

The
‘Uddat al-jalīs
of
‘Alī ibn Bishrī

An Anthology of Andalusian
Arabic *Muwashshahāt*

edited by

Alan Jones

Fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford

PUBLISHED AND DISTRIBUTED BY THE
TRUSTEES OF THE “E.J.W. GIBB MEMORIAL”,
LEDA HOUSE, STATION ROAD,
CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND

1992

Introduction

The aim of this edition is to present the text of a crucial work in a form that is as close to the unique manuscript as I can manage. My introduction to this volume is therefore brief, the indices confined to simple references (*i.e.* there is no biographical data on such figures as al-Mu‘tamid or the poet ‘Ubāda, *etc.*), and the bibliography is limited to the few works that the reader is likely to need for textual cross-references.

Attention is thus focused on the texts of the poems themselves, for the goal of this volume clearly had to be the establishment of the text, as the majority of the poems are being printed for the first time.

However, the *‘Uddat al-jalīs* is not an easy work, and I fear that it needs two companion volumes, both of which I intend to provide. The first is a *facsimile* of the manuscript. The basic work for this has already been done. The only question is whether a black and white version is clear enough. The alternative, a colour version, will have to be on microfiche if it is not to be prohibitively expensive. The second volume required is a commentary on the poems. I am reasonably well into this, but there is still a long way to go.

The Work

The *‘Uddat al-jalīs* is an anthology of outstanding literary importance, probably the most valuable work of Arabic poetry to surface in this century. It contains the largest and best collection of Andalusian Arabic *muwaššahāt*, 354 in all, of which over 280 are not extant in any other major source. Furthermore, no less than 29 of these poems have *kharjas* that are wholly or partly in Romance. (By comparison, the next most important collection, the *Jayš al-tawšīh* of Ibn al-Khaṭīb has 111 unique poems and 16 with ‘Romance *kharjas*’.) The *‘Uddat al-jalīs* is therefore a key source for those interested in Arabic literature, Romance literature or comparative literature. Three of its *kharjas* containing Romance, two of its *maṭla*’s and eleven of its Arabic *kharjas* are also to be found as *kharjas* of Hebrew *muwaššahāt*, giving it yet another dimension.

The anthology survives in one manuscript only, the *manuscript Colin*, unearthed in Morocco in 1948 by the late Professor Georges Colin. The one disappointment about the manuscript is that considerably fewer than half the poems carry ascriptions. With over two hundred poems we find

the title *muwašṣaha* and nothing else. Occasionally even that is missing. Even when attributions in other sources — often of small fragments rather than whole poems — have been added to the appropriate *muwašṣahāt*, the total of attributable poems is still only half of the total number of poems in the anthology.

What ascriptions there are appear to be reasonably reliable, though the spelling is not always correct, and from time to time *ibn* or *abī* is omitted from a name. When there is a clash about attribution, most frequently between the 'Uddat al-jalīs and the *Jayš al-tawšīh*, the 'Uddat al-jalīs usually seems to be correct. However, there are exceptions to this. For example, the poem no.50 in the 'Uddat al-jalīs is attributed to Ibn Baqī, whilst in the *Jayš al-tawšīh* (section 15, poem 2) it is ascribed to Ibn Zuhr. General stylistic features make the latter much more likely. The most surprising error is with poem no.145, which is attributed to Ibn Sahl, instead of to Ibn Šaraf.

Amongst the poets with *muwašṣahāt* surviving in the 'Uddat al-jalīs but not elsewhere are such famous names as al-Mu'tamid and al-Ruṣāfī, together with such lesser figures as Ibn al-Mu'allim, Ibn Ḥamdīn, the poetess Nazhūn and a good few others. Virtually all the famous *wašṣāhūn* are represented. The one notable exception is 'Ubāda ibn Mā' al-Samā', whose name neither appears in the anthology nor can be attached to any poem in it.

