ascendant with this delectable buyable boy.
10. *Khawd la-hā*; K has *li-ḥusnihā*, "for its beauty," that is, the beauty of the seductress, who, lit., is "a soft girl who has the noonday sun as a co-wife (*ḍarrah*)," that is, she is the principal wife, while the sun has a lower rank in beauty, as merely a co-wife.
 - 10–11. One line is inserted between the two lines in K; it reads: *Yaḥmilu* (variant: *taḥmilu*) *dhāka al-naqsha min jismihā / mā'u na'īmin qāma bi-al-qudrah*. [Cleaning up that tattoo (?) off her body is water of pleasure, overflowing with vigor.]
 11. *Mi'ṣamī*, lit., "my wrist," that is, the lovers were released from the seductress, wandering in the fantasy garden of "water and green"; for the implications of "water" and "green" see the discussion in the article. "Green" also hints at hashish; see Guo, "Paradise Lost," 221 (note 9).
 12. *Turḍi'uhu baḍrah*, lit., "so [her] clitoris would give him suck."
 13. *Shidqihi*, lit., "[through] the corner of his mouth"; K has *famihi*, "his mouth."
 14. I read the phrase *mughāliban* as a *ḥāl* clause, modifying the main verb *yasṭū*. The phrase *li-mā* is to be understood here as related to the verbal noun *sawm*, "the going away for or after a thing" (Lane; compare the usage cited by Lane: *khallāhu wa-sawmahu li-mā yurīdu*, "he left him to do as he pleased"). *Jadhr*, the "snatch"; the word also can be understood as "what is to be uprooted," that is, hashish. This line is not in K. This is a difficult line, the reading of which is uncertain.
 - 15–16. The two lines are condensed into one in K: *Yaqūlu lil-kīfākhi min khalfihi / an (in?) kāna mā yardā bi-hā ba'rah* [He speaks to the tall woman (?), dragging behind him, although he doesn't care about her dung].
 15. All the manuscripts used in *Mukhtār* and K have *al-kīfākh*, except one, which has *al-afqāh*, an alternate for the uncertain *kīfākh*. *Afqāh* appears to be a plural form for perhaps *fuqqāh*, "blossom of plants, tall, handsome woman" (Hava), or *fiqāh*, "a wide anus" (Lane, Kazimirski). As for *kīfākh*, according to the *Lisān al-'Arab* the root *k-f-kh* has the basic meaning of *ḍaraba*, "to strike, to squeeze (?)" ; thus *kafkhaḥ* means *al-zubdah al-mujatama'ah al-bayḍā'*, "the foam, or cream, on top of the butter," which is considered its best part (*Lisān al-'Arab*), or "Écume abondante" (Kazimirski). There is also the possibility of a corrupt spelling of *q-f-h*, thus *qafīḥah*, "cream upon which milk is added" (Hava), or *q-f-kh*, thus *qufākh*, which is similar to *k-f-kh*. I read the rest of the line, after *wa-al-kīfākh . . .*, as a *ḥāl* clause, describing the circumstances under which the pimp was speaking. *Shamrah*, "fennel," perhaps alludes to hashish.
 16. *Zin*, lit., "weigh out!"



