The Catholic University of America

Literary Themes of the Poetry of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī in Kitāb al-Zahra

A DISSERTATION

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Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī (d. 297/909) was a judge of the Ẓāhirite madhhab of Islamic law, but his only surviving work is Kitāb al-Zahra (The Book of the Flower), an anthology of poetry, including some of Ibn Dāwūd’s own poems. The biographical tradition names Ibn Dāwūd’s motivation for writing Kitāb al-Zahra and his poetry therein as his unrequited love for a male friend, and this love story became much more famous than the poetry Ibn Dāwūd actually wrote. This dissertation argues that the subject of Ibn Dāwūd’s poetry was not erotic love as is typically described in love poetry, but brotherhood (īkhā’), friendship among males of similar age and social status, which was frequently a topic of discussion in ʿAbbāsid literature, although Ibn Dāwūd may be the only poet of the Arabic language to make it the central theme of his work. A survey of other early Arabic works that deal with brotherhood, including pre-Islamic poetry, treatises on courtly etiquette, and philosophical writings influenced by the Aristotelian tradition, will provide insight into the cultural construct of brotherhood to which Ibn Dāwūd’s poetry constantly returns. Close readings of Ibn Dāwūd’s poetry show how he employed various conventions of Arabic poetry, such as intertextuality and a level of diction more appropriate to the entertainments and debates of the majlis than to the ceremonial ode (qasīda), in order to convey his ideas about brotherhood.
This dissertation by Jennifer Tobkin fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures approved by Sidney H. Griffith, S.T., Ph.D., as Director, and by Shawqi Talia, Ph.D., and Lourdes Maria Alvarez, Ph.D., as Readers.

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Table of Contents

Introduction: Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd al-Īṣfahānī, Misunderstood ..........1

Chapter One: Muḥammad Ibn Dāwūd and his Interlocutors: A Man of our Times and a Mystery for the Ages .....................................................6

Chapter Two: The Twin of your Mind: Toward a Study of Brotherhood Literature in ḤAbbāsid Society ......................................................35

Chapter Three: This Book is a Brother: Kitāb al-Zahra and its Poetic Hero, the Man of our Times .............................................................85

Chapter Four: I shall not Exaggerate in Anything I Say: Some Stylistic Features of the Man of our Times Poems .................................138

The Man of our Times Poems: Arabic Text and English Translation ......188

Bibliography ....................................................................................278
Introduction

Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī, Misunderstood

In the first years of this century, the Egyptian writer Alaa al-Aswany, author of the popular and controversial novel *The Yacoubian Building*, lamented the lack of appreciation audiences have for the distinction between literary artifice and historical fact. In the introduction to *Friendly Fire*, a collection of his short stories, he compared the public’s reaction to his previous books to the way the audience reacted to the first cinema screening in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1896. According to al-Aswany, when images of a moving locomotive were projected on the screen, people in the audience panicked and ran out of the theater as though they were running out of the way of a real train. Al-Aswany expressed disappointment that readers too often paid attention only to the worst of the behavior depicted in his books and took offense as though, by writing about these actions of fictional characters, he was directing accusations at the readers themselves. Unfortunately, what al-Aswany experienced is something that happens too often to writers of imaginative literature, prose or poetry; the very fact that a writer describes a fictional scenario dealing with the complexity of human emotions and behavior leads readers to attack the character of the author himself.¹

Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī (d. 297/909), the judge and poet who compiled a poetic anthology called *Kitāb al-Zahra*, suffered such a fate at the hands of near-contemporary biographers. Exaggeration being the faithful companion of rumor, the story grew throughout the centuries so that the first impression that twentieth-century readers, whether in the Arab world or the West, gained of Ibn Dāwūd had little basis in his own

writings. Several hundred lines of Ibn Dāwūd’s poetry appear in Kitāb al-Zahra attributed to a pseudonymous “Man of our Times” (ba’d ahl hādhā al-‘aṣr), and almost all of his poems refer to a “Brother” at whose hands the Man of our Times has suffered rejection and ingratitude. These poems, as well as the introduction to Kitāb al-Zahra, in which Ibn Dāwūd describes the characteristics of the ideal friend and laments the elusiveness of such an ideal friendship, led readers to posit the existence of a male friend who did not reciprocate Ibn Dāwūd’s affections, leading the heartbroken judge to compose hundreds of verses of poetry and publish them in Kitāb al-Zahra. The fact that Ibn Dāwūd described Kitāb al-Zahra as a commentary on love poetry (ghazal) was further evidence, in the popular imagination, that Ibn Dāwūd was passionately in love with the man for whom he wrote the poems, and eventually the story became so exaggerated that some biographical anecdotes have Ibn Dāwūd dying from love for his beloved. Later Arab authors, and eventually the first European authors to write about him, formed an opinion of him based as much on his supposed death from love as on any of his own writings.

The antidote to these rumors and exaggerations is a careful and sincere reading of the author’s work. It would be naïve indeed to read Ibn Dāwūd’s poetry as strictly autobiographical; to do so would be to ignore the complex mixture of fact and fiction proper to the genre in which Ibn Dāwūd wrote, namely, poetry. Classical Arabic poetry has gained the reputation of being almost impenetrable; its meanings are not obvious, even to those whose first language is Arabic, except after extensive study of its conventions. A popular saying says that poetry is the dīwān of the Arab people, that is, the record of the geography of their lands, the rarities of their language, and the deeds of their illustrious men. By this logic,
poetry began as a mnemonic for the Arabic language and culture itself, and for centuries, authors who wrote in the Arabic language, whether or not it was their first language, regarded this as an ideal, even as they adapted the medium of poetry to times, places, and concerns very different from those of the original proponents of Arabic poetry in pre-Islamic Arabia. Among the criteria by which audiences judged the merit of a poem was how well it followed the laws and precedents of poetic tradition, for if the poet deviated too far from these, his reputation as a master of the poetic craft would be compromised.

The result is that Arabic poetry operates through various, often multi-layered allusions. Intertextual references allowed poets to demonstrate their knowledge of the poetic canon, but allusions to the specific situation for which the poem was written can appear alongside these echoes of earlier poems. A study of how Ibn Dāwūd wielded poetic techniques, from motifs borrowed from heroic and Bacchic poetry to a level of diction that emulates prose to direct quotations from poems by earlier poets, that would have been familiar to his audience, will elucidate the fictional story he tells through his poems.

Perhaps the greatest distraction for Ibn Dāwūd’s readers was that his poetry represented someone who was in love, which is easily the world’s most enduring subject of gossip, for writers who dare to deal with matters relating to the sexes frequently find their personal feelings of love the target of speculation. Readers idealized and vilified, by turns, Ibn Dāwūd’s love, and the fact that both the Man of our Times and the Brother in the poems are male only added to the controversy. An examination of the sources shows us that the diversity of commentators’ attitudes toward Ibn Dāwūd corresponds to the diversity of their attitudes toward same-sex erotic love.
Never mind that friendship, the bond between two human beings that, while it may seem to arise from external circumstances, ultimately proves that it can transcend and outlast those circumstances, is among the oldest and most widespread themes in world literature. It is very difficult to delve deeply into discussion either of social etiquette or of moral philosophy without at least some discussion of friendship, and the `Abbāsid period, during which Ibn Dāwūd lived, saw a flourishing of writing on these subjects. Arabic literature in Ibn Dāwūd’s time used the word “brotherhood” (ikhā’) to refer to friendship among males, and while no widely agreed-upon definition of brotherhood has come down to us, the sources tend to agree on some attributes of brotherhood, such as loyalty, reciprocity, and mutual desire for moral good, even if the sources portray this vision of brotherhood indirectly more often than they clearly prescribe its attributes. Brotherhood is rather so central to the literary culture in which Ibn Dāwūd wrote as to be taken for granted, appearing usually as an underlying assumption rather than a subject of discussion. Thus, the Man of our Times poems, which return again and again to the correct and incorrect practices of “brothers,” are a valuable source of insight into the way intellectuals in the `Abbāsid period regarded brotherhood. We may even consider Ibn Dāwūd the foremost poet of brotherhood in the Arabic language.

The aims of this dissertation are to introduce readers of the English language to the historical figure of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd and his poetry and to advance the study of the cultural construct of brotherhood in Arab society in the first few centuries of the Islamic era. The first chapter contains a discussion of the biographical sources which contain anecdotes about Ibn Dāwūd, as well as the more theoretical works that rely on information contained in
them. The second chapter looks to sources as diverse as pre-Islamic poetry, treatises on social etiquette by Ibn al-Muqaffa` and al-Jāḥiẓ, and works on morality written in Arabic by philosophers faithful to the Aristotelian tradition, in order to sketch the cultural concept of brotherhood to which the Man of our Times poems constantly refer. The third and fourth chapters show the process of reading Ibn Dāwūd’s poetry with awareness of the poetic conventions he emulated and those he deliberately avoided. Finally, the Man of our Times poems appear at the end of this dissertation, both in the original Arabic and in English translation.
Chapter One
Muḥammad Ibn Dāwūd and his Interlocutors: A Man of our Times and a Mystery for the Ages

Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd ibn `Alī ibn Khalaf al-İsfahānī (254/868-296/909) was a jurist, poet, and scholar of Arabic poetry. The time and place in which he lived, Baghdād in the third Islamic century, appears in the Arab literary imagination as the site of a Golden Age and was, perhaps, second only to the Qurʾan and hadīth as a subject of inquiry for Western scholars of Arabic in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ibn Dāwūd’s contemporaries and near predecessors collected, recorded, classified, and interpreted information from every corner of the known world, and third-century Baghdād came to be remembered, both in Arab folklore and in the estimation of the Orientalists, as a city of mathematicians, physicians, philosophers, grammarians, poets, and men of religion, a place for the exchange and evaluation of ideas. Literacy was widespread, and educated people gathered in the majlis to hear wise men speak, to debate important questions, to match wits, and to entertain each other with stories, poetry, and music. It is in the majlis that Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd learned about the things for which he came to be remembered, namely, jurisprudence, poetry, and love.

Unfortunately, we can know for certain only a small portion of what Ibn Dāwūd learned or said in the majlis, since nothing remains of his juridical writings except brief quotations in later works. Although Ibn Dāwūd is said to have written somewhere between

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2 In contemporary usage, the word majlis means everything from, “parliament,” to, “sitting room.” In the Abbasid period, the majlis was a formal gathering of notables and experts, usually in the home of a ruler or other wealthy person.
seven\(^3\) and fourteen books, mostly treatises on jurisprudence and refutations of other jurists,\(^4\) the only one of his books that remains is *Kitāb al-Zahra (The Book of the Flower)*, which contains much commentary on poetry and 104 of Ibn Dāwūd’s own poems, consisting of 534 lines in total, which he attributed to a pseudonymous “Man of our Times” (*ba`d ahl hādhā al-`asr*).

Centuries of scholarship, animosity, and literary artifice have made a fascinating character out of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, and most writers have conflated Ibn Dāwūd the author with the Man of our Times, his poetic persona, whom we must treat as a fictional character. In this dissertation, we will allow the Man of our Times verses to speak for themselves for the first time in modern scholarship. This chapter will seek to chart the development of the Ibn Dāwūd figure as ancient and modern authors have presented him. The second chapter will situate Ibn Dāwūd among other `Abbāsid authors who wrote about “brotherhood,” that is, friendship among males, which, as I shall argue, is the main theme of Ibn Dāwūd’s poetry. Subsequent chapters will deal with thematic and stylistic features of the Man of our Times verses themselves. The third chapter will discuss the didactic purpose of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, with brotherhood as its central theme, as Ibn Dāwūd presents it in the introduction to that book and how the Man of our Times verses fulfill that purpose, including four famous poetic scenarios in which the Man of our Times lives out the lessons *Kitāb al-Zahra* has set out to teach. The fourth chapter will treat technical aspects of the Man of our Times poems, such as intertextuality and dramaturgic shifts of person, as well as reasons why

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\(^3\) Ibn al-Nadīm includes the titles of all of Ibn Dāwūd’s books that were known to him (Muḥammad ibn Abī Yā`qūb Ishāq Ibn al-Nadīm. *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, ed. Gustav Flügel [Beirut: Khayats, 1964], 217).

Ibn Dāwūd might have employed those techniques. A full presentation of the Man of our Times verses, along with an English translation, will follow.

Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd grew up around learned people. His father Dāwūd ibn `Alī (d. 884), was the founding qādī of the now-defunct Zāhirite madhhab (school of jurisprudence) and a connoisseur of poetry. He surrounded himself with traditionists, grammarians, and poets, notably the grammarian Abū Abdullāh Niftawayh, whose name would become attached to a famous anecdote about Ibn Dāwūd’s death. Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd later assumed leadership of the madhhab and inherited his father’s circle of learned companions, and it seems that he enjoyed the reputation of an expert on poetry as well as on jurisprudence.⁵

A book like Kitāb al-Zahra could only have originated in the majlis in an urban center in the classical period of Islamic civilization. It is one of the early works of adab, the genre which began in the early Abbasid period and dominated Arabic prose literature for much of the pre-modern period.⁶ Much as epic poetry is the art form of a society on the brink of literacy and the novel is the art form of an industrialized one so prosperous that people spend their copious leisure time alone and printing presses are so ubiquitous that novels do not need to lend themselves to memorization, adab belongs to a society in which new cultures, each with an ancient tradition of writing, are being encountered, but in which the Bedouin who knows thousands of proverbs and lines of poetry from memory is held as an

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⁵ Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn `Alī Al-Baghdādī, Taʾrīkh Baghidād wa Madīnata Salām (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1931), 5: 256.

ideal master of language. *Adab* might be described as a *majlis* on paper, a collection of anecdotes, excerpts of poetry, and one-line sayings all related to one or several themes, for the purpose of making the reader wiser and more virtuous in general or more adept in a certain discipline. The books reflect the cosmopolitan spirit of the *majālis* of Baghād and other cities, containing not only quotations from Arab authors, but also from the Greek, Syriac, Persian, and Indian scholars whose works were translated into Arabic in the `Abbāsid period. The population of the Islamic state, and therefore the audience of *adab*, was comprised of Muslims as well as Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians, and many of the books are non-sectarian in that the compiler does not assume that the reader ascribes to one religion or another, only that the reader is intelligent.

Whatever Ibn Dāwūd actually intended by composing those verses of his which survive and by compiling *Kitāb al-Zahra*, the interest that others have taken in him and his work forms a story of love, rivalry, and introspection. In this chapter, I will explore the development of the Ibn Dāwūd character as he has emerged in the writings of medieval Arab biographers, belletrists, and mystics, as well as Western Orientalist scholars.

Beginning in the century after Ibn Dāwūd’s death and continuing for the next four centuries, the boy *qāḍī* appears as a colorful character in biographical dictionaries, a prodigy of the Arabic language and a martyr of love. The identification of Ibn Dāwūd as the author

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7 Bonebakker, “*Adab* and the concept of *belles-lettres*,” 24-26.
of the, Man of our Times verses goes back as far as al-Mas`ūdī\(^9\) (280/856-345/956)\(^10\) and al-Washshā’ (246/860-325/936),\(^11\) near-contemporaries of Ibn Dāwūd, and from there, the story only grew. Biographical dictionaries such as Ta’rīkh Baghdād aw Madīnāt al-Salām by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (392/1002-463/1071)\(^12\), Wafayāt al-A`yān by Ibn Khallikān (608/1211-681/1282)\(^13\), al-Wāfī bi-`l-Wafayāt by Ṣalah al-Dīn al-Šafadī (d. 1296), and the Irshād of Yāqūt al-Rūmī (574-575/1179-626/1229)\(^14\) have Ibn Dāwūd memorizing the Qur’an at age seven and taking on the leadership of the Žāhirī madhhab at the age of sixteen, by which time he has already mostly completed his magnum opus, Kitāb al-Zahra. According to these sources, his reason for writing Kitāb al-Zahra was his unrequited love for Muḥammad ibn Jāmī`, or Wahb ibn Jāmī`, as Šafadī gives the beloved’s name.\(^15\) In keeping with the moral standards befitting a qādir,\(^16\) Ibn Dāwūd did his best to conceal the secret of his love, but the biographies tell of secret trysts, licentious verses about Ibn Jāmī` which are nowhere to be found in Kitāb al-Zahra, and a dramatic deathbed scene in which Ibn Dāwūd confides in Nifṭawayh the grammarian that unrequited love has brought about his untimely death, and even though Ibn Dāwūd never reveals his beloved’s name, Nifṭawayh is certain that it is Ibn


\(^{10}\) Ch. Pellat, “Al-Mas`ūdī,” The Encyclopedia of Islam, 6:784-785.


\(^{15}\) Šafadī, al-Wāfī, 24:59.

\(^{16}\) The conduct befitting a person of a certain social role, such as a scribe, doctor, or gentleman, was a popular subject for adab, and it is in connection with these career-specific attributes that the biographies often state or imply that, for example, Ibn Dāwūd was a gentleman (zarīf), and therefore he wrote love poetry, or Ibn Dāwūd was a pious Muslim, and therefore he remained chaste.
While the modern reader might find a sympathetic character in a great intellectual laid low by unrequited love, the medieval biographers did not intend a flattering portrayal. Obsession with Ibn Jāmi` is only one of the unattractive qualities with which the biographical dictionaries paint Ibn Dāwūd. We see him taking his own wit more seriously than his duties as a Muslim judge, and he answers serious questions of jurisprudence with riddles, double-entendres, and sometimes outright dismissal. This, combined with his lifelong homoerotic infatuation with Ibn Jāmi`, makes him, at best, silly, and, at worse, a sociopath whose presence in a position of leadership is a danger to the Islamic polity. Of course, it would be unwise to accept uncritically this characterization of Ibn Dāwūd, as many of the compilers of these biographical dictionaries and the sources that informed them were inimical to Ibn Dāwūd or the Żāhirite ideas he represented. According to El-Rouayheb, “[B]iographical entries were written within a social setting marked by rivalries, enmity, and alliances, and thus were charged with ‘political’ significance.” Thus we find in Ibn Khallikān’s biographical dictionary a clear bias in favor of Ibn Surayj the Shāfi`ite jurist, who wins one battle of words after another against the Żāhirite Ibn Dāwūd.

