

Note on the Text

The Edition

Editorial Principles

My decision to edit and translate the *Ṭardiyyāt* of Abū Nuwās for the Library of Arabic Literature presented me with a conundrum. Unlike the work of many poets from the tradition, Abū Nuwās's poetry is available in an excellent edition, established on sound scientific principles and meticulously documented. The first volume of Ewald Wagner's edition appeared in 1958 (a second revised and enlarged edition was published in 2001), with the fifth and final volume published in 2003.⁴⁶ Two volumes of indexes appeared in 2006. Prior to embarking on his edition of the diwan, in 1957 Wagner produced an extensive study of the manuscript tradition ("Die Überlieferung des Abū Nuwās-Dīwān und seine Handschriften"). Why burden scholarship with yet another edition? What contribution, I wondered, could I possibly make?

Initially, I contemplated using Wagner's excellent edition of Abū Nuwās's *Ṭardiyyāt* and approached him with a view to securing his permission, which I'm honored to say I received. Philip Kennedy suggested that I consider editing Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī's recension (Wagner's edition is based on the recension of Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī [d. 360/971]). Al-Ṣūlī's recension is available in a fine edition by Bahjat 'Abd al-Ghafūr al-Ḥadīthī from 2001, and I seriously considered this alternative. In fact, in the initial stages of the project I entertained both options and refrained from making a decision.

As my work on the *ṭardiyyah* tradition progressed and I became more familiar with its varieties, I was led to the important insight that as a genre, the *ṭardiyyah* was especially prone to internal variations, often to the point of entire poems. This is especially evident in the case of the *Ṭardiyyāt* of Ibn al-Mu'tazz (see Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *In Deadly Embrace*). My work on Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī's (d. 355/947) recension of Ibn al-Mu'tazz led me to a second insight, that al-Ṣūlī's recension of this mode of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's poetry (and, by inference, of his recension of the

whole diwan) did not exist in a stable form. Despite our understanding of al-Šūlī as a scholar who published his work in book form, his recension of Ibn al-Mu‘tazz seems to have circulated in several versions (see my forthcoming scholarly edition of the *Ṭardiyyāt*). This stage of my work was dominated by a third consideration: I wanted my study to be as comprehensive as possible, to try to make available as many poems from the heyday of the tradition as I possibly could.

Armed with these insights, I revisited the question of which recension of Abū Nuwās’s *Ṭardiyyāt* to use. My desire for comprehensiveness ruled out al-Šūlī’s recension: al-Šūlī was only interested in what he considered to be the genuine Abū Nuwās and often refers to poems he considered spurious by their first lines without offering full versions.⁴⁷ Al-Iṣfahānī too was driven to establish what he considered to be the genuine Abū Nuwās, but in the case of the *Ṭardiyyāt*, and to our great good fortune, he decided to offer versions of Abū Nuwās’s apocrypha. Thus, his recension includes thirty genuine pieces, five pieces of indeterminate authenticity on subjects contiguous to those of the *ṭardiyyah* as a genre, but not necessarily *ṭardiyyāt* proper, and sixty-nine apocrypha, in addition to a list of the first lines of a further sixteen *ṭardiyyāt* that he found in various sources accredited to Abū Nuwās, but in his view demonstrably incorrectly.⁴⁸ In order to be comprehensive, therefore, the project required that I base my edition on al-Iṣfahānī’s recension.

In terms of editorial method, Ewald Wagner’s edition is synthetic—that is, his edition does not rely on one manuscript to the exclusion of other testimonies in the corpus but produces its own version of the poems based on an integrative approach to as many manuscripts as he had at his disposal. In other words, it is a work of restoration: the resultant versions are effectively restored and are often not actually attested to by the tradition. They represent a new, combinatorial, reading that seeks to produce as complete a text as possible. Wagner’s detailed critical apparatus meticulously charts his restorations and thereby mitigates most of the confusion that can arise from such synthetic editions. However, this editorial method does not accord with the editorial approach promoted by the LAL, which requires scholars to base their edition on a single manuscript as principal witness, to avoid the creation of versions of texts that are not attested in the tradition, and to keep editorial intrusion or interference to a minimum.⁴⁹ In light of this, and of my realization that the *ṭardiyyah* as a genre was more likely than most to attest to the genuineness of divergent versions of any given poem, I decided that I could not use Wagner’s edition for my project. I hasten to emphasize my admiration for, and dependence on, Wagner—I could not have

produced my edition without his work. What is at stake is a question of editorial approach that seeks to represent as far as possible the perceived nature of the tradition under study.

My edition of Abū Nuwās's *Ṭardiyyāt* is therefore based on a single witness: MS Fātiḥ 3773 preserved in the Sülemaniye Library in Istanbul, an undated copy made for private use by a certain Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh ibn al-'Asqalānī.⁵⁰ This manuscript contains approximately half of al-Iṣfahānī's recension of the diwan: the *Ṭardiyyāt* are on folios 197b–260b. It is in a clear hand, regularly and correctly vocalized, and with a minimum of marginalia.