17. *Fawqahu*: one MS in K has *dabba fī*, "(worms) crawl in," perhaps as in "white sperms, like worms, crawling around the red makeup (or blood?) on her cheeks," or the other way around, as in "red tongue, like a worm, crawling around white cheeks."
18. K has a totally different line: *Yā ayyuhā al-nāsu* (variant: *yā ma'shara al-nās*) *ighnamū waṣlahā / lā tatrūkū al-nayka* 'alā fashrah [O men, seize the opportunity to screw her! Don't trade a real fuck for cheap talk!] *Dhī saḥq al-wafā'*, lit., "those who wear the old garments of chivalrous loyalty (?); for *saḥq*, "an old and worn-out garment," see Lane. Note the similar imagery of worn-out cloth (*nashrah*) in the next hemistich. *Al-qaṣf*: the fuller version of the expression is *dhū al-qaṣf*, "folks of carousal, revelry," which also appears in Ibn Dāniyāl's *Qaṣīdah* No. 69 (line 6); see Guo, "Paradise Lost," 221, 232. The rendering of this verse is uncertain.
19. *Samīṭ al-laḥm*, lit., "a meat dish." *Sufrāh*, "tablecloth," also means "anus" in modern Egyptian (Badawi and Hinds). I thank Everett Rowson for the reference.
20. *In washwashat fī wajhihi faswatun*; K has *in nasamat fī wajhihi ḍarṭatun*.
21. The first letter of the last word is erased in the manuscript, I read the word as 'ishrah; K has *nushrah*, which does not make sense to me.
22. 'Udhrah; an ancient Arabian tribe famous for its folks' platonic love.
23. *Saḥḥāqah*: K has *saḥḥātah*, the meaning of which is unclear.
24. K has slightly different wording: *Wa-kullu khammārin 'alā 'unqīhi / ziqqun wa-fī 'ātiqīhi zukrah*.
26. K has slightly different wording: *Wa-min banī ḥāmin akhū mizrah / qad 'akkarahu al-waqtu lahū mizrah* (variant: *ṣafā lahū s-n-d [sh-d-d] wa-lahū mizrah*). *Al-mizrah*, according to al-Dulaymī, means *manqū' al-dhurah* (*Mukhtār*, 120 [note 356]); since *naqī'* is a kind of "juice obtained from dried fruits soaked in water" (Hans Wehr), *manqū' al-dhurah* could probably be some kind of juice obtained from millet soaked in water.
27. *Baghghā'*, an energetic form of *bighā'*, "passive prostitution," that is, a male prostitute who is penetrated; see Rowson, "Medieval Arabic Vice Lists," 54, 64–65. Both *bighā'* and *ubnah* are listed by al-Jurjānī in the category of "passive male homosexuality." *Mubādil*, derived from *bidāl*, namely, "taking turns at the active role in homosexual intercourse"; see Rowson, "Medieval Arabic Vice Lists," 66–67. *Abghā'* is a superlative perhaps punning on *bāghin*, "striving, oppressive," and *baghī*, "whore."
28. *Mukhtār* has 'umrah, but the word may be read 'amrah, "turban," as well.
- 28–29. In K, two more lines are inserted between these two:
 Wa-kullu shālūṣi qimārin wa-qad / ajāda bi-al-'ufqi la-hū qamrah
 Wa-kullu liṣṣin wa-'ayyārin / wa-baṭṭāṭin wa-fī tubbānihi ṣurrah



[Every gambler who is good at breaking wind (while having sex) has his target to shoot at (?).

Every thief, bum, and (wine?) bottle maker, a money bag hangs in his pants.]

The first line is somewhat similar to line 40 in the *Mukhtār* version. The meaning of *qamrah*, so vocalized in K, is unclear; Dozy has "coup de flèche qui atteint presque le but." *Al-'ufq*, vocalized so in K, is also unclear; for *al-'afq*, see note to line 40 below.