Various versions of the story of Ibn Dāwūd’s love for Ibn Jāmi` are found in adab

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17 Raven has provided an English translation of twenty-two biographical anecdotes about Ibn Dāwūd (Willem Raven, *Ibn Dāwūd al-Isbahānī and his Kitāb al-Zahra* [Amsterdam, 1989], 36-50).
19 Compare the fate of Abū Nuwās at the hands of the biographers. A brilliant, innovative poet with an irreverent sense of humor, Abū Nuwās is often depicted in later literature as a comic buffoon, and his wine poems and homoerotic verses have contributed to his loss of reputation over the centuries (Philip F. Kennedy, *Abū Nuwās: A Genius of Poetry* [Oxford: Oneworld, 2005], 27-28).
books on love that date from the late Middle Ages, with each author including Ibn Dāwūd in a different category or mentioning him for a different reason. Ibn Dāwūd’s deathbed conversation with Niftawayh forms the first anecdote in the introduction of Mughulṭāī’s (690/1291-762/1361)\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Al-Wāḍīḥ al-Mubīn fī dhikr man Istashhada min al-Muḥībbīn} (usually called \textit{The Biographical Dictionary of the Martyrs of Love} in English). The book contains a chapter for each letter of the Arabic alphabet, much like a dīwān of poetry, with each chapter containing numerous anecdotes about star-crossed lovers, but the story of Ibn Dāwūd’s death appears in Mughulṭāī’s prologue, where the author introduces the phenomenon of lovers dying from love.\textsuperscript{23} Ibn Abī Ḥajala’s (725/1325-776/1375)\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Dīwān al-Šabāba (Dīwān of Love)} contains sections on caliphs and princes, men who loved women, men who loved men, and lovers who remained chaste, and Ibn Dāwūd is counted among the chaste lovers. Some two hundred years after Mughulṭāī and Ibn Abī Ḥajala, Dāwūd al-Anṭākī (d. 1599)\textsuperscript{25} devotes several pages of his \textit{Tazyīn al-Aswāq} to Ibn Dāwūd. Ibn Dāwūd’s story is part of the section about men who loved males, and among those, he is classified among those who died after being unable to attain the beloved.\textsuperscript{26} It is worthy of note that these \textit{adab} books say less about Ibn Dāwūd’s juridical career or his rivalry with Ibn Surayj, which subjects receive equal attention or even take precedence over his love story in the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[22]{Giffen, \textit{Profane Love}, 33.}
\footnotetext[23]{Al-Ḥāfīz Mughulṭāī, \textit{Al-Wāḍīḥ al-Mubīn fī Dhikr man Ustushhida min al-Muḥībbīn}, (Beirut: al-Intishār al-ʿArabī, 1997), 18-19.}
\footnotetext[24]{Giffen, \textit{Profane Love}, 38.}
\footnotetext[25]{El-Rouayheb, \textit{Before Homosexuality}, 19.}
\footnotetext[26]{Dāwūd Ibn ʿUmar Al- Ἀντακί, \textit{Tazyīn al-Aswāq fī Akhbār al-ʿUshshāq wa-bi-Ākhirihi Dīwān al-Šabāba} (Beirut: Dār Hamad wa-Mahyū, 1972). \textit{Tazyīn al-Aswāq}, written seven centuries after \textit{Kitāb al-Zahra} is the first book to include Ibn Dāwūd’s love story in a category specific to love stories about two males, but this aspect of the Ibn Dāwūd character would play a pivotal role in Massignon’s estimation of him, which was the next time any author devoted more than a few lines to the discussion of Ibn Dāwūd.}
\end{footnotes}
biographical dictionaries, than they do about his love for Ibn Jāmi`. These books did not aim
to be encyclopedias or to report everything that was known about the historical figures
mentioned in them; love was at the center of every anecdote, and Ibn Dāwūd’s role in them
was that of a character in a love story.

The post-`Abbāsid adab works on love quote more extensively from the biographical
dictionaries than they do from Kitāb al-Zahra itself, but they include details that appeal to
readers’ taste for personal stories, beyond oblique references to events such as one might find
in poetry. To capture the attention of the adab writers, Ibn Dāwūd would not even have to
have written poetry; he would need only to have fallen in love. Ta’rīkh Baghdād has Ibn
Dāwūd making an isolated comment that he had suffered from love, presumably unrequited,
since childhood,27 and another comment, elsewhere, that he wrote most of Kitāb al-Zahra
while his father was still living,28 that is, by the time he was sixteen years old. Elsewhere, he
states that Ibn Jāmi` provided the impetus for the composition of Kitāb al-Zahra.29 These,
along with the story in which Ibn Dāwūd leaves the bath with his face veiled, later unveiling
his face before Ibn Jāmi`,30 and the story of Ibn Dāwūd’s death, appear as unconnected
anecdotes.31 Al-Anṭākī makes these into a single story, and says,

“This [beloved] is Muḥammad ibn Jāmi` al-Ṣaydālānī. […] It
is said that [Ibn Dāwūd] wrote [his] aforementioned book for
no reason other than this love, and that there are allusions to it

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30 Al-Baghdādī, TB, 5:261.
31 Al-Baghdādī, TB, 5:262.
in the beginning of the book.”

Although gossip and polemic may have been the aim of the biographers, they left much to
the reader’s imagination about Ibn Dāwūd’s relationship with Ibn Jāmī‘; the anecdotes are, at
least on the surface, simply anecdotes, each an individual khabar, an isolated report, meant to
be recited as would be a proverb or a line of poetry. They refrain from making general
statements, and the reader is left to draw his own conclusions. Likewise, Ibn Dāwūd ascribed
to a style of love poetry in which the attributes of the beloved are rarely mentioned; his
poems draw attention to love, not to the beloved. Al-Anṭākī reads into the verses and
anecdotes and says, “Their relationship became known, and they did not deny it; it was in the
open, and they did not conceal it.”

The biographical dictionaries and adab love stories allege that Ibn Dāwūd was a
proponent of al-naẓar al-mubah (“the permitted gaze”), meaning that it is ḥalāl (lawful) for a
Muslim to gaze at a beautiful person, even though there is an implicit danger of falling in
love with someone he cannot marry, but such a teaching appears nowhere in Ibn Dāwūd’s
own writings. The allegation that Ibn Dāwūd espoused al-naẓar al-mubah seems to go back
only as far as the deathbed anecdote, attributed to the grammarian Niftawayh (244/858-
323/935), which first appeared in Ta’rikh Baghdaｄ.¹⁵

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¹² Al-Anṭākī, Tazīyān, 333.
¹³ Al-Anṭākī, Tazīyān 333.
¹⁴ Raven, MBD, 30.
¹⁵ A verse of Ibn Dāwūd’s in Kitāb al-Zahra has the beloved blushing when the lover looks at him (Ibn Dāwūd,
KZ, 81), but this is hardly evidence that Ibn Dāwūd considered gazing at the beloved to be licit from a juridical
perspective.
[Nīfṭawayh] said: I visited Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd during the illness from which he died, and I said to him, “How are you?”

He said, “You know well whose love has brought me to this state.”

I said, “What prevents you from enjoying it while you are able?”

He said, “Enjoyment is of two kinds; one of them is the permitted gaze, and the other is the proscribed pleasure. As for the permitted gaze, it has caused in me what you see, and as for the forbidden pleasure, I was prevented from it by what my father recited[.] … [T]he Prophet, peace be upon him, said, “He who loves and conceals [his love] and remains chaste and patient [until death], God forgives him and takes him to Heaven.”36

In some versions of this anecdote, Ibn Dāwūd and Nīfṭawayh go on to recite verses about gazing at the beloved.37 Taʿrīkh Baghdād and other sources have him reciting verses not found in Kitāb al-Zahra, that allude to the doctrine of al-naẓar al-mubāḥ38 or describe the beloved’s attractive physical attributes.39 Dīwān al-Ṣabāba attributes to Ibn Dāwūd an even more incriminating statement, “The charity of the handsome face is that chaste people are allowed to look at it,”40 as well as this anecdote, which explicitly depicts Ibn Dāwūd gazing at his beloved.

It is said that his beloved was Muḥammad, also called Waḥb, ibn Jāmīʿ al-Ṣaydalānī. [Ibn Jāmīʿ] went to the Commander of the Faithful, and he was asked about Ibn Dāwūd, whether [Ibn Jāmīʿ] had ever seen him do anything despicable. He said, “No, O Commander of the Faithful, except that I spent the night with him, and he would uncover my face and say, ‘O

36 Al-Baghdādī, TB, 5:262.
38 Al-Baghdādī, TB, 5:261.
39 Al-Baghdādī, TB, 5:262.
40 Ibn Abī Ḥajala, Ṣabāba, 255.
Lord, You know that I love him and how greatly You have cared for him.”

Ibn Abī Ḥajala and the adab love story writers, in contrast to the biographers, mean these stories to indicate Ibn Dāwūd’s virtue. Ibn Abī Ḥajala holds him up as an example, showing how he sought to win Ibn Jāmi’’s love with his piety and chastity, whereas Mughlīṭāī so much as makes him a martyr of love.

Among a certain group of people, Ibn Dāwūd became notorious for advocating the permitted gaze and even more notorious for reciting the controversial hadīth al-`ishq (hadīth of love), which appears in many versions of the deathbed anecdote, going back as far as Ta’rīkh Baghdaḍī. These were the Ḥanbalite religious scholars, most notably Ibn al-Jawzī (510/1116-597-1200), Ibn Taymiyya, and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (691/1272-751/1350). The twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw a flourishing of Ḥanbalite thought, in which scholars sought to separate the ideas and practices which were true to the essence of Islam from heresies and innovations which had also become established in the first five centuries of Islamic civilization. Books such as Dhamm al-Hawā (The Censure of Love) and al-Muntaẓam fi Ta’rīkh al-Mulūk wa-’l-Umm (The Well-Ordered Chronicle of Kings and Nations) by Ibn al-Jawzī and Rawḍat al-Muḥibbīn (The Garden of Lovers) have a similar format to works of adab from the same period, that is, large collections of brief anecdotes.

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41 Ibn Abī Ḥajala, Šabāba, 255.
42 Ibn Abī Ḥajala, Šabāba, 255.
43 The hadīth al-`ishq appears in Kitāb al-Zahra, with Ibn Dāwūd’s own name in the isnād (Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 66). This is sufficient to make those who rejected this hadīth view Ibn Dāwūd as an opponent, but he presents it as one of many things that have been said about the concepts and motifs to which the chapters of Kitāb al-Zahra are devoted; it is hardly a central theme of Kitāb al-Zahra or of the Man of our Times poems.
44 Al-Baghdadī, TB, 5:262.
45 Giffen, Profane Love, 27.
46 Giffen, Profane Love, 34.
but these books are unambiguous in representing the Ḥanbalite ideology. Whereas a book like Kitāb al-Zahra demonstrates the author’s moral virtue as well as his literary virtuosity, it appeals to the reader’s sense of wit and aesthetics as much as it does to his piety, but when the Ḥanbalite jurists write about love and lovers (including Ibn Dāwūd), it is to warn the reader against an array of heresies and vices, and the tone is explicitly polemical, so much so that, according to Giffen, Ibn al-Jawzī seems to have written Dhamm al-Hawā in order to scare the reader out of falling in love by enumerating the calamitous consequences the lover will encounter in this world and the next.\(^{47}\)

Ibn Dāwūd is on the Ḥanbalites’ list of enemies for a number of reasons, from being a Ṣāhirite to writing love poetry that keeps the reader’s mind preoccupied with thoughts of illicit love, and these are only the charges of which Ibn Dāwūd was actually guilty. Equally often, the Ibn Dāwūd character whose reputation grew and became distorted over the centuries gets caught in the middle of Ibn al-Jawzī’s polemic against the Ṣūfis, and his name is mentioned either in connection with the permitted gaze\(^{48}\) or the hadīth al-‘ishq.

Because of his characterization as a well-read, sharp-witted urbanite in the biographical dictionaries, a martyr of love in the adab works on love, and a proponent of libertine and theologically suspect ideas in the Ḥanbalite religious treatises, Ibn Dāwūd gained the reputation, however unjustly, for placing a greater value on love and on fine speech than on worship of God. This was the Ibn Dāwūd character that the West came to know. Louis Massignon (1883-1962) was the Orientalist scholar responsible for introducing

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Ibn Dāwūd to the West, although his interest in Ibn Dāwūd began for a different reason than that of any of the previously mentioned groups of writers. Massignon’s treatment of Ibn Dāwūd is found in the first volume of the former’s life’s work, *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, which deals with the life, teachings, and legacy of the Ṣūfī mystic, as well as Massignon’s own ideas on the implications of al-Ḥallāj’s mysticism for Muslims and Christians.

Massignon’s interest in Ibn Dāwūd was rooted in the fact that Ibn Dāwūd was one of the many judges who wrote *fatwās* (judgments) condemning al-Ḥallāj’s activities, and it was Ibn Dāwūd’s *fatwā* that ultimately decided the fate of al-Ḥallāj, although al-Ḥallāj’s execution did not take place until twelve years after Ibn Dāwūd’s death. Massignon devotes approximately thirty pages to the discussion of Ibn Dāwūd and his writings, a far more extensive treatment than any previous writer had given him, and he contrasted Ibn Dāwūd’s comments on love, as found in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, with the teachings of al-Ḥallāj and his followers on similar matters, including comparing the levels of love between two people, as specified in the second chapter of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, to Platonic-influenced and Ṣūfī descriptions of levels of spiritual states and levels of love between a believer and God.

According to Massignon, Ibn Dāwūd’s condemnation of al-Ḥallāj was the result of a flawed understanding of Islam and of love. Al-Ḥallāj, like other Ṣūfīs, used words like *shaghaf* (‘passion’) and *`ishq* (‘erotic love’) to describe the love that the believer feels for God. Massignon defended the Ṣūfī idea that the ultimate goal of love for another human being is love for God; thus, one cannot be called a martyr of love unless it is God for whose

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love the lover is killed. The Ṣūfīs frequently used stories about lovers famous for their fidelity, chastity, and suffering, such as Qays (called Majnūn) and Laylā, Jamīl and Buthayna, and even Ibn Dāwūd and Ibn Jāmi`; as parables to illustrate how the servant of God feels and behaves toward his Lord, and mystical poetry imitates many of the motifs of erotic poetry. Whereas the Ḥanbalites criticized Ibn Dāwūd, albeit on questionable grounds, for having too much in common with the Ṣūfīs, Massignon criticized him for having too little in common with them. Ibn Dāwūd’s legalistic leanings, whether in jurisprudence or in adab, were antithetical to the pure faith of al-Ḥallāj.

Massignon’s Ibn Dāwūd, by writing hundreds and compiling thousands of verses of love poetry without mentioning love for God and then by dying of love for a human beloved, missed the mark entirely. He failed to understand the truth of al-Ḥallāj’s teachings because he failed to understand love. According to Massignon, Ibn Dāwūd followed his own personal feelings and predilections and then made a philosophical system out of them. The Arabic language pleased Ibn Dāwūd, and therefore he, like his father and his companions, declared the external meaning of a word (its ḥādir) to be its truth. Ibn Jāmi`’s countenance pleased Ibn Dāwūd, and thus he declared it permissible to gaze at the beloved’s face, even promising salvation for the lover who can devote himself to adoration of his beloved until the end of his life. Even worse than getting too caught up in the things of this world, like erotic

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52 Hellmut Ritter, *The Ocean of the Soul: Man, the World, and God in the Stories of Farīd al-Dīn `Aṭṭār*, trans. John O’Kane (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 172. The example of the story about Majnūn and Laylā which Ritter cites from the Muṣḥbatnāmah is but one of many Ṣūfī allegories mentioned in *The Ocean of the Soul.*

53 *Kitāb al-Zahra* makes it seem as though the truth is somewhere in between. Ibn Dāwūd occasionally attributes one or another line of thinking to the Ṣūfīs, but he does not quote any poems by well-known Ṣūfīs. Raven even suggests that Ibn Dāwūd deliberately omitted the names of Ṣūfī poets from *Kitāb al-Zahra* (Raven, *MBD*, 21). The Ṣūfīs appear in *Kitāb al-Zahra* as one of many sources of which Ibn Dāwūd had little firsthand knowledge. He quote nameless Ṣūfīs the way he quotes nameless Persian kings.
infatuation or witty exchange, even worse than taking the ḥadīth al-ʿishq at face value, Massignon’s Ibn Dāwūd made a religion out of an intrinsically rebellious, hedonistic, and sinful love.