However, it can no longer be said that 'Ubāda ibn Mā' al-Samā' (died 419 or 421 A.H./1028 or 1030 A.D.) is the earliest *wašṣāh* to have a *muwašṣah* extant. The 'Uddat al-jalīs contains at least one poem that may be dated to the tenth century. That is no.33, which the manuscript attributes to Abū 'l-Qāsim al-'Aṭṭār. This appears to be an error for Abū 'l-Qāsim *ibn* al-'Aṭṭār, a native of Ēcija, who became a well-known grammarian in Seville. His dates are given as 299-387 A.H. *i.e.* 911/2-997 A.D., thus wholly within the tenth century. There is perhaps one other poem in the anthology that we may tentatively ascribe to the first century of the *muwašṣah*'s existence. It is an anonymous *muwašṣah*, poem no.164, which resembles a *musammaṭ* in structure: AAAA B etc., with only one section in the *simṭ* lines. The final *simṭ* is a proper name, and thus not susceptible of typical *kharja* development. (An anonymous Hebrew poem of similar structure is to be found in Schirmann, *Širīm hadašīm min ha-geñzah*, Jerusalem 1965, poem 165, pp.336-7. It has an Arabic *kharja* and hence is more fully developed.)

The Anthologist

Mystery surrounds the anthologist. It would appear that he is not mentioned in any source material, and we are confined to what we can glean from the anthology itself. Even his name is a matter of some

dispute. It occurs only once in the manuscript, and then in a form that can be read two ways. When the anthology was first discovered, it was suggested, by Georges Colin himself it would appear, that the name was 'Alī ibn Bušrā. This was presumably because on the sole occasion that the compiler's name appears in the manuscript the final *yā'* has no dots: *علي بن بشرى* However, that does not necessarily signify that the letter represents *alif maqsūra* — the final *yā'* of the following *nisba* is also without dots. It seems more likely that the compiler's name is 'Alī ibn Bišrī, as Bišrī is a form known to have been used in the Maghrib in medieval times. There is also the problem of whether we are to take the *nisba* 'of Granada' literally or not. I suspect that it simply indicates that the anthologist's family claimed Andalusian origin, but I have no good reason for doing so.

For the rest, the manuscript indicates that Ibn Bišrī, as I shall continue to call him, was the author of twelve poems in the anthology: poems nos. 1, 34, 35, 87, 134, 137, 159, 160, 194, 291, 302 and 307. These poems refer to some proper names: Aḥmad, Aḥmad ibn al-Qaṣṭal, al-Qaṣṭal (also al-Qaṣṭāl); and to one place name: Marrakesh (the only occasion that the city is mentioned in the extant corpus). Two other poems that bear no ascription (nos. 43 and 270) apparently contain references to the same people, but there is no cogent reason for assuming that they are also by the compiler. They might be, but they could just as easily be by a contemporary.

There is an indication of *ante quem non* in his inclusion of one *muwašṣaḥ*, but only one, by Lisān al-dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb (died 1375 A.D.). One may perhaps guess, on this very flimsy basis, that Ibn Bišrī flourished in the generation following that of Ibn al-Khaṭīb.

The manuscript Colin

The age and provenance of the manuscript remain unclear, because of the loss of the final pages, which would have held any colophon. However, it is a typical Maghribi manuscript, and it would seem more or less certain that it is Moroccan. The compiler appears to have flourished in Morocco, Professor Colin acquired the manuscript there, and on the basis of notes he found scribbled on the first page he gave the following brief description to García Gómez, who incorporated it into *Veinticuatro jarýas romances en muwašṣaḥas árabes (Ms. G.S. Colin), al-Andalus*, 17 [1952], p.63:

Le ms. parait d'époque sa'dienne et a appartenu au prince al-Mustaḏīr, fils du sultan Muley Ismā'īl du Maroc, qui mourut en 1173 h. = 1759-60.

The manuscript is of good size, measuring 11 ½ by 8 ½ inches (29 ½ by 21 ½ centimetres). It has suffered greatly in the passage of time. In many places the ink has eaten through the paper; it is much damaged by worm holes; and pages towards the end have been soaked by water at top and

bottom, causing both staining and the fading of the ink, in some places to the point of illegibility. It ends abruptly in the middle of poem 354, at the bottom of page 222. It is impossible to say how many pages have been lost, probably only a few.

In three places the manuscript contains poems that have seriously defective texts: these are nos.58-61, 104 and 261-263. The way that the manuscript is copied at these places indicates that the problem must have lain with the exemplar from which our copy was made. There are also indications, notably an initial uncertainty when some of the scribes begin their copying, that the exemplar was not all that easy to read.

As one would expect, the manuscript is written in Maghribi script throughout, and the alphabetical order used in the arrangement of the poems is the Andalusī/Maghribi one.

A minor amount of correcting appears to have taken place at the time that the manuscript was copied, but it did not rid the text of many errors.