31. *Mā*, K has *man*, "who caused . . ."; and *man turá*, "who do you think . . ." *Dhawī shirrah*, K has *dhawī khibrah*, "savvy, seasoned."
32. *Mānī*, "a Manichaeon" (the common spelling is *mānawī*); this reading is given in *Mukhtār*; the word appears in the manuscript, without dots, as either *bānī* (?), or *bābī* (?), likely *bi-abī*, that is, "O you for whom I would ransom my father . . ."; one MS in K has *ṣāhibī*, "my friend," while the other three have *bābī*. *Kuss (u)kht*, lit., "sister's cunt," as in, "fuck your sister!"
33. *Qallat*: K has *fullat* (variant: *qallat*). The second hemistich, lit., "I no longer have commanding power (*amr*) nor authority (*imrah*)."
34. *Yaltaqī* in the manuscript; but the *Mukhtār* gives *yaktafī*, "is satisfied with . . ."; K has *yaltaqī* as well.
35. *Ṣufr*, "yellow": under Mamluk ruling, Jews were forced to wear yellow turbans in public, and their shops were supposed to hang a yellow sign to distinguish themselves from the businesses run by Muslims. It could also be a pun on *ṣifr* (empty, has been stripped bare) and *ṣufr* (he is so humiliated that his face has turned yellow).
36. *Qalī* (K has *qallā*, a verb) *al-fār*, lit., "he who fries rat," or "fried rat"; for the possible meaning of *al-fār* as the name of some hard liquor, see Guo, "Paradise Lost," 234 (line 14, *ṭājinat al-fār*, "Hot Pot of Rat"). *Fī ḥasrah*: K has *fī fāqatin*, "in poverty."
37. *Yujriḥa* in the manuscript; *Mukhtār* and K have *yakhruja*, "is about to go out . . ."
38. K has a different first hemistich: *Fa-lā tasalnī 'an banāti al-khaṭā* [Don't even bother to ask me about the misguided girls . . .].
40. This line is likely misplaced. The K version is closer to the right context; it has a different line: *Wa-kullu qiṣṣīfin yará sakrata / al-mawti wa-lā talqāhu fī sakrah* [Every reveler would see the agony of death, which you may not find in drunkenness]. *Sākūs qimār*: al-Dulaymī suggests the meaning of the word *sākūs* to be *al-mudmin*, "addict" (*Mukhtār*, 120 [note 359]). I suspect it was perhaps a misspelling of *sālūs*; for *sālūs*, see Bosworth, *The Medieval Islamic Underworld*, 311 (*sālūs*, *shālūsah*). K has *shālūs*. *Al-'afq*



bi-hā: the reading is uncertain; the basic meaning of the verb root ‘-f-q is “to come and go often,” hence the current translation; however, according to the *Lisān al-‘Arab*, the verb ‘*aḥaḥa* means *ḍaraḥa*, “fart,” or *al-ḍarḥah al-khaḥīyah*, “breaking soundless wind”; cf. the use cited in the *Lisān*: ‘*aḥaḥa bi-hā wa-khabaja bi-hā idhā ḍaraḥa*, “sodomize her while breaking wind.” If that is the case, then we have one more example of the “farting vs. fragrant smell” topos.

41. Both *Mukhtār* and K have *aghawī wa-a‘wī* (“howl,” but it can also mean something like “lead into *fiṭnah*.”) “To comb love-lock and forelock” perhaps strikes an image of Iblīs constantly grabbing his hair, or his followers theirs, in desperation and despair, somehow an equivalent of “lending a shoulder for someone to cry on.” It may also simply mean that Iblīs helps his “clients” to get well-groomed and ready to go.
45. *Lā ajrah*, lit., “without fee, or charge.”
47. *Taskuna*: K has *tadhkura*, “[don’t] even mention . . .” “*Miṣr*, “a country,” a pun on “Egypt” or “Cairo” (*miṣr*) and a “country” (*miṣr*).
- 48–50. K has a different ending:
 Iyyāka an tadhkura miṣra wa-an / taqrubahā in kunta dhā khibrah
 Fa-inna fīhā malika qāsiṭin / lā bariḥat ayyāmuhū naṣrah
 Bāta al-qarīru al-ṭarfī fī baladatin / amnuhū a‘lá min al-nashrah
 [Don’t you dare mention a place called Egypt, let alone come close to it, even if you know it well.
 In that country, there is a just ruler, whose reign continues to gain support.
 A gratified man will rest assured that in such a place, his safety is loftier (in status) than a royal decree!]
48. *Mubārah al-ṭal‘ah*, that is, a handsome horse.
50. For the torture of *al-tajrīs*, see Guo, “Paradise Lost,” 221. *Al-durrah*, “big-headed whip,” *Mukhtār*, 121 (note 360).