Ibn Dāwūd’s first mistake, in Massignon’s eyes, was the name of his madhhab, Zāhirī, named for the belief that the true meaning of a word or āya is what it appears to be, and therefore the meaning is obvious and can be agreed on by every intelligent person who knows the Arabic language. This was objectionable, according to Massignon, because it goes against the widely held Ṣūfī principle that Scripture (as well as some poetry), has both a zāhir (external) meaning, obvious to all readers, and a bātin (internal) meaning, comprehensible only to those spiritually advanced enough to understand it. While it is impossible to know, based on Kitāb al-Zahra, Ibn Dāwūd’s opinions and those of his Zāhirī contemporaries toward Ṣūfīsm, Massignon seems ready to conflate Ibn Dāwūd’s ideas with those of other, later writers, such as the aforementioned thirteenth-century Ḥanbalites and make him an enemy of al-Ḥallāj from the outset.

His second mistake was conceiving of no love greater than the highest level of love that one human being can feel for another, or at least, this is how Massignon interprets Ibn Dāwūd’s presentation of the levels of love, anecdotes about lovers, and erotic poetry. In Kitāb al-Zahra, Majnūn and Laylā are only mortals who have unusually strong feelings toward each other; he fails to grasp that the value of their love story is as a this-worldly symbol of the greatest love that can exist, love for God. Ibn Dāwūd treats death from love as an end in itself and thereby misses the spiritual lesson. Massignon refers to this preoccupation with a love that begins in this world and ends in this world as, “Uranism,” so
called because the Uranistic thinker looks heavenward and sees only the heavens but not Heaven, because he loves with a love that consumes the mind but misses the spirit. The term has been used in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries\textsuperscript{54} with various shades of meaning, always with a strong connotation of homoeroticism.\textsuperscript{55}

In Massignon’s time, the words “uranism,” “inversion,” and, “homosexuality,” were synonyms, with the latter, a medical term originating in the then-nascent field of psychiatry, eventually displacing the others. Both in *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, in which Ibn Dāwūd serves as the prime example, and in his treatise *La Prière sur Sodome (The Prayer for Sodom)*,\textsuperscript{56} Massignon presents male homosexual attraction and an intellectualized love for sensual pleasures as aspects of the same personality type. Massignon’s audience would not have been surprised to see an *adīb* of such melancholy temperament as Ibn Dāwūd portrayed as a homosexual, or rather, as a caricature of one. Massignon’s Ibn Dāwūd was far from being the only homosexual character in early twentieth-century literature to fancy himself a martyr of love. Anthony Heilbut describes this phenomenon in his biography of Thomas Mann.

Since Oscar Wilde (or, in German, the lyrics of Mann’s favorite poet August von Platen), gay melancholia has fragilely balanced the grandiose, the campy, and the genuinely afflicted. Tricked and wounded by the philistines’ assaults, seeing themselves as little Saint Sebastians (Mann’s preferred saint), some youthful fops exhibit a form of aesthetic Catholicism, reveling in their misery. Hanno [a character in Mann’s novel

\textsuperscript{54}Karl-Heinrich Ulrichs used the term *Urning*, translated into English as, “Uranian,” to describe a male who is sexually attracted to other males. A group of English poets in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, all of them educated in the Greco-Roman Classics, wrote what they called, “Uranian poetry,” erotic verse, conservative in form and technique, directed toward adolescent boys and young men.

\textsuperscript{55}Massignon uses the term with a clearly negative connotation, in contrast to the spiritual connotation it carries in Phaedrus’ speech in Plato’s *Symposium*.

Buddenbrooks displays operatic excesses of self-pity unmitigated by humor, along with a precise sense of the life around him. It is a knowledge specifically predicated on his sexual nature.\(^{57}\)

Massignon describes Ibn Dāwūd’s character vividly, drawing heavily on the stories of his love for Ibn Jāmi` as found in the biographical dictionaries and the encyclopedias of lovers. If the biographers wanted Ibn Dāwūd to be remembered as a sexual deviant who twisted the teachings of Islam to serve his own purposes, Massignon’s book is the strongest indication that they succeeded. He refers to the bath-house story, among the most far-fetched of the biographical anecdotes, as, “an authentic anecdote from the life of Ibn Dāwūd.”\(^{58}\) Massignon refers to Ibn Dāwūd as, “a sensitive personality, frail and effeminate,”\(^{59}\) even though none of the medieval sources explicitly describe him as such,\(^{60}\) and he uses as evidence only three biographical anecdotes out of the twenty-two, excluding minor variations, that exist.\(^{61}\) He uses the anecdote about the young Ibn Dāwūd’s distress over a nickname his playmates have given him as evidence that he was an emotionally sensitive, and therefore effeminate, child who would become an emotionally sensitive, and therefore effeminate, adult.\(^{62}\) His description of Ibn Dāwūd’s death scene is even more vivid and detailed than the version that appears in al-Wādıḥ al-Mubīn.

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\(^{60}\) They do not include the word mukhannath, which in the time the biographical dictionaries were written, referred to a man with effeminate mannerisms, or ma’būn, which referred to a man in the passive role in homosexual intercourse. It is not immediately clear which phrase in the anecdotes led Massignon to this description. He may be interpreting the description of Ibn Dāwūd as a gentlemen and writer of fine poetry, or perhaps Şafādi’s explanation of the phrase ʿuşūr al-shawk to mean that Ibn Dāwūd had a sallow complexion (Şafādi, *al-Wāفيدي, 24:58*), combined with the fact that the latter died at age forty-two.

\(^{61}\) Raven, *MBD*, 32. Raven presents the anecdotes in full.

“We glimpse the precious, ordered setting of Ibn Dāwūd’s
death […] still young, lavished with attentions and weary
regrets, between the light filtering in from the outside through
the shahnishin grating and the empty space that the ‘tarma’
overlooks, before a cage that holds a blinded twittering
nightingale. His last remarks show him turning back, restored
to serenity, to the renunciation of forbidden pleasures in his
past […] : what was of concern to him was that he was allowed
in this way to carry the mental conception of this forbidden
pleasure intact, since it was unsatisfied, to the paradise of the
uranians.”

Massignon’s reasons for vilifying Ibn Dāwūd are twofold; first, Ibn Dāwūd’s role in
The Passion of al-Ḥallāj is that of a dramatic foil to al-Ḥallāj, legalistic instead of mystical,
in love with a human being to the exclusion of God, and, second, the Ibn Dāwūd character in
The Passion of al-Ḥallāj represents Massignon’s own demons. Taʾrīkh Baghdād and all
subsequent accounts have it that Ibn Dāwūd fell in love with Ibn Jāmi‘ when the former (as
well as, presumably, the latter) was in his teens, during which time, and as a direct result of
which, he composed Kitāb al-Zahra.

Massignon’s belief that Ibn Dāwūd’s death from love, as the story had come down to
him, was the worst possible response to his youthful passion was, in part, based on personal
experience. In 1906, the twenty-three year old Massignon was living in Cairo, where he met
and became friends with Luis de la Cuadra, a Spanish convert to Islam. Their relationship
was passionate, even sexual, and Massignon wrote that de la Cuadra “taught him ‘in a

63 Massignon, Passion, 1:361.
64 Al-Baghdādī. TB, 5:259.
crooked way' how love is ‘torn from our hearts for the beloved.’” The following year, French Ministry of Education sent Massignon to Baghdad, and from that time on, their lives took divergent paths. Massignon repented of his youthful “debauchery” with de la Cuadra and went on to marry, have children, become ordained as a Christian priest, and see in al-Ḥallāj a Muslim who understood faith and love, even whose teachings came very close to the Christian doctrine of vicarious atonement; de la Cuadra would commit suicide while imprisoned in Spain, but Massignon continued to pray for his friend’s salvation until the former’s death in 1962.

Massignon’s Ibn Dāwūd never outgrew his youthful folly, and he spent the remaining twenty-six years of his life suffering hopelessly from his unrequited love for Ibn Jāmi’, mired in his earthbound interpretation of Islam, preferring enslavement to his own hedonistic desires over salvation. The Ibn Dāwūd character in *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj* is what Massignon might have become if he had not, with God’s help, overcome the Uranistic love of his youth. In writing about him, Massignon is fighting his own demons.

The publication of *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj* introduced Ibn Dāwūd and *Kitāb al-Zahra* to the West, and subsequent studies have revolved around *Kitāb al-Zahra* rather than Ibn Dāwūd as a martyr of love. In 1932, Alois Nykl (1885-1958), in collaboration with Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān, published a printed edition of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, based on the only manuscript of it that was known, at that time, to survive. Nykl’s purpose in making the edition was its

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relationship to the slightly later ʻTawq al-Ḥamāma (The Dove’s Neck-Ring) by the Andalusian Ibn Ḥazm (383/993-456/1064), since both books deal with the theme of love, and both authors were Zāhirites. Nykl originally intended to translate Kitāb al-Zahra into English, but he eventually decided that publishing his edition of the text in the original Arabic would be of more immediate benefit, and he postponed the translation. As of 2010, no English translation exists of Kitāb al-Zahra in its entirety.

Lois Giffen’s Theory of Profane Love Among the Arabs: The Development of a Genre, recognized the originality of thought that went into the production of Kitāb al-Zahra, but it, like its predecessors, treated Ibn Dāwūd as though his only intention were to write about love. The first chapter is a summary of some twenty works of adab which were written over a span of eight centuries, on the theme of love, and she singles out these twenty because, in her estimation, their compilers seek to make a statement about the nature of love or the proper conduct of lovers, rather than simply presenting verses and anecdotes about love because they are entertaining. Kitāb al-Zahra is, according, to Giffen, the earliest book-length work in Arabic dealing primarily with the theory of love. In the summary of Kitāb al-Zahra and of its author’s biography, she mentions Ibn Dāwūd’s love for Ibn Jāmi` and offers no comment on the story’s veracity or lack thereof. She, like Massignon, repeats the deathbed anecdote. In subsequent chapters, she explores the technical terms involved in the discourse on love and, finally, the major points of debate among medieval Arab thinkers about the nature of love.

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69 Giffen, Profane Love, 23.
70 Nykl, introduction to Kitāb al-Zahra by Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, 1.
71 Nykl, introduction to KZ, 2-3.
72 Giffen, Profane Love, 8-13.
Nearly a millennium after his death, Ibn Dāwūd finally became the primary subject of a scholarly work. Willem Raven defended his doctoral dissertation *Ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣbahānī and his Kitāb al-Zahra* in 1989. Raven is the first scholar to consider Ibn Dāwūd as an important thinker in his own right, rather than being content to compare him to others. He deals with aspects of Ibn Dāwūd’s writing that went unnoticed or ignored for centuries in the East and the West alike. Raven’s Ibn Dāwūd is primarily a literary critic, not a lover, and *Kitāb al-Zahra* is a book about love poetry, not about love and that his simply compiling an adab work on love poetry, even if he had not written a single word of commentary, is an act of literary criticism. He considers Ibn Dāwūd unique, or at least ahead of his time, in that he comments extensively on the content of the poems he quotes, assessing the purity of the poetic personae’s feelings of love and sometimes criticizing them for displaying a selfish or fickle attitude, at a time when most commentaries on poetry concentrated on form and meter to the exclusion of content, and herein lies some of Raven’s highest praise for Ibn Dāwūd.

[Ibn Dāwūd] did more than just choose and paste together, as so many of his countrymen; his book displays a clear view on genres and motifs, and on the improperness of some of them.

Raven’s exploration of Ibn Dāwūd and his writing is as broad as it is detailed, and among the subjects he discusses are an overview of the second half of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, which deals with poetry on subjects other than love, the cultural and literary milieu that shaped Ibn

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73 Raven, *MBD*, 1.
75 Raven, *MBD*, 20.
Dāwūd, the possible influence on the contents of Kitāb al-Zahra of materials based on Greek wisdom literature, and a description of his vision of the Ibn Dāwūd literary character. He is highly skeptical of most of the content of the biographical anecdotes; he is the first person to question, in writing, that Ibn Dāwūd worked as a qāḍī at the age of sixteen (he raises the possibility that Niťawayh may have held the position after Dāwūd died and before his son Muḥammad came of age),\textsuperscript{77} that he wrote Kitāb al-Zahra at such a young age, that Ibn Jāmi`, if he even existed, was the beloved to whom Ibn Dāwūd addressed his love poetry, and that their youthful falling-out precipitated the composition of Kitāb al-Zahra. In Raven’s words, “In trying to reconstruct a life, being dull or incomplete is preferable than yielding to the flight of fancy.”\textsuperscript{78} He is also the first to assert that al-naẓar al-mubāh (the permitted gaze) is mentioned nowhere in Kitāb al-Zahra, thereby clearing Ibn Dāwūd’s name of centuries of unfounded gossip.\textsuperscript{79}

Far from expressing an uncritical admiration for Ibn Dāwūd, Raven frequently makes dismissive remarks about him, such as, “our author had a capricious mind”\textsuperscript{80} and, “[he] occasionally displays a tendency toward sophistry and witicism.”\textsuperscript{81} He even disagrees with Ibn Dāwūd’s statement of the purpose of Kitāb al-Zahra, saying, “the author’s claim [that Kitāb al-Zahra is about love] is inaccurate and […] in reality the first half of his book is about love poetry, not about love.”\textsuperscript{82}

While Raven cautions his readers about interpreting anything in the biographical

\textsuperscript{77} Raven, \textit{MBD}, 4. 
\textsuperscript{78} Raven, \textit{MBD}, 3. 
\textsuperscript{79} Raven, \textit{MBD}, 17. 
\textsuperscript{80} Raven, \textit{MBD}, 2. 
\textsuperscript{81} Raven, \textit{MBD}, 7. 
\textsuperscript{82} Raven, \textit{MBD}, 1.
anecdotes or in the text of Kitāb al-Zahra itself as though it refers literally to events in Ibn Dāwūd’s life, he considers the story the biographers have spun too interesting not to repeat. The fact that the biographers are so unanimous in referring, in one way or another, to what Raven calls Ibn Dāwūd’s, “homosexual inclinations,”83 convinces him that Ibn Dāwūd’s must have behaved in some way that would earn him that reputation. No compelling proof, however, of Ibn Dāwūd being what today would be called a homosexual man can be found in Kitāb al-Zahra.

A millennium of speculation, vitriol, and romantic fancy has made a flawed but sympathetic character out of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd. Each writer who contributed to the development of the character was motivated by his own sense of what was right and wrong in love, literature, theology, and historiography. For the fourteenth-century adab writers Mughulṭāī and Ibn Abī Ḥajala, there is nothing unchaste or ribald about harboring feelings of unrequited love and attraction for one’s entire life, so long as one abstains from illicit sexual acts. For Massignon, indulging one’s emotions and personal desires, even in the absence of physical consummation, to the exclusion of what today would be called pursuing a relationship with God, is a matter of moral depravity, especially for a religious leader. Raven at once divests Ibn Dāwūd of his laurels and pardons him of slanderous accusations on the basis that one ought not to judge a person’s character based on hearsay, all the more so if that person lived in the distant past. All of them lost sight of the fact that Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, in his own poetic corpus, represented himself as a literary character, and while this character bears some resemblance to the one the biographers describe to us, they very infrequently cite

83 Raven, MBD, 52.
as evidence those poems that can be attributed to him with the greatest degree of certainty (the ones that appear in *Kitāb al-Zahra* ascribed to “a man of our times”). They judged his historical significance to be in his role as a theologian or as a lover, but not as a poet.

We now turn our attention away from the development of the Ibn Dāwūd character, and toward the character of Ibn Dāwūd’s own device, the Man of our Times (*baʿd ahl hādhā al-ʿaṣr*). The remainder of this dissertation will deal with a corpus of 534 lines of poetry, scattered throughout the first half of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, which bear the attribution “a man of our times.” Ibn Dāwūd states that he intended *Kitāb al-Zahra* to consist of one hundred chapters, each containing one hundred lines of poetry on a particular motif. We will consider only the Man of our Times verses that appear in the first half of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, for reasons to be discussed in the third chapter of this dissertation.

All the biographical sources since Masʿūdī have held that Ibn Dāwūd was the author of the verses in *Kitāb al-Zahra* attributed to the Man of our Times, and Masʿūdī even implies that Ibn Dāwūd used this pseudonym when reciting these verses in the *majlis*.84 Upon examination of the Man of our Times poems and Ibn Dāwūd’s prose comments in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, especially the introduction, I find the identification of Ibn Dāwūd with the Man of our Times plausible. As we will discuss in the third chapter of this dissertation, and as the biographers noticed, the Man of our Times returns frequently to certain ideas about love Ibn Dāwūd espouses in the introduction to *Kitāb al-Zahra*. The pseudonymous Man of our Times is the only poet whose verses appear in every chapter of the first half of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, lending support to the argument that Ibn Dāwūd wrote verses specifically for each

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84 See Raven for further discussion of this argument and for the case for attributing some, but not all, of the Man of our Times verses to Ibn Dāwūd, (Raven, *MBD*, 20).
I interpret the choice of some of the words in the Man of our Times verses as a sort of self-referential wordplay, as though Ibn Dāwūd were subtly acknowledging that his audience knew that he was the Man of our Times, or perhaps to amuse those associates of his who were in on the secret. The only instance of a personal name in the Man of our Times poems is Ibn Dāwūd’s own name Muḥammad.