Poems 1-63 have brief marginalia on metre and music. For example, against poem no.5 we have: *'alā wazān* (sic) *'yā man ḥakā'* (a cross-reference to poem no.1); and against poem no.6 we have *mina 'l-garība; ma'lūm al-isti'māl*. They are written by a later and not very literate hand, possibly by a musician. These notes are clearly not part of the original text. I have therefore excluded them from this volume. Nevertheless, they are of considerable interest, and they will be printed and discussed in my volume of commentary.

Scribes and Orthography

No less than six copyists were involved in the copying of the manuscript. The sections that each scribe copied are:

Scribe	Pages	Poems
A	1-56	1-83
B	57 only	83-85
C	58-110	85-173
D	111-168	173-269
E	169-194	269-308
F	195-222	308-354

The handwriting of each of these scribes has some characteristics that mark it as quite different from that of the others, and it is necessary to treat the pages written by each of the scribes as falling into a separate palaeographical unit. What may seem plausible in the interpretation of the writing of one scribe may well be inappropriate with the others. Of course, this is not always the case, but extrapolation from one scribe's writing to that of another must normally be considered to be highly dubious.

A minor but quite significant complication is an added uncertainty that is noticeable in the 29 *kharjas* that contain Romance material. Scribal uncertainty is not infrequent in colloquial *kharjas*, but it is, in my view, more marked in the Romance *kharjas*, sometimes being a positive indication of the presence of Romance. In some cases (a good example is the last word of poem no.260), the scribe seems deliberately to have written an incomplete or ambiguous form, in the hope that a learned reader would know what was meant.

The copying of the scribes is of variable quality. The best, by some way, is D, though even he would win no prizes for accuracy. A and E are tolerable. F is rather poor. Worst by some way is C. His neat and apparently assured handwriting masks gross ignorance and carelessness. Mistakes litter the section of the manuscript for which he was responsible. His incompetence adds greatly to the palaeographical problems, as it sharply increases the probability of irretrievable corruptions.

Vocalisation is inconsistent between the scribes, and in the case of two of them, E and F, one section of the pages they copied is vocalised and the other is not. The standard of the scribes' vocalisation is very much like that for their writing of the consonantal text. D is again best, often vocalising fairly fully and with reasonable accuracy. It is quite impossible to guess whether any of the vocalisation has been taken over from the exemplar or not. Even if it has, it is greatly affected by the attitude and competence of the scribe concerned. Specimens of each hand are given immediately after this introduction.

For those used only to modern orthography, there are other, largely irrational, variations in spelling that will take a little time to become accustomed to. Many of the more frequent variations are connected with *alif maqsūra*, for which *alif* and *yā'* are used interchangeably, and *hamza*, the writing of which is not bound by the modern rules of orthography. Thus *ra'ā* 'he saw' may be written in its normal form of *rā'*, *hamza* with an *alif* bearer, *yā'* or as *rā'*, *hamza* with no bearer, *alif*. *Alif madda* is very rare in its modern form. Instead, one finds *hamza* without a bearer followed by *alif* (at the beginning of a word) or *alif hamza* only (usually at the beginning of a word) or simply *alif* alone. Occasionally the *hamza* gets written in front of *lām alif* when it should go with the *alif* of the combination, e.g. in line 7 of poem no.61 *la'ālī* is written as *hamza* without a bearer, *lām, alif, lām, yā'*. This oddity is always disconcerting, and the normal spelling is given in the critical apparatus.

In these and other places where the orthography might cause difficulty for the reader I have added a note in the critical apparatus to give the word or phrase as it would normally be printed to-day.

Those not accustomed to the Andalusī/Magribī script should note that the orthography of *fā'* and *qāf* differs from the eastern spelling in the

dotting, but not the shape, of the two letters. *Fā'* has one dot below its shape instead of one above; and *qāf* is spelled with one dot above instead of the two dots used in the east. Further, with the final and independent forms of the two letters the dot is most frequently omitted.

Method of editing

The problems of editing Arabic texts are seldom discussed in any detail. For the most part this is because Arab tradition — naturally the dominant one — has become firmly fixed, and shows little response to suggestions that different norms be adopted. It is felt that traditional methods are generally adequate.

Over the centuries, two quite distinct editing procedures have evolved. The first is a procedure unlikely to be challenged, one of extreme fidelity, in which the works concerned are not subject to editing in any technical sense but are carefully preserved and transmitted as accurately as possible. The Qur'ān is of course the supreme example of this, but the transmission of some of the major *Hadith* collections is also remarkable for its accuracy and conservatism. The few works that are treated in this way show variations that reflect developments in the script but little else.