Editorial Decisions

The opening lines of Poem 5 required some editorial interference. Al-Iṣfahānī notes that this poem has an alternative two-verse opening.⁵¹ I have restored these as the first two lines of the poem, with al-Iṣfahānī's preferred opening beginning with line 3. The sequence of lines in the version of Poem 11 in al-Ṣūlī's recension and Wagner's edition makes slightly better sense than the version contained in our manuscript. Al-Ṣūlī's version is four lines shorter than the version in Fātiḥ 3773, and its line sequence is 1–3, 7–11, 13–14, 4–6, 16–26; the sequence in Wagner is 1–3, 7–12, 4–6, 13–28.⁵² Al-Ṣūlī's recension reads the events of the last four lines of Poem 47 in a different sequence: see *Dīwān Abī Nuwās* (ed. al-Ḥadīthī), 226. In Poem 94, lines 11–17 are problematic. I have transposed lines 12 and 13 of the version contained in the manuscript to provide a referent for the description of line 12. In the case of Poem 99, al-Iṣfahānī includes a shortened version at the end of the section of his diwan devoted to the reproach (*'itāb*): see Fātiḥ 3773, 132a–132b.⁵³ Al-Iṣfahānī notes there: "The following verses will be found in a long *rajaz* poem I have included at the end of a section of the chapter on hunting." The "reproach" version contains the following verses of my edition: 1–6, 51–70, 73–76. I have incorporated the variant readings of this version into the apparatus.⁵⁴

Oddly, al-Iṣfahānī includes nine pellet-bow poems in the apocryphal chapter (Poems 91–99), though the manuscripts specify "eight." I have not emended the text and retained the inconsistency.

For some reason, the Fātiḥ 3773 manuscript omits one *ṭardiyyah* included in other manuscripts of al-Iṣfahānī's recension: Poem 106, a saluki description.⁵⁵ I have decided not to position it in the place it occupies in the other manuscripts but have included it as the first of the poems supplementary to al-Iṣfahānī's

recension as preserved in Fātiḥ 3773. Furthermore, al-Šūlī preserves a poem not recorded by al-Iṣfahānī, either as genuine or apocryphal, and edited by Wagner.⁵⁶ I include it as Poem 107.

The edition concludes with poems attributed to Abū Nuwās but not preserved by either al-Iṣfahānī or al-Šūlī. Wagner's revised and enlarged edition of volume one of the diwan (2001) includes nine poems preserved only by Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad al-Ṭabarī Tüzün.⁵⁷ In addition, I have added five poems attributed to Abū Nuwās by Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Shimshāṭī (fl. second half of fourth/tenth century)⁵⁸ and also two qasidas by Abū Nuwās (Poems 122 and 123), which feature respectively a goshawk and a saker description: see Fātiḥ 3773, folios 50a–53a, and Fātiḥ 3773, folios 144a–46b.⁵⁹

Divergent Attributions

Several of the poems in the collection are attributed to other poets. A version of Poem 10 is attributed by Abū 'Uthmān al-Jāḥiẓ (*Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, 6.472–73) to al-Faḍl ibn 'Abd al-Šamad al-Raqāshī. According to al-Šūlī, Poems 12 and 17 are not genuine, but are classed by him in the category of “attributed” to Abū Nuwās.⁶⁰ An alternative version of Poem 107 (preserved only in al-Šūlī's recension⁶¹) is attributed to al-Shamardal ibn Sharīk.⁶² Poem 109, preserved in Tüzün's recension, is ascribed by al-Iṣfahānī, on the authority of Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī (d. 255/869), to Ghaylān ibn Ḥurayth. The poem's first line is quoted by al-Iṣfahānī in his inventory of the first lines of poems he has excluded from his section of attributions:⁶³ see the version ascribed to Ghaylān in Montgomery, *Fate the Hunter*, Poem 12, 74–75. The first line of Poem 110 is included by al-Iṣfahānī in his inventory of the first lines of poems he has excluded from his section of attributions.⁶⁴ He attributes it to “a poet of Bal'anbar.” Lines 1–3 and 5–8 of Poem 111 are attributed to al-Shamardal ibn Sharīk.⁶⁵ Tüzün prefaces Poem 113 as follows: “A description of a horse. According to Abū Ḥātim (that is, al-Sijistānī), this poem is by Ḥumayd al-Arqaṭ: Ḥumayd compares his horses with a saker.” The version in Montgomery, *Fate the Hunter*, Poem 11, has three extra lines: two between lines 5 and 6 and one between lines 10 and 11. The seventeen-line version of Poem 118 in this collection is a version of the forty-nine-line poem by Abū l-Najm reconstructed from a variety of sources in Montgomery, *Fate the Hunter*, Poem 24, 124–29. The sequence of lines in this version, compared to that of Abū l-Najm's poem, is: 7, 13, 16, 17, 18, 8, 21, 30, 9, 10, 11, 33, 39, 12, 40, 46, 47.

Finally, for some reason al-Shimshāṭī includes a version of Poem 104, identified as an equine description in our collection, in his section on dogs (*Kitāb al-Anwār wa-maḥāsīn al-ash'ār*, 2.125–26).

The Translation

The *ṭardiyyah* in Arabic conveys an at times breathless intensity and rapidity, perfectly facilitated by the flexibility of its metrical form. I have striven to recreate this intensity in English, insofar as I am able. To achieve this, I have prioritized clarity above all, be it of expression, image, or poetic structure, in an English I have endeavored to keep uncluttered and economical. I aimed for English renderings that could stand on their own.

The art of falconry and hawking boasts a developed and sophisticated vocabulary in English. I have dipped into its lexical riches to capture features and behaviors of the raptors as described by Abū Nuwās. I have included these terms in the Glossary. I have also opted quite frequently to transform into proper nouns common epithets for both nonhuman hunter and hunted.

However, despite my best efforts, there remain many poems and lines that are obscure, be it because the vocabulary has been forgotten, the practice or behavior described unclear, or the syntax condensed to the point of puzzlement. Consequently, much of my translation remains conjectural, and in such instances I have dispensed with endnotes that signpost my failings.