I have drunk a cup
Of Muḥammad’s rejection;
It has weakened my bones
And overwhelmed my brain

If Ibn Dāwūd was, in fact, alluding to his own name in this verse, he was far from being the only `Abbāsid poet to engage in such a practice. It is a more subtle reference than the verse where Abū Nuwās says

If you saw me,
You would think I were Ḥasan of Baṣra
Or Qatāda,
So dignified is my conduct

He seems to refer to the famous ascetic Ḥasan of Baṣra (d. 110/728), but is also alluding to

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85 Raven, MBD, 22.
86 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 305. More discussion of this verse and the poem in which it occurs will occur in the third chapter.
88 For more information on Ḥasan and his reputation for ascetic piety, see Michael Sells, Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur'an, Mi`raj, Poetic, and Theological Writings (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 17-20.
his own given name Hasan and the fact that he lived in Basra as a child. A much more subtle example of this practice is this verse by Jahm ibn `Abd al-Rahmān:

قَضِىَ اللَّهُ أُنَّا يَعْلَمُونَا ٱلْغَيْبَ ٱلْخَيْرَةَ فَفِي أَيْ مَآ أُمِرَ اِمْتَنُّوٰنِي

God has ordained that none but He
Have knowledge of the unseen,
So with which of God’s commands
Do the two of you dispute?

The second half of this verse alludes to the āyah that occurs thirty-one times in the fifty-fifth sūra (al-Rahmān) of the Qur’ān, (“And which of your Lord’s favors do the two of you deny?”), even including the dual number for the verb. The wordplay lies in that the allusion is to the sūra of al-Rahmān, and the poet’s name is Ibn `Abd al-Rahmān.

In addition to this one reference to the name Muḥammad, the Man of our Times poems are replete with juridical terminology, as if Ibn Dāwūd were punning on the fact that he was a judge. One can hardly read the Man of our Times poems without noticing their preoccupation with what is just or unjust in matters of brotherhood, as references to justice and rights abound. Raven says that Ibn Dāwūd displays “a jurist’s mind throughout” Kitāb al-Zahra, using “legal terms for non-legal matters,” and that, “[i]n poetry, the use of legal terms is sometimes playful, as for instance the rejection of ra’y and qiyyās” and when the Man of our Times “confesses without witnesses being necessary.”

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89 Kennedy, Abū Nuwās, 93.
90 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 251. The dual number in this bayt is itself a double-entendre, as the preceding two lines refer to two slanderers.
91 Q 55:5, etc.
92 Raven, MBD, 19.
which gives us, among other meanings, the verb “to judge” and the word qādī (“a judge”), occur seven times in the Man of our Times verses, and the word ḥaqq (“a legal right”), including its singular, plural, nominal, and adjectival forms, occurs twelve times. Some of these instances will be treated in more detail in subsequent chapters. Among the more subtle allusions to the word “judge” is this couplet, featuring the verb ṭinqaḏā, which means “to pass by, to depart.”

When Will my Sickness Go Away? [9]

1 O cure of my sickness,  
When will my sickness go away?  
Everything that treats my affliction  
Only makes me sicker

2 Behold! The one  
Does not drive off the other,  
But rather, my whole life  
Will pass me by

In English translation, this couplet has nothing to do with judges or jurisprudence, but Ibn Dāwūd’s original audience would have appreciated the reference. Suzanne Stetkevych notes that `Abbāsid poets took delight in such root-based wordplay, as it allowed them to display their virtuosity in the sciences of grammar and etymology. Who better than Ibn Dāwūd, the lifelong companion of grammarians, to try his hand at this? Likewise, this verse contains the

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93 This includes the meaning of “to judge,” as in, “to discern, to choose,” said of any rational being, “to make a legal decision,” said of a judge, and, “to ordain,” said of God. In modern usage, the word qadiyya has both the technical meaning of “a lawsuit” and the generic meaning of “an issue.”
94 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 32. The number in brackets refers to the poem’s position in the full presentation of the Man of our Times poems below.
word taqādī, which can carry the technical meaning of “litigation.”

I shall gladly commission my soul
To sue for its debt from him,
Until I see him distraught
At what he has done

Whether or not Ibn Dāwūd wrote the Man of our Times verses himself, we shall demonstrate in subsequent chapters that he uses the Man of our Times persona as an alter ego to dramatize concepts he first lays out in the introduction and in the chapter headings. It is highly likely that, at the very least, the Man of our Times verses were produced in the same literary circle in which Ibn Dāwūd composed Kitāb al-Zahra. I believe that several of the pseudonyms attached to poems in Kitāb al-Zahra could be attached to Ibn Dāwūd’s personal associates, including “a gentleman” (baʿd al-ẓurafāʾ), “a scribe” (baʿd al-kuttāb), “a man of letters” (baʿd al-udabāʾ), and “one of our brothers” (baʿd ikhwānīnā), especially since, in terms of style, their poetry seems to belong to the domain of the scribe-poets of the majlis rather than the professional poets. In the fourth chapter of this dissertation, we will elaborate further on these two venues of poetry and the relationship of the Man of our Times verses to them.

For the remainder of this dissertation we will refer to Ibn Dāwūd as the author of the Man of our Times verses since, as we have demonstrated, he either wrote the verses himself

96 See Raven, MBD, 19.
97 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 143.
98 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 7, 22.
99 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 28.
100 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 37.
101 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 54.
or compiled them and presented them as the work of the same fictitious “poet,” which would mean that Ibn Dāwūd created the Man of our Times much the way Arab culture would create the legendary figure of Majnūn Laylā.¹⁰² For the sake of ease, we will also refer to the persona himself as “the Man of our Times,” as it sounds more idiomatic in English, and because he is always the same persona, although “a Man of our Times” would be a more literal translation of the pseudonym itself. As for the character whose friendship with the Man of our Times forms the unifying theme of the 534 verses, we shall call him the Brother, although the Man of our Times only refers to him as such several times, usually only calling him “you” or “he.”

In the coming chapters, we will turn our attention toward glimmers of Ibn Dāwūd’s unique persona in the midst of the poetic framework, as well as the larger culture, in which he wrote. The biographies and the more theoretical works that use them as sources have made, by turns, a hero and a villain of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, but as we look to his poetry alone, we will here its ancient, steady rhythm above the din, and it will bear witness to a gentleman, a friend, an idealist, a scholar, a Man of our Times.

Chapter Two
The Twin of your Mind: Toward a Study of Brotherhood Literature in `Abbāsid Society

In the centuries since his death, Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd’s detractors have accused him of writing poetry deals with a type of love that is vain, shallow, and derivative, a love that distract the soul from its true calling. We have proposed, in the preceding chapter, that the main theme of Ibn Dāwūd’s verses is brotherhood (ikhāʾ), which is a very different relationship from the carnal, frivolous dalliances with which biographers, from Ibn al-Jawzī to Massignon, tried to associate him. Rather, Ibn Dāwūd enlisted his poetic alter ego the Man of our Times to instruct his audience in the ways of brotherhood, that is, to increase their wisdom and good judgment, their refinement and moral virtue, in a word, their adab, in their interactions with their friends and “brothers.” This chapter will present an overview of some of the writings on brotherhood known to Ibn Dāwūd and his contemporaries and mention some of the maxims of brotherhood reflected in the Man of our Times verses. It will also include discussion of several works which, though written after Ibn Dāwūd’s death, convey important insights about the concept of brotherhood according to classical Arab-Islamic civilization.

If there existed in Arabic an authoritative “book of brotherhood,” which offered a systematic presentation of the emotions and behaviors of male friends, or even a single volume of adab which contained all the divergent opinions, even if it made no attempt to assess them, then this chapter would be brief indeed. No such volume exists, and thus we must look to diverse sources, from etiquette manuals to treatises on moral philosophy, to understand the relationship that Ibn Dāwūd posited between the Man of our Times and the wayward Brother. In the short term, this exercise will grant us a more thorough understanding of Ibn
Dāwūd’s poetry, to be supplemented in subsequent chapters by discussion of other areas of the Arabic poetic corpus from which Ibn Dāwūd drew allusions, as we are so far removed, chronologically and culturally, from the original audience as to require extensive commentary in order to appreciate the rhetorical force, and sometimes even the intent, of the Man of our Times verses. The more general purpose of this chapter is to posit the existence of a genre of brotherhood literature, albeit one that tends to conceal itself within works that claim themes other than brotherhood as their primary subject matter.

I can only imagine that the reason that the kuttāb, the writers of poetic criticism, and the philosophers did not isolate brotherhood as the subject of a book is that they took it for granted. Brotherhood, friendship among men of similar age and usually similar social status, was an inextricable part of so many subjects that were frequently discussed in the majlis. Wisdom, generosity, and humility, to name only a few examples, can only be judged by how a person interacts with others. The denizens of the majlis were, in large part, males of sufficient means to pursue high levels of education, and brotherhood was with them in every majlis. This chapter will look to the poetic tradition, treatises of etiquette, ranging from the utilitarian to the theoretical, and works of moral philosophy, in order to gain a more thorough understanding of the cultural construct known as brotherhood, which was so important to Ibn Dāwūd. None of the works studied in this chapter are primarily about love; while a study of brotherhood in Arabic love literature would be a worthwhile undertaking, it falls outside the scope of this chapter.

The aim of this chapter is not to draw conclusions about Ibn Dāwūd’s ideas about brotherhood, or about any other matter, based on the introduction to Kitāb al-Zahra or other
prose passages elsewhere in the book, as Massignon\textsuperscript{1} and Raven\textsuperscript{2} have conducted extensive analysis of the prose portions of Ibn Dāwūd’s anthology, albeit reaching divergent conclusions, as we have discussed in the first chapter, namely that Massignon and Raven considered the main theme of \textit{Kitāb al-Zahra} to be love and poetic criticism, respectively. Likewise, this is not a comprehensive summary of the sources of \textit{Kitāb al-Zahra}; Raven has presented a thorough treatment of that subject, as well, tracing quoted verses and prose material in \textit{Kitāb al-Zahra} to poetry anthologies, including al-Buhturī’s \textit{Ḥamās},\textsuperscript{3} which we will discuss in more detail later in this chapter, and books of Greek-influenced “wisdom literature.”\textsuperscript{4} He has also provided some insight into the social mores of Ibn Dāwūd’s audience by examining contemporary sources such as \textit{Kitāb al-Washshā}’\textsuperscript{5}. It is, however, among my aims that this chapter will be a step toward a more comprehensive study on brotherhood in `Abbāsid literature.

**How is Brotherhood Different from Other Types of Love?**

The richness of the Arabic language in terms of words referring to love and friendship was not lost on Ibn Dāwūd\textsuperscript{6} and his contemporaries,\textsuperscript{7} nor on later writers discussing the subject of love,\textsuperscript{8} and matters only become more complicated when rendering these nuances in

\textsuperscript{1} Massignon, \textit{Passion}, 1:340-341, 352, \textit{inter alia}.
\textsuperscript{2} Raven, \textit{MBD}, 99-159.
\textsuperscript{3} Raven, \textit{MBD}, 95-99.
\textsuperscript{4} Raven, \textit{MBD}, 58-91.
\textsuperscript{5} Raven, \textit{MBD}, 27-30. Raven has mainly discussed, on the authority of \textit{Kitāb al-Washshā’}, the etiquette of courtship among Ibn Dāwūd’s contemporaries. The courtship in question usually took place between a gentleman and a female slave. Raven has \textit{Kitāb al-Washshā’} relevant to his discussion of the sources of \textit{Kitāb al-Zahra} because some of the chapter titles in the latter are identical or similar to sayings found in the former, not because of any content related to brotherhood or to the Man of our Times verses themselves.
\textsuperscript{6} Ibn Dāwūd, \textit{KZ}, 18-21.
\textsuperscript{7} See Massignon, \textit{Passion}, 1:341.

other languages. That which we call “brotherhood” in this chapter is what Ibn Dāwūd calls *ikhāʾ*, and when we say that the texts under consideration in this chapter deal with brotherhood, we mean that they deal with friendship between adult men of similar social status. The connotation of social equality implicit in the word “brother” is given evidence in Ibn al-Muqaffaʾ’s exhortation, “If you see the sultan treating you as a brother (*akh*), treat him as your father.”\footnote{‘Abdullāh ibn al-Muqaffaʾ, *Al-Adab al-Ṣaghīr, waʾl-Adab al-Kabīr wa-Risālat al-Ṣahāba*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Hawārī (Bayrūt: Dār wa-Maktabat al-Hilāl, 2009), 72.} Another necessary quality of brotherhood seems to be that, at least as long as the brotherhood relationship is intact, it is reciprocal. One may feel attraction (*istiḥsān*)\footnote{Ibn Dāwūd, or his unnamed source, says that *istiḥsān* “is generated by seeing or hearing” the object of one’s attraction, and that when it grows strong, it passes into another stage called *mawadda* (Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 19). All of the eight stages in this oft-discussed taxonomy of love are, in fact, one-sided, and brotherhood is not among them. One could pass through all eight stages, including the ones that are usually fatal, without reaching *ikhāʾ*.} toward another person from a distance and desire to have him as a brother, but such feelings do not properly constitute brotherhood. The scenario to which the Man of our Times poems constantly return is the one in which he laments that his Brother has abandoned their brotherhood, and it is here that Ibn Dāwūd’s poetry is most poignant. In the following section of this chapter, we will discuss the long tradition in Arabic of using the word “brother” (*akh*) to mean “an associate,” with its implication that if A is associated with B, it follows that B is associated with A. The problems, and therefore the dramatic tension in the Man of our Times poems, arise when the emotions and behaviors involved in this mutual association do not conform to the ideal of equality that we see in their underlying principle.\footnote{Neither *Kitāb al-Zahra* nor any of the other *adab* works treated in this chapter give a precise definition of *ikhāʾ* nor explicitly prescribe its reciprocity. For this, it may be helpful to consider the discussion, in the Greek writings, of reciprocity as a necessary component of *philia*, which is variously translated as “love” and “friendship” (Brian Carr, “Friendship in Plato’s Lysis in Oliver Leaman, ed., *Friendship East and West: Philosophical Perspectives* [Richmond: Curzon, 1996], 18). Carr offers his own thesis about the reciprocity of *philia* (Carr, “Friendship in Plato,” 15-16) as well as interpreting the issue as described in Plato’s *Lysis* (Carr, “Friendship in Plato,” 18-20) and Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* (Carr, “Friendship in Plato,” 26-28).}
I have chosen the texts under consideration in this chapter because they treat the friendship between men as a subject separate from love, at least as love is defined in the books treated in Giffen’s study. This is not to say that brotherhood is not love, since, as we shall demonstrate in the next chapter, it has enough in common with other types of love for Ibn Dāwūd to represent it effectively through the medium of ghazal; indeed, much of the `Abbāsid period literature on love gives the impression that the emotions of love between a man and a woman, between an adult man and a male youth, and between two adult men are of a kind, with verses and anecdotes about all these relationships appearing side by side in anthologies on love. Even Kitāb al-Zahra combines, in one chapter, an anecdote about a woman dying of love for a man with an elegy by Abū Tammām for a male friend, a “brother” who was related to him by intellectual affinity and not by blood, and in another, a couplet in which an anonymous poet addresses a woman called Sulmā and a letter from a man named Waḍḍāḥ al-Kūfī to his friend `Alī ibn Muḥammad, complaining of the latter’s change of heart about their friendship, followed by `Alī’s response. As we have discussed in the first chapter, anthologies that deal specifically with passionate, carnal love of females or of males, or that contain accounts of both but treat them in separate sections, only began to appear later.

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12 Giffen, Profane Love, 5-50.
13 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 364.
14 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 361.
15 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 133.
16 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 130-131.
17 Ṣafadī’s Al-Husn al-sāriḥ fī mi’īt malīḥ is a case in point (Everett K. Rowson, “Two Homoerotic Narratives from Mamlûk Literature,” in Wright and Rowson, Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature [New York: Columbia University Press], 161, 185).
Brotherhood, as envisioned in classical Arabic literature, warrants discussion apart from other types of love, even if for no other reason than that it is only once the carnal basis of social and emotional attachment has been ruled out that the discussion of other aspects of human relationships begins, and we find this discussion flourishing in the brotherhood literature which concerns us in this chapter. When audiences heard a story in which a man was in love with a woman, they would have assumed that physical attraction was the motivation for their love, such that the chastity of the lover and the beloved became a major theme in love poetry in the first centuries of Islam, with poets, especially those writing in the so-called `udhrī genre, going to great lengths to demonstrate that the lovers’ intentions were noble, and their attraction, not purely physical. A similar suspicion could easily befall a story of love between a man and a youth, because, in the urban centers of the pre-modern Arab world, erotic attraction of adult males toward adolescent boys, while certainly not regarded as an admirable trait, was not considered exceptional, as is given evidence by the numerous references in juridical writings about whether it is licit for adult men and youths to interact in any of a number of situations which might lead to temptation. The friendship of similarly aged men stands apart from these in that it stood a much better chance of being free of speculation that the “love” in question was merely a euphemism for sexual attraction. It was not impossible, to the medieval Arab mind, that two men who maintained a lifelong friendship might have been physically attracted to each other, or even engaged together in

18 See El-Rouayheb, Before Homosexuality, 87.
20 El-Rouayheb, Before Homosexuality, 116-117.
21 See El-Rouayheb, Before Homosexuality, 87.
acts of sexual intimacy, when they were young, but the texts which form the subject of this chapter leave the impression that physical attraction between the two friends, if it had ever been present, does not form the basis of their friendship in the long term. In the first chapter, we have seen how centuries of commentators and scholars allowed what they perceived as physical attraction between Ibn Dāwūd and Ibn Jāmi` to influence their assessment of Kitāb al-Zahra and of Ibn Dāwūd’s poetry. Our exploration of the texts in this chapter will reveal that the love which is called “brotherhood” is based on an assumption of social, intellectual, and moral equality between the two parties; it is the fruit of adab.