With other medieval works, the standard view in the Arab world is that a completely different process should be adopted. It is felt that the text is part of a living tradition, and that it is the basic duty of the modern editor to ensure that his edition should be as accessible as possible to the Arab reader of to-day, and that all other aims should be subordinate to this.

In many ways this is a laudable approach, but the inevitable result is that modern editions of medieval texts stand at some remove from the manuscripts of the work being presented. Uniformity of spelling, in particular, is seen as a basic necessity, even though its imposition eliminates information contained in the manuscripts about the long evolution of the Arabic script. With a good editor, this modernising approach normally produces a reasonably reliable and readable text, and in cases where the prime *desideratum* is to put an easily readable text before the general public, one cannot reasonably object to that.

However, at a scholarly level there are drawbacks to such an approach. The reader gets virtually no idea of the real nature of the textual problems involved, and the edition makes no contribution to our knowledge of Arabic palaeography. Yet a knowledge of palaeography is often crucial to the understanding and solution of textual problems. In particular, it acts as a restraint against the temptations of instinctive emendation to which many Arab editors have been prone.

The lack of a sustained palaeographic tradition poses problems for an editor who wishes, for whatever reasons, to pay particular attention to manuscript problems. Any attempt at an approximation to a diplomatic

text will produce an edition with spelling and other anomalies that will at first reading prove difficult and distracting to readers unaccustomed to the erratic ways of medieval scribes. It is clear, therefore, that editors will not adopt such an approach unless they are convinced that the text being edited requires such special treatment. From a very early stage in my editing of the manuscript of the *'Uddat al-jalīs*, I have felt that it falls into this category. In fact, I believe this to be the case with all the main manuscripts of Andalusian stanzaic poetry, as they contain both Romance and Andalusian dialect material.

We have a duty to our colleagues who specialize in Romance studies, if to no one else, to see that the lines containing Romance material are available in a form that is as near to a diplomatic edition as possible. It is equally important to present the *kharjas* containing dialect material in a form that indicates clearly what spelling the manuscript gives. Any modernisation of the spelling of the *kharjas* will inevitably obscure some of those indications of Andalusian dialect in the *kharjas*. This will in turn cause failures in our perception of some of the dialect features involved. Now, if the lines containing Romance and dialect material are to be given conservative palaeographical treatment, it is hardly reasonable to handle the rest of the text in a different manner.

When I first began my edition of the *'Uddat al-jalīs*, I made it my goal to produce an edition that would come as close as possible to the ideal of a diplomatic text. As time has progressed, however, I have seen the edition move away from my ideal, as problems of various kinds had to be dealt with.

The most difficult problem that faced me was with the form of script I have had to use. As will be immediately apparent, the printing fount available to me is an excellent *naskh* fount. It is something of a paradox to have such a fount with Maghribi letters, but this was a necessary compromise.

There was an additional problem. The typesetting machine to which I have access can produce the Maghribi *fā'* in its dotted forms, but not in its undotted forms; nor can it produce *qāf* either with a single dot or without any dot. As a result, I have had to check every final and independent *fā'* and *qāf* and use liquid paper on the bromide sheets to remove the surplus dots. Though I have done my best, I fear that there are bound to be errors with such minute alterations.

There is also a problem with *šadda* that is common to most medieval manuscripts, both western and eastern. The *manuscript Colin* has three forms for *šadda*: $\overset{\vee}{\wedge}$ and $\underset{\wedge}{\vee}$ to show a doubled consonant plus *a*, *u* and *i* respectively. These forms may or may not have the vowel sign in addition. The three forms merged in later Arabic, and modern printing uses $\overset{\vee}{\wedge}$ for all three, thereby losing some useful information when the vowel is not

written in addition to the *šadda*.

Two further general, but specifically Andalusī/Maghribī, orthographic problems concern scribal interchangeability between *dāl* and *ḍāl* on the one hand, and *ḍād* and *zā'* on the other. For example, *šādin* is spelled as both *šādin* and *shādin*. This causes no difficulty. But when *naẓīr* is spelled as *naḍīr* there is a problem. After long deliberation, I decided that there was no alternative but to treat these letters very much as a traditional editor would do, that is to print the letter that is to all appearances correct without drawing special attention to this in the apparatus. When, however, there is the slightest doubt or difficulty caused by the interchangeability of these letters, any change from the manuscript reading is noted in the critical apparatus. This is, I must accept, a lapse from the appropriate standard of meticulousness, but an inevitable one if the apparatus is not to be too cluttered. The only mitigation I can plead is that a *facsimile* edition will make it possible for those who want to check on such spellings to do so. These problems apart, I have done my best to reproduce the manuscript orthography.