Al-Jāḥiẓ makes the argument, in al-Ma`āsh wa-’l-Ma`ād (This World and the Next), that the awareness and use of reason (`aql) form the basis for trustworthiness (thiqa), which in turn forms the basis for friendship. As we shall discuss further throughout this chapter, the Man of our Times poems and other writings on brotherhood rely on this assumption, although, as far as I have seen, al-Jāḥiẓ is the only one who explains it in detail. Nonetheless, powerful emotions also play a role in the relationship between “brothers;” if this were not so, then the tropes of `udhrī love poetry would not be nearly so effective in representing it. In the following chapter, we will present examples of emotionally charged brotherhood poetry, but the application of the “martyrs of love” literary theme can be found even in prose.

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22 See Rowson, “Two Homoerotic Narratives,” 188.
23 Some of these also seem to posit a significant age difference between Ibn Dāwūd and Ibn Jāmi`, as when al-Ṣafadī says that Ibn Jāmi` spent money on Ibn Dāwūd, even though it was Ibn Jāmi` who was the beloved, and Ibn Dāwūd, the lover (Ṣafadī, Al-Wafī, 58). This carries the speculation even further. It is one thing to assume that, if Ibn Jāmi` was a youth, then Ibn Dāwūd’s love for him must have been carnal; it is another to assume that, if Ibn Dāwūd wrote ghazal, then their love must have been carnal, and therefore Ibn Jāmi` must have been much younger than Ibn Dāwūd. Ibn al-Jawzī says that Ibn Dāwūd “was afflicted with the love of a boy (ṣabiyy) called Muḥammad ibn Jāmi`, known as Muḥammad ibn Zukhruf (Abū al-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Muntaẓam fī Tārīkh al-Mulūk wa’l-Ummām (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyya, 1992) 12:99).
writings on brotherhood. Kashājim’s (d. 350/961)²⁵ Adab al-Nadīm contains this anecdote in which men die of brotherly love.

Al-Walīd ibn `Uqba remained as the nadīm of Abū Zubayd al-Ṭāʾī, treating him as a friend, even after he was dismissed because of a single lapse of good conduct which he could not have avoided, and he continued to honor [Abū Zubayd] and praise him, and he never preferred anyone else over him until Abū Zubayd’s death. Then [al-Walīd] was overcome with great despair (wajd)²⁶ over him, until he became ill, and it is said that he was buried beside him. Ashja` ibn `Amr al-Salmī passed by their graves, and two friends of his, named Ḥamza and Sa`īd, were with him. He stopped at the two [graves] and said:

1 I passed by the bones
   Of Abū Zubayd,
   Captive
   Beneath barren earth

2 A nadīm of al-Walīd,
   He settled here and became
   The neighbor of the grave
   Of al-Walīd

3 I know not
   To whom death will come first,
   To Ashja`
   Or to Ḥamza or Sa`īd

   And they died in that order, one after the other.²⁷

This anecdote would not seem out of place in the final chapter of Kitāb al-Zahra or even in Mughulṭā’ī’s anthology on the martyrs of love.

**Beginnings**

²⁶ This word has connotations of “love.” Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya counts it among the sixty words for love and defines it as “the love that leads to sadness” (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Rawda, 29).
The figurative use of the word “brother” (akh) to mean “a close associate,” is so prevalent in classical Arabic as to be taken for granted. None of the authors under consideration in this chapter found it necessary to explain that, by the word “brothers” they meant “close friends;” they simply assumed that their audiences would understand this. Ibn al-Muqaffa’s Ādāb al-Kabīr (The Greater Book of Conduct) uses the word “brother” interchangeably with the words “friend” (ṣadīq) and “companion” (ṣāhib). The verb yu’ākhī (“to consider [someone] a brother” or “to treat [someone] as a brother”) is attested in ancient poetry.  

A man might even be described as the “brother” of a thing or characteristic, the way he might be called the “father” (abū) or “companion” (ṣāhib) of a characteristic. Poems in the Ḥamāsa contain the phrases ikhwān ṣidq (“honest men,” literally, “brothers of honesty”) and akhū al-`ahd (“one who is bound to a covenant,” literally, “brother of a covenant”), and Ibn al-Muqaffa refers to ikhwān thiqā (“trustworthy men,” literally, “brothers of trust”), as well as ikhwān al-dīn (“men of religion”) and ikhwān al-dunyā (“men of the world”).  

It was fairly common for muḥdath poets to play on the literal and figurative meanings of the word “brother,” and we will discuss, in the third chapter of this dissertation, several examples of this phenomenon among the poems of Kitāb al-Zahra. Verses that represent the bond between “brothers” bound by emotional affinity as even stronger than that between

29 Thus the famous Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ have been called both the Brethren of Purity and the Sincere Brethren in English; it would also make sense simply to call them the Sincere Ones.
30 Buḥṭūrī, Ḥamāsa , 68.
31 Buḥṭūrī, Ḥamāsa , 66.
32 Ibn al-Muqaffā’, AK, 89.
33 Ibn al-Muqaffā’, AK, 92.
biological brothers also appear in the poetry of the ancients, as in this line by al-Nābigha al-Ja`dī (d.680-684)\(^{34}\), which is quoted in the Ḥamāsa.

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\text{أَخْبِرُكَ السَّرَّ لَا أَخْبِرُهُ الناسَ وَأَصْفِيكَ دُونَ ذِي الْرَّحْمَٰنِ}
\]

I let you know secrets
That I do not reveal to other people,
And I esteem you
To the exclusion of the sons of my mother

Watt’s article on “Mu`ākhāt,” in the Encyclopedia of Islam, describes several practices among the early Muslims, related in the books of sīra and ṭabagāt, by which unrelated men were called “brothers.”\(^{36}\) The word mu`ākhāt is, like ikhā`, a maṣdar (“verbal noun” or “gerund”) of the verb yu`ākhā, which we have discussed above. Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 245/859) mentions fifty-nine pairs of men, each pair consisting of one Anṣārī and one Muhājir, bound by this relationship,\(^{37}\) as well as nine pairs formed in Mecca before the Emigration to Medina.\(^{38}\) According to Ibn Ḥabīb, mu`ākhāt relationships were a factor in Zayd ibn Ḥāritha’s rivalry with `Alī ibn Abī Tālib and his brother Ja`far over a daughter of Ḥamza.\(^{39}\) He says that the practice of mu`ākhāt ended after the battle of Badr.\(^{40}\) Watt posits that the mu`ākhāt relationship may have included inheritance rights, but that the practice came to an end upon the revelation of one of several Qur’anic verses dealing with


\(^{35}\) Buḥūrī, Ḥamāsa , 74.


\(^{37}\) Muḥammad Ibn Ḥabīb, Kitāb al-Muḥabbār (Hyderabad: Maṭba`at Jam`iyyat Dā`irat al-Ma`ārif al-`Uthmāniyyah, 1942), 71-75.

\(^{38}\) Ibn Ḥabīb, Muḥabbār, 70-71.

\(^{39}\) Ibn Ḥabīb, Muḥabbār, 70-71.

\(^{40}\) Ibn Ḥabīb, Muḥabbār, 75.
inheritance. While beliefs and practices of male friendship among the early Muslims are a subject most worthy of study, this subject falls outside the scope of this dissertation.

**The Sources**

The texts from which we have obtained information about the views on brotherhood among Ibn Dāwūd’s contemporaries belong to three major categories: poetic anthologies, treatises on social etiquette, and philosophical treatises on morals. Whether in poetry or prose, we see that the society’s ideas about brotherhood, as about so many other subjects, combine elements of the Arab, Hellenistic, and Persian traditions, and that the authors and compilers of these texts adapted and interpreted their source material to reflect the values of a cosmopolitan Islamic society.

**Al-Buḥturī’s Ḥamāṣa: The Poetics of Brotherhood**

Abū `Ubāda al-Walīd ibn `Ubayd al-Buḥturī (820-897) was among the most eminent panegyrists of the ninth century in addition to being a pioneer in the genre of descriptive poetry (wasf). Nykl claims that Ibn Dāwūd was a friend of al-Buḥturī, despite the forty-nine year age difference between the two poets, although, according to Raven, sufficient evidence exists only to verify that the two met face-to-face on at least one occasion, as Ibn Dāwūd makes statements in *Kitāb al-Zahra* that he heard al-Buḥturī’s recitations first hand. Raven has mentioned that the influence of al-Buḥturī’s Ḥamāṣa can be seen in *Kitāb al-Zahra* because the former book, like Abū Tammām’s before it, is an

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43 Irwin, *Night*, 139.
44 Nykl, introduction to *KZ*, 7.
anthology of poetry in which verses are grouped by subject matter, whereas most poetic anthologies of that time classified poems by meter or end-rhyme or by poet.  

Al-Buḥṭurī’s prominence as a panegyrist led his contemporaries to compare him to Abū Tammām, a famous poetic innovator and al-Buḥṭurī’s one-time teacher, and entire books, such as al-Āmiḍī’s Muwāzana, have been devoted to the relative merits of the two poets. Abū Tammām and al-Buḥṭurī have at least two things in common as regards Ibn Dāwūd; first, they both compiled anthologies of poetry, both known as al-Ḥamāsa, which Ibn Dāwūd used as sources for Kitāb al-Zahra. Second, Kitāb al-Zahra contains several poems by each of them that are unambiguously about brotherhood and cannot be interpreted as being about a female beloved. No poet other than the Man of our Times has as many poems in Kitāb al-Zahra which specifically represent brotherhood.

Twenty chapters in the Ḥamāsa treat various aspects of brotherhood.

The twenty-eighth chapter: on taking men of noble character as brothers, the praise thereof, and on treating virtuous men honorably and amiably

The twenty-ninth chapter: On avoiding taking stingy men as brothers, and the censure thereof

The thirtieth chapter: On putting men to the test before taking them as brothers

The thirty-first chapter: On him whose friendship is a matter of suspicion and whose brotherhood is untrustworthy

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50 These anthologies take their name from the subject matter of the poems in their first chapter, which is ḥamāsa (“bravery”).
51 Abū Tammām has five such fragments (Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 60, 92, 192, 303, 366), and al-Buḥṭurī has four (Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 62, 101, 108, 344). I have included in this category only poems that refer to the “beloved” by a masculine name or refer to both the persona and the beloved both as “brother” (ابن) or some similar term denoting a masculine social role. This count does not include poems which might be interpreted either as brotherhood or as heterosexual love.
52 Buḥṭurī, Ḥamāsa, 57.
53 Buḥṭurī, Ḥamāsa, 58.
54 Buḥṭurī, Ḥamāsa, 58.
The thirty-second chapter: On being utterly devoted to your friend and only being pleased with him having what you would be pleased to have for yourself.58

The thirty-third chapter: On the breaking of promises.57

The thirty-fourth chapter: On cutting ties with friends who are disagreeable in their friendship with you.58

The thirty-fifth chapter: On the well-being of friendship and the preservation of brotherhood.59

The thirty-sixth chapter: On the man who abandons his brothers when he no longer needs them but they are in need of him.60

The thirty-seventh chapter: On the whole-heartedness of friendship and its perpetuity.61

The thirty-eighth chapter: On the loathsomeness of friendship with men who grow bored easily.62

The thirty-ninth chapter: On avoiding cutting ties with a brother you have known for a long time in favor of the novelty of a different one.63

The fortieth chapter: When a man draws near to his brothers in a time of prosperity, but he stays away from them in a time of need, his lack of reliance on them makes him even more honorable in the eyes of his brothers who are in need.64

The forty-first chapter: On avoiding blaming brothers for their mistakes, and preserving your brotherhood with them.65

The forty-second chapter: On preserving loyalty and avoiding betrayal.66

The forty-third chapter: On brothers and kinsmen on whom you wish good, though they wish ill on you.67

The forty-fourth chapter: On behaving politely toward those who avoid your company.68

The forty-fifth chapter: On avoiding malicious gossip among brothers.69

The forty-sixth chapter: On regret over worthless brothers.70

The forty-seventh chapter: On avoiding cutting ties with brothers and blaming them for their first offense, on helping them with what they wish, and on joining them in what they do.71

55 Buṭṭuri, Ḥamāṣa, 59.
56 Buṭṭuri, Ḥamāṣa, 60.
57 Buṭṭuri, Ḥamāṣa, 61.
58 Buṭṭuri, Ḥamāṣa, 63.
59 Buṭṭuri, Ḥamāṣa, 65.
60 Buṭṭuri, Ḥamāṣa, 68.
61 Buṭṭuri, Ḥamāṣa, 69.
62 Buṭṭuri, Ḥamāṣa, 70.
63 Buṭṭuri, Ḥamāṣa, 71.
64 Buṭṭuri, Ḥamāṣa, 71.
65 Buṭṭuri, Ḥamāṣa, 72.
66 Buṭṭuri, Ḥamāṣa, 73.
67 Buṭṭuri, Ḥamāṣa, 74.
68 Buṭṭuri, Ḥamāṣa, 75.
69 Buṭṭuri, Ḥamāṣa, 76.
70 Buṭṭuri, Ḥamāṣa, 76.
71 Buṭṭuri, Ḥamāṣa, 77.
The forty-eighth chapter: On the man who is cruel to his brothers and avoids them when he
does not need them, and who draws near to them and treats them affectionately when he is in
need. 

The poems in the *Hamāsa* praise many of the same traits of virtuous brothers that the
Man of our Times holds in high esteem, most notably loyalty, that is to say, keeping the
coVENANT (ʾahd) of friendship, and the concealment of secrets told in confidence, and they
warn against many of the same faults, such as fickleness and failure to reciprocate the
brother’s loyalty and devotion. Al-Buḥṭurī chose to include these poems not because they
accord with his personal views, but because he considers them true representations of ancient
Arabic poetry about brotherhood. Thus the poems reveal something about the way Bedouin
ArAB society in the centuries immediately before and after the rise of Islam viewed
brotherhood, or at least the way it represented it in poetry. It stands out to the modern reader
that the poetic personae in the *Hamāsa* never let on that they played a role in causing
problems between themselves and their brothers; in fact, this self-aggrandizing tone is part of
what makes Arabic poetry seem so inaccessible to readers unfamiliar with its conventions.

Ibn Qutayba’s famous description of the qaṣīda makes it sound as though poets only
described their lost loves in order to play on the audience’s emotions and to gain their
sympathy for the rest of the poem. 

Admitting one’s own weaknesses and humbling oneself
were simply not part of ancient Arabic poetry, and books like al-Buḥṭurī’s *Hamāsa*
demonstrate just how strictly early poets followed precedents for the established subject
matter of poetry. Thus, in contrast to the Man of our Times, the poets in the *Hamāsa* never

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72 Buḥṭurī, *Hamāsa*, 78.
even apologize or admit fault for their quarrels with their brothers, and there is little mention of humbling oneself before one’s brother, as though saving face before the community were more important than repairing a friendship. When viewed in this context, the Man of our Times stands out for his humility, and as this dissertation continues, we will see how we might attribute this to the influence of a cultural shift toward a more urbane ethos, embodied by the so-called zurafā’, or to the genre conventions of `Abbāsid ghazal, or even to Ibn Dāwūd’s individual efforts to make the Man of our Times a uniquely compelling persona.

It is not only in language borrowed from the nasīb and from later developments in love poetry that the Man of our Times expresses his esteem for the emotional aspects of brotherhood; he returns to this theme even in aphoristic couplets like this one.

1 Do not abandon your brother
When he has done nothing wrong
For abandonment is the key
To forgetting

2 If a friend conceals a secret
From his brother,
Then how is a friend
Better than an enemy?

He has not taken offense because the brother publicly violated his honor or behaved in a way that has caused others to disapprove, but rather that he has turned away from the intimacy and confidence he once shared with the Man of our Times, something others cannot measure.

By contrast, this poem by al-`Arzamī clearly places the value of principles above that of

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74 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 19.
emotions, as it warns against befriending a small-minded man “even if he loves you,” as though the man’s general character, perhaps even his reputation, matters more than his feelings.

1 Do not become devoted to a weak man And make him a brother Or a friend, Even if he loves you

2 Simply avoid him Without hatred; Do not let friendship become Adulterated and muddled

The attributes of brotherhood described in the ancient Arab poetic tradition only partially overlap with Ibn Dāwūd’s vision of brotherhood. As we shall discuss in more detail in the fourth chapter, Ibn Dāwūd, like many other `Abbāsid poets, used his poetry to convey ideas that other authors discussed in prose, and we shall see how the development of Arabic prose influenced both the style and the content of Arabic poetry. We now turn our attention to those prose texts where we can find descriptions of the brotherhood the Man of our Times constantly seeks.

**Ibn al-Muqaffa`’s Ādāb al-Kabīr: The Etiquette of Brotherhood**

`Abdullāh ibn al-Muqaffa`, best known today for his translations of Persian texts into Arabic, most notably *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, was one of the earliest of the master prose stylists in...
Arabic,\textsuperscript{76} and his \textit{Ādāb al-Kabīr} is an early classic of Arabic prose. His writing represents the perspective of the formative period of cosmopolitan Arab-Islamic society much as the poems in al-Buḥturī’s \textit{Ḥamāsa} represent the perspective of pre-Islamic and early Islamic Arabic poetry. Its influence on Ibn Dāwūd’s world was undeniable, but it had existed for as long as anyone in Ibn Dāwūd’s time could remember and was taken for granted as part of the culture.

\textit{Ādāb al-Kabīr}, popularly known as \textit{al-Adab al-Kabīr},\textsuperscript{77} is a handbook of conduct, with various sections addressed to various types of people in the upper echelons of society. It reflects Ibn al-Muqaffa’s experiences with the Arab elite, such as the Umayyad patrons who employed him, and the Persian elite, from which Ibn al-Muqaffa’s himself was descended,\textsuperscript{78} and he apparently considered the advice contained therein applicable to both Arab and Persian culture. Although Ibn al-Muqaffa acknowledges that he is indebted to “the ancients,” by which he means the ancient Persians, for much of the wisdom contained in the treatise,\textsuperscript{79} \textit{Ādāb al-Kabīr} is an original Arabic composition and not a translation. This brief work contains advice for princes, advice for the associates of princes, such as ministers and courtiers, and, most importantly for the purposes of this chapter, advice for gentlemen of the secretarial class, as regards their interactions with their peers.\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{76} Consider that he died only seven years after the establishment of `Abbāsid rule and some twenty years before the birth of al-Jāḥīz (see C. Pellat, “Al-Jāḥīz,” in \textit{The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: `Abbasi}d Belles-Lettres, 78).
\textsuperscript{78} Latham, “Ibn al-Muqaffa”, 48-49.
\textsuperscript{80} Latham, “Ibn al-Muqaffa”, 57-60.
Ādāb al-Kabīr advises its readers in matters of behavior, not in the composition of poetry, and thus its astute social insights, which often deal with situations outside the conventional range of poetic subject matter, and its windows into the minutiae of polite conduct in eighth-century society still seem entertaining to today’s reader. Ibn al-Muqaffa` gives advice on everything from the etiquette of listening to stories one has heard before81 to interacting with acquaintances one does not particularly like but whom one’s brother regards highly,82 and from avoiding reviling people or nations with whom one’s interlocutors might be associated83 to eschewing repeated praise of things for which one’s brothers do not share one’s enthusiasm.84 As for the subject of apologies and pardon (‘udhr, i`tidhār), a major theme of the Man of our Times poems but one which falls by the wayside in the Ḥamāṣa as the poets employ their verses as a means of saving face, Ibn al-Muqaffa` advises his readers, “Only apologize to someone whose forgiveness you want.”85 Like the Man of our Times, he emphasizes the importance of graciously accepting a brother’s apology unless the relationship is beyond repair,86 and he counts among the attributes of the virtuous man that he does not become angry with his brother before giving him a chance to apologize.87 Ibn al-Muqaffa` would likely agree with the Man of our Times that the Brother’s refusal to accept the former’s apology constitutes injustice.

Ibn al-Muqaffa` seems to imply that a gentleman’s main objective is to make others like him, and thus the self-aggrandizing, confrontational pose assumed by the poets of the

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81 Ibn al-Muqaffa`, AK, 91.
82 Ibn al-Muqaffa`, AK, 110.
83 Ibn al-Muqaffa`, AK, 114.
84 Ibn al-Muqaffa`, AK, 106.
85 Ibn al-Muqaffa`, AK, 95.
86 Ibn al-Muqaffa`, AK, 95.
87 Ibn al-Muqaffa`, AK, 115.
Ḥamāsa is largely absent from Ādāb al-Kabīr. Ādāb al-Kabīr makes no claim to be anything other than a guide to proper, that is, socially advantageous, conduct. It is, ultimately, a social code and not an ethical code. Its pragmatic worldview provides a window into actual events such as one does not find in either the Ḥamāsa or Kitāb al-Zahra. Whereas the Ḥamāsa tells us what it was acceptable for poets to say about brotherhood, Ādāb al-Kabīr describes, in considerable detail, behaviors that would have been favorably received in polite society. The Man of our Times poems reflect the social code described in Ādāb al-Kabīr more closely than that of the Bedouin poets quoted in the Ḥamāsa, as the former acknowledges an awareness of the desire to appear sophisticated, the reverence for the adab\(^{88}\) of the majlis.

Despite the pragmatic orientation of some of the advice contained therein and the pervasive preoccupation with anticipating the reactions of others, Ādāb al-Kabīr does not simply amount to a guide to sycophancy and keeping up appearances, for Ibn al-Muqaffa` does remain true to his purpose of keeping alive the wisdom of the ancients. He instructs the reader on ideas and principles that should lead him to certain actions, even though others might never know what led him to behave in the way Ibn al-Muqaffa` advises. It is in these instances that delve most deeply into the reader’s psyche that Ādāb al-Kabīr comes closest to depicting the inner struggle described in the Man of our Times poems. In this example, he appeals to the reader’s sense of reason and justice.

If you see your friend with your enemy, do not let it make you angry, for he can only be one of two types of men. If he is a man you trust intimately, then it is most advantageous to you that he be as close as possible to your enemy, so that he may avert evil from you or shield you from trouble or disclose

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This piece of advice is an excellent example of the tone of gentlemanly sensibility that the Man of our Times frequently echoes in order to give his poems a sense of appeal to the audience’s ideas of fairness and reason. Not only does Ibn Dāwūd acknowledge that his audience is part of this gentlemanly class, with its currency of measuring rights and discerning what is reasonable, gentlemen schooled in rhetoric, logic, and jurisprudence, but, as we shall see in the next chapter, Ibn Dāwūd also depicts the character of the Brother as an educated gentleman who understands the laws and ideals of the majlis.

Ibn al-Muqaffa` assumes that the gentleman wants to be taken seriously, that he possesses good judgment and values the use of reason, and that he desires to be recognized as such. To behave irrationally, for example, by failing to differentiate between edifying anecdotes and foolish ones, ought to be beneath his dignity. Thus he advises the reader, “If possible, do not pass on a piece of news unless you believe that it is true and unless you believe it based on compelling evidence.”

Thus, when the Man of our Times urges his brother not to reject him on the basis of unfounded speculations, he is relying on the Brother’s desire not to be a fool who cannot tell the difference between credible information and nonsense.

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89 Ibn al-Muqaffa`, *AK*, 89.
3 إِفَّاء أُحُبَّ الْمُرْءُ سَاءَتْ حَوَاطِرُهُ

Do Not Follow Baseless Suspicions [20]92

1 O my hope,
   Is your fidelity within reach,
   So that I may seek it out,
   Or is it beyond my grasp?

2 If that which you fear is really the case,
   Then do not do it again,
   For one whose heart is faithful
   Is not equal to a treacherous one

3 If it is not,
   Then do not chide me,
   For if a man allows his heart to speculate,
   Then he will think bad thoughts

Perhaps it is to these men of sound judgment, the ones in Ibn al-Muqaffa`'s audience, or at
least, the ones that Ibn al-Muqaffa`'s readers aspire to be, that the Man of our Times refers in
the first line of “Where is the Path to God’s Country?” [97], in which he says that he has
always loved “sound hearts.” The Man of our Times is not alone in preferring gravitas over
frivolity in his companions; Ādāb al-Kabīr operates on the assumption that all men of
refinement share this preference and then offers advice on how to present oneself as a sound
heart.

The Man of our Times, with his love of “sound hearts” and his preference for the
companionship of “honest young men” values the things that, according to Ādāb al-Kabīr, a
gentleman should value. Ibn al-Muqaffa` would have his reader be pleased if a brother were
to love the qualities in him that the Man of our Times loves in his Brother.

91 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 82.
92 The number in brackets after the English title of a poem refers to its position in the appendix, which contains
all Man of our Times poems contained in the ghazal volume of Kitāb al-Zahra. The poems appear in the
appendix in the same order in which they appear in Kitāb al-Zahra.
Do not be impressed if someone praises you because of your prestige or power, for power is among the most ephemeral things in the world. Do not be impressed if someone praises you because of your wealth, for it, too, is most ephemeral, second only to power. […] But if you are praised because of your religion or manly virtue (murū‘a), let that impress you, for manly virtue will never leave you in this life, and religion will never leave you in the Hereafter.

Ādāb al-Kabīr acknowledges that vanity and lack of forethought play a larger role than they ought to in the actions even of educated men, and even though it at times advises readers to manipulate this state of affairs to their advantage, there seems to be an underlying belief that the most valuable brother is the wisest one, the one who values virtue over appearances, and whose loyalty to his friends and commitment to justice are constant.

Ibn al-Muqaffa` briefly revisits the subject of the characteristics of desirable companions in another of his treatises, Risālat al-Ṣahāba (Treatise on the Entourage), written near the end of his life. This work is an epistle to the caliph al-Manṣūr containing advice, which, as history shows us, went unheeded, on how the caliph out to deal with all sorts of problems relating to governance, from disloyalty and disorder in the military and among the inhabitants of outlying regions of the caliphate to lack of education among the general public. The issue that concerns us here is that of the caliph’s entourage. Ibn al-

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93 Gruendler translates this term as, “honor code” (Gruendler, Praise Poetry, 10), and Latham translates it as “moral perfection” and “manliness” (Latham, “Ibn al-Muqaffa”, 58).
94 Ibn al-Muqaffa`, AK, 108.
96 Latham, “Ibn al-Muqaffa”, 64.
97 Latham, “Ibn al-Muqaffa”, 64.
98 Latham, “Ibn al-Muqaffa”, 64.
99 For a full list of these, see Latham, “Ibn al-Muqaffa”, 66.
100 Ibn al-Muqaffa`, Risālat al-Ṣahāba, 122-129.
101 Ibn al-Muqaffa`, RS, 139-140.
102 Ibn al-Muqaffa`, RS, 140-142.
Muqaffa` admonishes the caliph for taking as companions men of little virtue and moral worth. He describes the qualities of men who are, in his opinion, worthy of the honor of being the caliph’s companions; unsurprisingly, they have much the same attributes as the virtuous men described in Ādāb al-Kabīr, most especially justice and good judgment.\footnote{Ibn al-Muqaffa`’, RS, 135-137.}

Risālat al-Šaḥāba does not, however, contain advice on how to make oneself worthy of the caliph’s friendship, as it is addressed only to the caliph and not to those who aspire to be his companions. I mention it here because, even though it is a political treatise, with a purpose different from that of Ādāb al-Kabīr, Ibn al-Muqaffa` is consistent throughout both works in his depiction of the worthy companion.

\textbf{Al-Jāḥiz’s Al-Ma`āsh wa-’l-Ma`ād: The Logic of Brotherhood}

Abū `Uthmān `Amr ibn Baḥr ibn Maḥbūb al-Kinānī al-Baṣrī, called al-Jāḥiz,\footnote{Pellat, “Al-Jāḥiz,” 78.} the famous polymath, had several things in common with Ibn Dāwūd that might have influenced how they wrote about brotherhood. Both men lived in Baghdad and interacted with poets and religious scholars; al-Jāḥiz died within a year of Ibn Dāwūd’s birth. Both were versed in the Islamic religious sciences and, the former making his Mu`tazilite point of view evident in treatises on diverse subjects,\footnote{Pellat, “Al-Jāḥiz,” 78.} and the latter, a Žāhirite judge. They belonged to the generations of Baghdadi intellectuals who were familiar with the learning of the Greek and Persian civilizations, but only indirectly, having read Arabic texts based entirely or partially on Greek and Pahlavi originals.\footnote{Pellat, “Al-Jāḥiz,” 79. See Raven for further description of the “popularized version[s]” of Greek works current in `Abbāsid literary circles (Raven, MBD, 72).} Al-Jāḥiz might be mentioned in connection with Kitāb al-
Zahra and the legends surrounding it in two regards; first, Giffen considered his Risāla fi-`l-`Ishq wa-`n-Nisā’ (Treatise on Love and Women) and Risālat al-Qiyān (Treatise on Singing Girls) forerunners to the genre of “love theory” of which she named Kitāb al-Zahra as an early influential work, and second, al-Jāḥiz lampooned homosexual love and its proponents, among whom the biographers would count Ibn Dāwūd, in his treatises Fī tafdīl al-baṭn `alā al-zahr (The Superiority of the Belly to the Back) and Mufākharat al-Jawārī wa-`l-Ghilmān (Boasting Match Between Maidens and Swains), as well as one called Dhamm al-Liwāt (The Condemnation of Sodomy), which is now lost.109

Although al-Jāḥiz displayed his keen powers of observation as regards human relationships in many of his works,110 his treatise on social etiquette, Al-Ma`āsh wa-`l-Ma`ād (This World and the Next), also called Al-Akhlāq al-Maḥmūda wa-`l-Madhmūma (Praiseworthy and Reprehensible Moral Traits)111 is of the greatest interest to us for the study of social attitudes toward brotherhood and writings on these.112 Al-Ma`āsh wa-`l-Ma`ād shares its primary subject matter with Ādāb al-Kabīr; that is, it is a treatise on the adab of human interactions, and it contains much advice on how to win men’s hearts.113 Al-Ma`āsh wa’l-Ma-`ād delves more deeply into psychological and even philosophical dimensions than Ādāb al-Kabīr, and al-Jāḥiz displays his Mu`tazilite sensibilities throughout.

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107 Giffen, Profane Love, 3-4.
110 See Pellat, Life and Works, 24-25.
111 Hārūn, Rasā`il al-Jāḥiz, 89.
112 Pellat gives its full title as Risālat al-ma’ād wa’l-ma`āsh fī al-adab wa-tadābir al-nās wa-mu` āmalatihim (“Letter for this world and the next on manners, conduct[,] and human relationships”) (Pellat, Life and Works, 24).
113 Hārūn, Rasā`il al-Jāḥiz, 106, inter alia.
Muḥammad Hārūn believes that al-Jāḥiẓ addressed the treatise to Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī Du‘ād (d. 239/854), a judge in the service of the caliph al-Mutawakkil, although it has also been claimed that the wazīr Muḥammad ibn `Abd al-Malik al-Zayyāt (d. 233/847) was the addressee. As is so often the case with works of adab, though, it was most likely intended for the edification of all who might read it, not only for its original recipient.

The treatise begins, as is consistent with convention, with praise of the recipient and a statement of the text’s purpose. Thus Al-Jāḥiẓ describes the treatise and its addressee.

“I have seen fit to compile for you a treatise, [in which] I combine much information about the hereafter and this world. I shall describe to you the causes of things and report to you their reasons and that upon which the great men of [all] nations agree. […] That which led me to do it that I have seen what reason and understanding God has granted you, and how he has endowed you with a noble nature.”

This is only the first of several times in al-Maʿāsh wa-ʾl-Maʿād in which al-Jāḥiẓ emphasizes the centrality of reason and understanding to the cultivation and endurance of friendship. Elsewhere, he refers to an ideal brother as “the twin of your mind.” In this he agrees with Ibn al-Muqaffa` and with the Man of our Times, who frequently appeals to the Brother’s sense of reason.

Al-Jāḥiẓ then proceeds to a discussion of the causes of things. Human motivations, he claims, are as they are because God, in His justice, has endowed His servants with

115 Hārūn, Rasāʾīl al-Jāḥiẓ, 89.
117 Hārūn, Rasāʾīl al-Jāḥiẓ, 89.
118 See Raven for an outline of the conventions of the prolegomena of adab treatises (Raven, MBD, 99-102).
119 Hārūn, Rasāʾīl al-Jāḥiẓ, 95-96.
120 Hārūn, Rasāʾīl al-Jāḥiẓ, 122.
feelings of desire (targhib) and aversion (tarhib), in just measure. Thus, people hope to enter Heaven and fear the punishment of Hell. It is through the feelings of desire and aversion that people abide by God’s commands (amr) and prohibitions (nahy); this is the moral code (ta'dib).\textsuperscript{121} As for human relationships, “God knows that [men] only incline emotionally, and only become attached to one another, and are only motivated according to the moral code.”\textsuperscript{122} He further connects human relationships to a religious imperative when he says, “he who does not show gratitude to men does not show gratitude to God.”\textsuperscript{123} Thus al-Jāhiṣ, unlike Ibn al-Muqaffa`, posits the same philosophical underpinning for human friendship and for devotion to God. That he intersperses this explanation with examples from the Qur’ān and hadīth\textsuperscript{124} only emphasizes the connection between religion and friendship. All of this is consistent with Mu’tazilite teachings and shows their influence.

Al-Jāhiṣ’s method of logical argument is most impressive in his theory of the cause of friendship. Although muḥdath poetry on brotherhood, including the Man of our Times verses, frequently praised the brothers’ knowledge, as we shall see in the third chapter of this dissertation, they never explain why a learned man is a desirable friend; they rather take it for granted. Al-Jāhiṣ, however, clearly explains the relationship between intelligence and friendship. According to al-Jāhiṣ, knowledge (`ilm) is the cause of credibility (thiqa), and credibility is the cause of friendship (mawadda).\textsuperscript{125} In other words, friendship is rooted in trust, and the most learned men are the most trustworthy. Thus he advises his readers to

\textsuperscript{121} Hārūn, Rasā’il al-Jāhiṣ, 104.
\textsuperscript{122} Hārūn, Rasā’il al-Jāhiṣ, 104.
\textsuperscript{123} Hārūn, Rasā’il al-Jāhiṣ, 94.
\textsuperscript{124} Hārūn, Rasā’il al-Jāhiṣ, 105, inter alia.
\textsuperscript{125} Hārūn, Rasā’il al-Jāhiṣ, 106.
choose their friends based on the friends’ knowledge, and not because of personal feelings of affection (*hawā*), for “choosing because of *hawā* causes anger […] and effaces esteem.”

Furthermore, relationships based purely on emotion do not endure.

“[Your friend] knows that you did not choose him because of merit but because of *hawā*, and he is on his guard lest your *hawā* move to someone else, and your choice [of friends] will go wherever your *hawā* inclines, and while his heart enters into friendship, he is not sure whether your [feelings] will change.”