The Critical Apparatus

This is in Arabic with the following exceptions: Hebrew names and phrases found in Hebrew *muwaššahāt* are in Hebrew characters; references

to European scholars and works are in Latin characters. García Gómez's name has suffered the slight indignity of losing its accents. This is because it is virtually impossible to print accents on Latin characters processed through the Arabic printing software available to me, due to the complications that arise through the need to feed the Latin characters through in reverse order. For example, 'Stern' had to be entered as 'nretS'.

Though I have emended the text wherever I have felt justified, there are many other places in which I suspect the transmitted text to be very doubtful but nevertheless feel that I cannot present a fully reasoned case for the emendation I would wish to propose. In such cases, I have left the manuscript reading in the body of the poem but put my emendation in the apparatus. The phrase *kaḍā 'ayn* (ⵍ is the *siglum* I have used for the *manuscript Colin*) basically means *caveat lector*, as the text has to be looked at particularly carefully at that point, either because the reading is doubtful or because there is something unusual to be noticed. For example, the last word of line 5 of poem no. 230 reads *ašjānā*³. Note 3 reads *kaḍā 'ayn*. The reason, which can only be explained fully in a commentary, is that the *ašjānā* has already appeared at the end of line 4, and may well be a case of dittography. However, one cannot make a good case for following García Gómez, who substitutes *aḥzānā*, blithely adding, 'El ms. tiene aquí indudablemente por error, *ašjānā*, como dos

esticos antes' (*Las jarchas romances*, 2nd ed., p.192). There is obviously a problem, but the solution is not at all clear. Again, the text for line 23 of poem no. 71 reads ⁶*wa-kam wahabta min mali-k*,⁶ and note 6 reads *kaḍā 'ayn*. The reason is that the *min* presents a metrical problem. One can solve this either by assuming that a metrical foot has been substituted in a way that is normally considered irregular or by taking the view that the syllable is unstressed and that the quantity does not matter.

I have used the obelus † to indicate a corrupt passage for which no plausible emendation can be suggested, for example, when the same *juz'* has been copied twice, once correctly and once in error (as in lines 9 and 13 of poem no.223). In such cases, there is no hope of restoring the incorrectly copied section, unless the poem has survived in a different recension.

Reference is made from time to time to emendations made for metrical reasons. Alterations made solely on a metrical basis have been avoided wherever possible, unless the metrical pattern of the poem points to manifestly incorrect vocalisation that can be corrected very simply. The scansion patterns I have established have been for my own use to help me as I worked through the text. They were not intended for publication at this stage, though they will need to be discussed in the volume of commentary. However, I should make it clear that I have treated the scansion in a fairly traditional Arabic manner, in what is becoming known as the extended Khalīlian system, but without any attempt to give the patterns that emerged any Khalīlian label. Where a complete breakdown in the metrical pattern has been apparent, I have looked at the text very carefully to see if emendation was indicated, and where there has been a logical case I have made an emendation. I have not acted in this way where there might be just an unusual substitution of metrical feet (*taf'īlāt*).

It is not the aim of this edition to produce a comparative text or a general *apparatus* when a poem appears in more than one source. Different recensions are quoted whenever they throw light on the text found in the *'Uddat al-jalīs*, but not otherwise. Similarly, *maṭla*'s and *kharjas* that are also to be found in religious *muwaššahāt* are referred to only if they throw light on a line in our text.

The works that contain alternative recensions that are of real value are the *Jayš al-tawšīh* of Ibn al-Khaṭīb, the *Dār al-ṭirāz* of Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk, the *Mugrib* of Ibn Sa'īd, the *Tawšī' al-tawšīh* of al-Ṣafadī, and the *Naṣḥ al-ṭīb* and *Azhār al-riyāḍ* of al-Maqqarī. The *'Uqūd al-la'ālī* of al-Nawājī, the *Saj' al-wurq* of al-Sakhāwī and the considerably later *al-'Aḍārā al-mā'isāt* are much further down the chain of transmission, and they are not referred to unless they have information not available elsewhere.