Like *Ādāb al-Kabīr*, *al-Ma`āsh wa-`l-Ma`ād* depicts the virtuous life as one in which *adab*, in all its meanings, triumphs over individual personal preference (*hawā*). It accords with Ibn al-Muqaffa`’s statement that, “Most of what is right is the opposite of what you like (*hawā*).” Since the word *hawā* is also used very frequently in love poetry simply to mean “love,” readers of the Man of our Times poems might have sensed a double meaning in the word *hawā* as Ibn Dāwūd employs it. In the next chapter we will see him place the Man of our Times in the midst of love poems, his heart overwhelmed with *hawā* yet striving to behave according to the justice and reason befitting the *adīb*.

*Al-Ma`āsh wa-`l-Ma`ād* contains a long list of “things that cause each other” in the field of social conduct. The Man of our Times poems illustrate several of these particularly well. The poem “Do Not Abandon your Brother” expresses Al-Jāḥiz’s principle of “the rebuffing of love causes exasperation” as well as the principle that, “justice causes the

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unity of hearts and injustice causes their separation.”

“My Heart is Humble” [13] plays on al- Jāḥīz’s axiom that “humility causes love (miqa).” It is when the Man of our Times’ feelings and actions deviate from these laws, as in, “I Have No Way to Forget You” [6], “Treat me Well or Badly” [31], and “The More he Reassures me, the More I Fear” [23], which directly contradicts the principle that “loyalty causes a feeling of security,” that he leaves the domain of social etiquette and enters the realm of ghazal proper. The lack of references in al-Jāḥīz’s list to matters such as concealing the secret of love and intensity of feeling further lends support to the idea that the psychology of love was, in the minds of Ibn Dāwūd’s original audience, a subject to be treated separately from the psychology of social relationships. Thus, when the Man of our Times loses patience with the Brother, as he does in “I Regret Apologizing to You” [54], he is not acting as the archetypal `udhrī lover, whose love is not based on rational choice but rather on something beyond human understanding; he is rather acting in accordance with the causes of things and making clear his understanding thereof.

*Al-Ma`āsh wa-`l-Ma`ād* falls midway between being a collection of edifying sayings about social etiquette, on the order of Ādāb al-Kabīr, and a systematic presentation of moral philosophy, like the texts we will discuss later in this chapter. Before we enter the discussion of these, we will explore one more treatise which concerns itself entirely with social etiquette.

**Kashājim’s Adab al-Nadīm: A Toast to Brotherhood**

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131 Hārūn, Rasā’il al-Jāḥīz, 110.
132 Hārūn, Rasā’il al-Jāḥīz, 110.
133 Hārūn, Rasā’il al-Jāḥīz, 110.
Ādāb al-Kabīr and al-Maʿāsh wa-ʾl-Maʿād are treatises on social etiquette and human relationships in general, both explicitly didactic, the latter more theoretical than the former. Both give us insights into the customs and values surrounding friendship between two gentlemen in `Abbāsid society, but neither was written exclusively for that purpose. Ādāb al-Kabīr has obvious political underpinnings and draws heavily from the tradition of Persian wisdom literature in what may be an expression of Persian ethnic pride. To say that al-Maʿāsh wa-ʾl-Maʿād is merely a meditation on manners is to underestimate its psychological and epistemological insights. The next book we shall discuss, Kashājim’s Adab al-Nadīm, which was written several centuries after Ibn Dāwūd’s death, provides a different perspective on friendships among educated men in the culture in which Ibn Dāwūd lived; through anecdotes and advice, it gives insights into the conduct of a particular type of man whose craft was to behave as the ideal friend, namely, the nadīm.

Unfortunately, little can be known for certain about the life of Abū al-Fatḥ Maḥmūd ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Sīndī ibn Shāhik135 (d. 360/971),136 known as Kashājim.137 His pen name Kashājim is an acronym in which the letter kāf stands for kātib (“scribe”) or kitāba (“the scribe’s craft”), the shīn for shāʿir (“poet”) or shīʿr (“poetry”), the alif for adīb (“man of letters”) or inshā’ (“chancery prose”),138 the jīm for munajjim (“astrologer”) or jadal

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134 Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ’s high regard for Sasanian models of governance and etiquette can be observed in Ādāb al-Kabīr and many of his other works (Latham, “Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ,” 50-52, 56-58).
136 Kashājim, AN, 9.
137 He is popularly called “Kushājim” with a damma on the kāf. For “Kashājim” as the preferred reading of the name, see Kashājim, AN, 9.
He was well traveled, but he likely spent some of his early life in al-Ramla in Palestine, such that he came to be known by the nisba al-Ramlī, and he came to make his permanent home in Aleppo, where he was a court poet of the Ḥamdānid prince Sayf al-Dawla (d.356/967). That he should write a book like *Adab al-Nadīm* hardly seems out of character, as the same courtly character pervades his *Kitāb al-maṣāyid wa’l-maṭārid (The Book of the Hunt and the Chase)*, a book on hunting etiquette and hunting poetry, including some of Kashājim’s own poems on the subject. He is also said to have written books on other aspects of court culture, such as music and the culinary arts, although these works no longer survive.

*Adab al-Nadīm* is a collection of verses, anecdotes, and sayings on a specific relationship between two men, that of the nadīm and his patron. The word nadīm is not interchangeable with akh, for example, or any of the other words denoting friendship, as it refers to a particular social role; one might even call it a profession. The nadīm was a member of the entourage of a caliph or prince; his duty was to be a companion to his master.

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141 Kashājim, *AN*, 8.
144 The fact that *Kitāb al-Zahra* does not deal with these subjects and limits itself to the subject of love poetry is part of Raven’s argument for classifying it as a book of literary criticism and not a treatise on manners, a book on love poetry and not on love (Raven, *MBD*, 30).
146 The word nadīm has traditionally been translated into English as “boon companion.” In my opinion, the English language does not contain a single word or concise phrase that encompasses the nadīm’s role as a financially compensated partner in recreational, and sometimes competitive, activities, so I will use the Arabic word in this dissertation.
and to accompany him in pleasurable activities such as chess, hunting, the taking of food and drink, and most importantly, conversation. Given the popularity of poetry in courtly circles in this time, the recitation and even composition and extemporization of verses frequently entered into the relationship; consider that Abū Nuwās, the nadīm of the caliph al-Amīn, was, arguably, Arabic literature’s foremost writer both of poetry about wine drinking and about hunting, both of which are closely connected to the office of the nadīm. Kashājīm’s book attests to the prominent role of poetry in the life of the nadīm, as he quotes some verses composed by nudamā’ and others addressed to them, but it unfortunately does not contain a chapter on this subject. The chapters it does contain deal with both general principles of the nadīm relationship and the etiquette of specific activities in which the nadīm is expected to engage.

The first chapter: Praise of the nadīm and the enumeration of his virtues, and the censure of drinking wine in solitude
The second chapter: Character traits and attributes of the nadīm
The third chapter: Being called to be a nadīm
The fourth chapter: Drinking companions, many and few
The fifth chapter: Listening to music
The sixth chapter: Conversation
The seventh chapter: Washing hands
The eighth chapter: Passing around the cup
The ninth chapter: Excess and insufficiency
The tenth chapter: Requesting the cup when drinking wine
The eleventh chapter: The nadīm’s physical appearance and his obligations to his master
The twelfth chapter: The master’s obligations to his nadīm
The thirteenth chapter: Chess etiquette

147 Kashājīm, AN, 15.
149 Kashājīm, AN, 50-54 inter alia.
150 Kashājīm, AN, 15.
Adab al-nadīm is far from being the only literary work of this period to depict the courtly customs surrounding drinking and listening to music; these subjects receive copious mention, whether in poetry, anecdotes on love, or biographical dictionaries. What is significant for our purposes is that Kashājim’s decision to treat these subjects shows that he considers them important settings in which social interaction among men should be conducted in a certain way; they are venues for brotherhood, at least in its munādama (the relationship between a nadīm and a ra’īs) aspect. Although the activities for which Adab al-nadīm prescribes rules of etiquette, with the exception of chess, are not in themselves very intellectually demanding, most nadīms in the `Abbāsid era were quite learned, having established themselves as poets, grammarians, and writers of adab, although Adab al-nadīm does not deal explicitly with how the nadīm’s learning should influence his conduct.

The nadīm relationship stands apart from other types of friendship in that there is no true social equality between the master and the nadīm. The very nature of the relationship precludes the sort of equality that might exist in the friendships the philosophers discuss or in the relationship, hypothetical as it is, between the Man of our Times and the Brother. Thus, Kashājim makes “the nadīm’s obligations to his master” and “the master’s obligations to his nadīm” separate chapters. The nadīm was obliged to observe the utmost decorum in his dealings with his master, because failure to do so could spell dismissal or worse. He was required to accept blame for misdeeds he did not commit and “to be agreeable in the most

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152 Sadan, “Nadīm,” 850.
153 According to Sadan, the nadīm must “combine opposing qualities and patterns of behaviour,” to be, by turns, serious and light-hearted, because the “drinking companion who is unable to decide, on the basis of the gestures and reactions on the part of his master during the munādama, which quality would be appropriate to a given situation, risks his life” (Sadan, “Nadīm,” 851).
disagreeable of situations.\textsuperscript{154} The \textit{nadîm} was obligated to anticipate every turn of his master’s whims, to the point of following such contradictory advice as that “the \textit{nadîm} should not wear brightly colored clothing,” in case the master is in the mood to lend him his own clothes, but yet it is appropriate for him to go to his master dressed “in clothing which can be known and be seen in the crowded \textit{majlis}” as much as possible without transgressing the bounds of good taste.\textsuperscript{155} The master, of course, was not similarly at the mercy of his \textit{nadîm}. It was, at root, a relationship based on patronage; the \textit{nadîm} was a professional friend. The activities in which the master and the \textit{nadîm} participated together were the sort that might foster genuine feelings of friendship, and the truly successful \textit{nadîm} was the one who could move his master’s heart to true friendship, as though the fruit of such a patronage relationship is a false sense of equality, the more convincing the better.\textsuperscript{156} That is to say, the \textit{nadîm} was obligated to behave in ways that created the outer impression of brotherhood.

The purpose of \textit{Adab al-nadîm} is not simply to describe or give advice about brotherhood as such; it is rather to advise the reader, the prospective \textit{nadîm}, on how to affect true friendship, and therefore the feelings and behaviors of “brothers” frequently enter the discussion. It is only natural that a book that devotes so much attention to the description of recreational pursuits should lean more toward the practical etiquette and entertainment aspects of \textit{adab} than do the previous two works we have discussed, and less toward attempting to render into Arabic or to systematize the wisdom of the ancients. It is, in

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Kashâjim, \textit{AN}, 73.
\item Kashâjim, \textit{AN}, 71.
\item Case in point, Gruendler has demonstrated how the patrons of poets in the `Abbâsid period engaged actively in the composition of verse together with their court poets, to the point that the patrons began to influence poetic tastes, and this “caused the boundaries between poet and patron to blur” (Gruendler, \textit{Praise Poetry}, 9).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
general, less systematic than either Ādāb al-Kabīr or al-Maʿāsh wa-ʾl-Maʿād, and more of a miscellany of nadīm lore. Most of the men Kashājim presents as examples of gentlemanly friendship were historical figures from the `Abbāsid period; the caliph al-Maʿmūn is the most frequently mentioned historical person, with numerous sayings attributed to him and many anecdotes about his relationships with his nudamā’. The poets Abū Tammām, al-Buḥturī, `Alī ibn al-Jahm (d. 249/863), Abū Nuwās, Ibn al-Rūmī, and al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḍahḥāk (162/779-250/864), all quoted in Kitāb al-Zahra, appear in Adab al-nadīm, and this is fitting, considering they were all court poets.

Among the tales of carousing, the toast-worthy verses, and the advice for the image-conscious, we find glimpses of the sort of brotherhood Ibn Dāwūd envisioned for the Man of our Times and his wayward Brother. As we have seen in the other texts, both moral virtue (muruwwa) and eloquent speech (faṣāha) make for a desirable friend. Kashājim quotes letters, in verse, that he and his friends have exchanged. As in Kitāb al-Zahra, some poems appear in Adab al-Nadīm attributed to “one of [our] brothers.” The following playful verses by an anonymous poet in the first chapter show that drinking companions

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157 Kashājim, AN, 42, 73 inter alia.
158 Kashājim, AN, 43.
159 Kashājim, AN, 53.
160 Kashājim, AN, 68.
161 Gruendler, Praise Poetry, 12.
162 Kashājim, AN, 80.
163 Kashājim, AN, 53.
164 Kashājim, AN, 80.
165 See Gruendler, Praise Poetry, 5.
166 Kashājim, AN, 41.
167 Kashājim, AN, 47-48.
168 Kashājim, AN, 44-45.
thought of themselves as “brothers,” and drinking together was the source of their brotherhood.

1. We were not nursed
   By the same woman,
   But wine made us
   Nursery mates

2. If the first draught of wine
   Is mother’s milk,
   And the last draught of wine
   Is a hangover,

3. Then between the two
   Are such pleasures!
   To describe them as happiness
   Would not suffice

Adab al-Nadīm depicts the intense emotions between male friends in a way that Ādāb al-Kabīr and al-Ma`āsh wa’l-Ma`ād do not. Kashājim, in the most famous passage from Adab al-Nadīm, quotes a gentleman as saying that conversation with a male friend is preferable even to listening to music or being alone with a woman, and we have mentioned earlier in this chapter the anecdote about the three men who, upon visiting the graves of the master and his nādīm, are fatally overcome by emotion. `Abdullāh ibn Yazīd is referred to as the “beloved” (`ashīq) of the poet Abū Tammām in the context of an anecdote; this is a

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169 Kashājim, AN, 32.
170 Kashājim, AN, 58.
171 Kashājim, AN, 43. Kashājim quotes a single line from a poem by Abū Tammām, supposedly addressed to `Abdullāh and seeming to allude obliquely to his name, and then continues with the anecdote. The poem as it appears in his dīwān is classified in the ghazal section; it consists of four lines and refers to the beloved in the
very strong word, implying powerful emotions that can only be called love. In the next chapter we shall see how the emphasis on the intense emotions among brothers is pervasive in the Man of our Times poems.

**What the Philosophers Said**

Much scholarship in Western languages has already been devoted to the translation of the works of Greek philosophy into Arabic and their influence on Muslim philosophical and theological writings. The details of the complex process of how ideas which originated in ancient Greek texts found their way into the writings of someone like Ibn Dāwūd, through later Greek commentaries, early Syriac, Arabic, and possibly Persian translations of Greek works, and of course, the often inaccurate attributions in Arabic of particular texts and concepts to the Greek authors who first wrote them down, are beyond the scope of this dissertation.

As Raven has demonstrated, ninth-century *adab* works contain ideas that originated in works translated from Greek but circulated in the *majlis* in a “popularized” form that appealed to an audience that lacked specialized training in philosophy, but it would be a mistake to overestimate the direct influence of Greek philosophy on the Man of our Times poems or to read *Kitāb al-Zahra* as a philosophical work. Although *adab* was not among the disciplines most strongly influenced by the works of Greek authors, the indirect influence of
Greek philosophy and medicine echoed in the *majlis*, as writers of *adab* made frequent reference to Greek scholars and reported their teachings, albeit through the lens of `Abbāsid cultural values. Learned as he was in jurisprudence, Arabic grammar, and poetry, it is highly unlikely that Ibn Dāwūd knew Greek, and he was not educated in philosophy. The extent of his knowledge of Greek philosophy was that which was widely known among the educated classes, that which was part of the popular culture of the *majlis*. Ninth century works of *adab*, among them *Kitāb al-Zahra*, frequently include sayings attributed to Greek sages, often to the wrong Greek sage, which express a “popularized” and “easily digestible” version of the concept as it exists in the original Greek text. When it comes to the subject of human relationships, the Arabs of the *majlis* imposed sentimental overtones on Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* or even Galen’s medical writings, to make ancient Greek views on friendship and love accord with those of the so-called ‘udhrī poets, never mind that much of the Bedouin poetry had received a similar idealizing treatment in the *majlis*. We might compare the *majlis* version of Greek philosophy, expounded by amateur philosophers, to the *majlis* version of classical Arabic poetry, which we will treat in the fourth chapter, simplified and “[d]ramatized” to appeal to the non-specialist and consistent with the tastes of the ninth-century ẓurafā’. For example, *Kitāb al-Zahra*

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174 Raven says that Ibn Dāwūd “had no training in Greek science” (Raven, *MBD*, 91).
175 Raven, *MBD*, 60.
177 See Raven, *MBD*, 60.
179 Raven, *MBD*, 78.
180 See Raven, *MBD*, 68. Sometimes the popularized Arabic versions include etymological explanations for natural phenomena; as these etymological relationships are specific to the Arabic language, it is not possible that they have been translated from Greek (Raven, *MBD*, 83).
contains a saying, attributed to Galen, that two rational people will love each other because they are alike in reason, but two foolish people will not necessarily love each other because they are both foolish.\textsuperscript{181} Raven has traced the origin of this saying to Plato’s \textit{Lysis} and Ptolemy’s \textit{Nomoi}, but not to any of Galen’s writings,\textsuperscript{182} and he attributes the difference in content between the Arabic and Greek versions to the cultural attitudes of Ibn Dāwūd’s contemporaries.

The quoted Platonic texts concentrate on the contrast good/bad. Good people resemble each other and tend to like each other, whereas bad people, although equally resembling each other, are usually each other’s enemy. The Arabic text, however, points to the difference, in matters of love, between rational and stupid people and once more reflects the opinion that love is something for a refined elite.\textsuperscript{183}

As the philosophical training of \textit{adab} compilers varied from one writer to another, so did the degree of accuracy with which their Greek-influenced material reflected the content of the original Greek texts. Thus we find everything from the philosophically astute description of the cause of friendship, not attributed to a Greek sage but clearly showing familiarity with the principles of syllogistic logic, in \textit{al-Ma`āsh wa`l-Ma`ād} by the Mu‘tazilite disputationist al-Jāhiz, to an Arabic account in \textit{Kitāb al-Zahra}, based loosely on the Aristophanes’ speech in Plato’s \textit{Symposium} about each pair of lovers having originated a single entity which was then separated.\textsuperscript{184} The version of Aristophanes’ account as it appears in \textit{Kitāb al-Zahra}, where it is attributed simply to Plato, either reveals an incomplete

\begin{footnotes}
\item[181] Ibn Dāwūd, \textit{KZ}, 16-17.
\item[182] Raven, \textit{MBD}, 67.
\item[183] Raven, \textit{MBD}, 68.
\item[184] Raven doubts that Ibn Dāwūd himself included this passage in \textit{Kitāb al-Zahra}, since it seems out of place in the context of the chapter in which it appears; he believes that a copyist inserted it later, because it would have been uncharacteristically uncritical of Ibn Dāwūd to have included a text that was so contradictory to his argument (Raven, \textit{MBD}, 71).
\end{footnotes}
understanding of Greek original or has been deliberately altered to accord with Islamic sensibilities. In the *Symposium*, Aristophanes describes the spherical creatures as corporeal beings, even describing the position of their faces, arms, and legs, and the halves, once separated, remain confounded despite the intervention of several divine interlocutors, including Apollo, Zeus, and Hephaestus. Such a story, with its anthropomorphic deities, would have seemed either incomprehensible or absurd in Islamic society, and thus the Arabic version has it that spherical souls were divided in half, with each half placed in a different body, and the attraction of the two halves to each other is called “love.”

It is not only in these popular adaptations of Greek ideas that Arabic interpretations of Greek thought relate to Ibn Dāwūd’s views on brotherhood. The Man of our Times poems represent the idealization of certain moral traits, most importantly reason, fidelity, and justice. While the ancient Arab poetic tradition and the Persian-influenced court culture certainly acknowledged and appreciated these characteristics and exhorted those seeking virtue to cultivate them and to associate with those who possessed them, the most important texts devoted entirely to the subject of good and bad moral traits (*akhlāq*) were written after Ibn Dāwūd’s death, and their authors were scholars of Greek philosophy.

**Yaḥyā ibn `Adī’s *Reformation of Morals: A Christian Aristotelian Perspective***

Yaḥyā ibn `Adī al-Takrītī (893-974), a disciple of al-Fārābī, is most famous today for his contributions to the field of Christian apologetical writing in Arabic. He lived his life in cultural circumstances similar to those of Ibn Dāwūd, and thus it is fitting that he should

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think of virtuous men similarly to how the Man of our Times describes them. Yaḥyā was a layman\(^{188}\) who spent most of his life in urban centers, including Baghdad, with its majālis of discussion among people of various religions on topics religious and secular. Yaḥyā gained and applied his knowledge both within his own Syrian Orthodox (sometimes called “Jacobite”)\(^{189}\) Christian community and in the religiously diverse society as a whole. He learned Aristotelian philosophy at the hands of the renowned Muslim philosopher al-Fārābī (d. 950)\(^{190}\) and taught it to Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 1023),\(^{191}\) who was also a Muslim.\(^{192}\) In his apologetical writings, he almost always bases his arguments on Aristotelian logic, in order to convince those who did not already believe as he did on doctrinal issues, yet he served his own church community as a malpōnō, a lay teacher of Christian doctrine and the Syriac language.\(^{193}\) Thus he was, like Ibn Dāwūd, both a man of religion and a man of the majlis.

Yaḥyā’s Tahdhib al-Akhlāq (The Reformation of Morals) is one of the earliest works in Arabic on “ethical philosophy.”\(^{194}\) Its original title was most likely Siyāsat al-Nafs (The Governance of the Soul), but it has come to be associated with the former title, perhaps because of association with a later work of the similar title by Miskawayh, to be discussed below.\(^{195}\) For such a short treatise, approximately the same length as Ādāb al-Kabīr, it presents a remarkably comprehensive survey of human moral traits, both good and bad, as

\(^{188}\) Ibn `Adī, Reformation, xv.
\(^{189}\) Ibn `Adī, Reformation, xiii.
\(^{190}\) Fakhry, Islamic Philosophy, 20.
\(^{191}\) Ibn `Adī, Reformation, xx.
\(^{192}\) For a chart representing the religious diversity of the Aristotelian philosophers who wrote in Arabic, see Ian Richard Netton, Al-Fārābī and his School (London” Routledge, 1992), 3.
\(^{193}\) The word means “teacher” in Syriac (Ibn `Adī, Reformation, xv).
\(^{194}\) Ibn `Adī, Reformation, xxix.
\(^{195}\) Ibn `Adī, Reformation, xxx.
well as a prescription for ethical living. Griffith has observed that, although its frame of
reference is primarily Hellenistic, Arab and Persian cultural influence is discernible in
Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq,¹⁹⁶ that it is not merely an imitation of earlier Greek works. Thus, as we
shall demonstrate, Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq and the Man of our Times poems attempt to reach the
same audience; we might even say they vie for the affection of the same brothers.

Yahyā begins by laying the philosophical groundwork for a discussion of moral
qualities. He first defines the word khulq (“moral quality,” the plural of which is akhlāq), as
a “state (ḥāl) proper to the soul, in which a man performs his actions without deliberation or
study,” following the definition given in a treatise by Galen, which now survives only in
Arabic translation.¹⁹⁷ He then explains that every moral trait proceeds from one of the soul’s
three faculties (quwā) which, following Plato,¹⁹⁸ he names “the appetitive soul” (al-nafs al-
shahwāniyya),¹⁹⁹ “the irascible soul” (al-nafs al-ghaḍabīyya),²⁰⁰ and “the rational soul” (al-
nafs al-nāṭīqa).²⁰¹ Thus, every person is born with certain moral traits, and it is the duty of
individuals to cultivate good moral qualities in themselves and suppress bad ones; this is the
reformation of morals (tahdhīb al-akhlāq) and the governance of the soul. Since only people
who already possess a certain degree of moral refinement are able to do this without external
motivation, “there is a need in society for kings, laws, and systems of ethics.”²⁰² That he
begins by explaining the philosophical basis for the rules of conduct, which is reminiscent of

¹⁹⁶ Ibn `Adī, Reformation, xxxi. Griffith hypothesizes that Ibn al-Muqaffa`’s works may even have been a
source for the Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq (Ibn `Adī, Reformation, xii).
¹⁹⁷ Ibn `Adī, Reformation, xxxii.
¹⁹⁸ Ibn `Adī, Reformation, xxxiii.
¹⁹⁹ Ibn `Adī, Reformation, 14.
²⁰⁰ Ibn `Adī, Reformation, 18.
²⁰¹ Ibn `Adī, Reformation, 22.
²⁰² Ibn `Adī, Reformation, xxxiii.
the beginning of *al-Mā`āsh wa’l-Ma`ād*, although Yahyā approaches the rational explanation for his advice with far less flourish than al-Jāḥīz.

Although Yahyā treats the three faculties of the soul and their relationship to character traits from a philosophical point of view, popularized versions of these concepts found their way to the *majlis* and even had some influence on Ibn Dāwūd. He alludes to this idea in the second line of “Love is a Natural Property of my Soul” [2].

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حَبِّيّهِ طَبِيعٌ لِّنفْسِي لا يَعْيِرُهُ كُرْرُ الْليالي وَلا تُوْدِي بِهِ الحَقَّبٌ
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My love for him
Is a natural property of my soul;
The turning of the nights does not change it,
Nor the vicissitudes take it away

In saying this, the Man of our Times is alleging that his love for the Brother is as much a part of his character as any of the moral characteristics we might find in Yahyā’s treatise. As Raven has demonstrated, it was common in `Abbāsid literary circles to apply Hellenistic maxims of morality to love. The term for “natural property” (*tab‘*) in this poem is not the technical term that Yahyā uses; likewise, *Kitāb al-Zahra* includes a passage about the three “parts” (*masākin*) of the brain that is loosely based on Ḥunayn’s description of the brain’s three “faculties” (*quwā*). Ḥunayn, like Yahyā after him, uses the philosophical term “faculties.”

Yahyā then proceeds to a list of twenty virtues, twenty vices, and four moral traits which are neither virtues nor vices. It is here that echoes of the Arab and Persian influences

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204 Raven, *MBD*, 68.
are most strongly felt. Even the poets of the Ḥamāṣa praise men’s generosity and censure their malevolence. It is a testament to Yahyā’s keen powers of psychological observation that he mentions that the same trait might be admirable for a person in one social role and undesirable for someone in another. His assessment of the desirable qualities for princes and leaders, especially, suggests that he was familiar with the Persian “mirrors for princes” genre. The virtues and vices all refer to social interactions, and if the treatise had ended here, we might include it in the same category as al-Maʿāš waʾl-Maʿād, a treatise on social conduct written by a philosophical adept. As for brotherhood, Griffith has noted that Yahyā refers almost exclusively to the social relationships of men, as though his audience took for granted that only males “have the potential for full humanity.”

The conclusion of the treatise, however, which contains a “definite program [...] for the reformation of morals” and a description of “the complete man” (al-insān al-tāmm), that is, the one whose moral reformation is complete, takes us afield of the other texts described in this chapter. Here it becomes clear that association with one’s fellows is not an end in itself; the ultimate goal is not to earn the favor of others, as it is in Āḍāb al-Kabīr or especially in Adab al-Nadīm, nor is it to have a perfect relationship with one particular brother, as in the Man of our Times poems. The introduction to Al-Maʿāṣh waʾl-Maʿād implies that one should cultivate knowledge in order to attract friends. Conversely, Yahyā

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206 Ibn ʿAdī, Reformation, xxxv.
207 Ibn ʿAdī, Reformation, xxxv.
208 Ibn ʿAdī, Reformation, xxxi.
209 Tahdhīb al-Akhīlāq has even, on occasion, been incorrectly attributed to al-Jāḥīz (Ibn ʿAdī, Reformation, xxix).
210 Ibn ʿAdī, Reformation, xii. Yahyā does mention, however, that certain moral traits are more praiseworthy in one sex or the other (Ibn ʿAdī, Reformation, xxxv).
211 Ibn ʿAdī, Reformation, xxxvii.
212 Ibn ʿAdī, Reformation, xxxviii-xxxix.
recommends that one conduct one’s social life in a way that allows him to cultivate the sciences and that the virtue seeker “shall always frequent the sessions [majālis] of scholars and sages and continually associate with modest and abstinent people.”\textsuperscript{213} Thus, he exhorts his readers to aspire to something more enduring than the tastes of patrons, and he advises them in a way of thinking, not merely of outward behavior. Implicit in his high regard for scholarly pursuits which, by nature, require long periods of solitude, is the argument that the monastic life is a life of virtue, and thus, a rebuttal, on ethical grounds, to the Muslim disputationists who considered monasticism an evasion of social responsibility.\textsuperscript{214} Nonetheless, \textit{Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq} remains rooted in the social world, in human relationships and the quest for ethical perfection in this life, as opposed to spiritual perfection; it contains no mystical dimension.

\textbf{Miskawayh’s Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq: A Muslim Aristotelian Perspective}

Abū `Alī Āḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ya`qūb Miskawayh\textsuperscript{215} (320/932-421/1030) spent most of his career at the courts of the Buwayhid princes in Rayy and Baghdad.\textsuperscript{216} Like many of his peers in this chapter, he was a polymath, but he is best remembered for his universal history \textit{Tajārīb al-Umam} (\textit{The Experiences of the Nations}) and for his ethical writings, although he is said to have written on other subjects from mathematics to alchemy, and his poetry was popular in his time.\textsuperscript{217} He was a rival of two other great writers among

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{213} Ibn `Adī, \textit{Reformation}, xxxix.
\item \textsuperscript{214} See Constantine K. Zurayk, \textit{The Refinement of Character: A translation from the Arabic of Ahmad ibn Muḥammad Miskawayh’s Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq} (Beirut: The American University of Beirut, 1968), 150.
\item \textsuperscript{215} Some sources refer to him as Ibn Miskawayh, but this is incorrect, as the \textit{laqab} Miskawayh belonged to Abu `Alī himself and not to his father (Zurayk, \textit{Refinement}, xii).
\item \textsuperscript{216} Zurayk, \textit{Refinement}, xiv-xv.
\item \textsuperscript{217} Zurayk, \textit{Refinement}, xiii-xiv.
\end{itemize}
his contemporaries, both of whom also enjoyed the patronage of the Buwayhid court, Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawhīdī and al-Ṣāḥib ibn al-ʿAbbād (d.995).  

The work of his that concerns us here is his *Tahdhīb al-Akhlaq*, written approximately fifty years after Yaḥyā ibn Ḍī’s treatise of the same name, but different from it in some significant ways which we shall discuss below. Although each of the *adab*-oriented works we have discussed in this chapter possesses its own internal logic and fulfils its unique purpose, Miskawayh’s *Tahdhīb al-Akhlaq* is, in Fakhry’s estimation, “one of the few systematic ethical treatises in Arabic.” Miskawayh claims that the purpose of his book is “to acquire for ourselves a character that all our actions issuing therefrom may be good and, at the same time, may be performed by us easily, without any constraint or difficulty.” In contrast to the other works studied in this chapter, Miskawayh’s *Tahdhīb al-Akhlaq* consists mostly of definitions and classifications and contains little practical advice, which is appropriate, as he claims to have written the book in order to refine his own character instead of his audience’s, unless, of course, we interpret this statement as the beginning of a long conceit in which the author addresses his own soul. In any case, Miskawayh’s assertion that good actions proceed from a refined character stands in contrast to the assumption underlying *Ādāb al-Kabīr*, namely that one’s character is the sum of one’s actions, and therefore the virtuous man is the one whose outward actions are correct. Likewise, Miskawayh differs from Yahyā on several important points, namely the divisions of the soul and the value of the

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221 Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy*, 197.
solitary life. Miskawayh also describes a tripartite soul, but, following Platonic teachings, he divides it into the rational soul, the bestial soul, and the leonine soul.\textsuperscript{224} Yahyā’s divisions of the soul are much more clearly related to virtues and vices and to human relationships. While Yahyā sees solitude as a means of avoiding idleness and cultivating the study of philosophy, Miskawayh asserts that, since humans are, by nature “civic,” the solitary life is the life of a savage.\textsuperscript{225}

Miskawayh’s *Tahdhib al-Akhlāq* encompasses a wider range of subject matter than Yahyā’s, and he is less concerned with individual character traits. His book consists of six discourses, “The Principles of Ethics,” “Character and its Refinement,” “The Good and its Divisions,” “Justice,” “Love and Friendship,” and “The Health of the Soul.”\textsuperscript{226} One notices immediately that Miskawayh’s concerns are with matters far more abstract than the day-to-day workings of the *majlis*; the fifth discourse, however, contains some insights into a perspective on brotherhood of which echoes may be heard in the Man of our Times verses.

Miskawayh presents several systems for the classification of types of love, beginning with the one based on the criteria of how quickly it is formed and how quickly it is dissolved. According to this line of reasoning, there are four types of love:

1. love that forms quickly and dissolves quickly
2. love that forms quickly and dissolves slowly
3. love that forms slowly and dissolves quickly
4. love that forms slowly and dissolves slowly\textsuperscript{227}

\textsuperscript{224} Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy*, 193.
\textsuperscript{225} Zurayk, *Refinement*, 150. We may consider this assertion a subtle refutation of Yahyā’s defense of solitude, which argument he makes to defend the Christian practices of monasticism and clerical celibacy on philosophical grounds.
\textsuperscript{226} Zurayk, *Refinement*, ix.
\textsuperscript{227} Zurayk, *Refinement*, 123.
He then relates these to the three “ends at which men aim in their desires and conducts.” At various points throughout the treatise, he describes the love between a husband and a wife, a ruler’s love for his subjects, a father’s love for his child, a mother’s love for her child, a son or daughter’s love for his or her parents, a teacher’s love for a student, and a student’s love for a teacher. In general, the more effort the one who loves has exerted in ensuring the existence or well-being of the object of his love, the more intense his feelings of love. Thus maternal love is stronger than paternal love, and both of these are stronger than filial love.

What the Man of Times calls “brotherhood” (ikhā’), Miskawayh calls “friendship” (ṣadāqa) and considers a subset of “love” (maḥabba). Miskawayh’s very avoidance of the figurative use of the word “brotherhood” shows us that he is writing outside the domain of literary adab. According to Miskawayh, two criteria of friendship are that it takes place between two people only and that it is not based on utility. Friendship is not virtuous in itself; rather, whether it is praiseworthy or blameworthy depends on whether its aim is pleasure or the good. This distinction is important in regards to our discussion of the Man of our Times poems, because later Arab authors’ negative estimation of Ibn Dāwūd, as well

228 Zurayk, Refinement, 123.
229 Zurayk, Refinement, 123.
231 Zurayk, Refinement, 138.
232 Zurayk, Refinement, 132.
234 Zurayk, Refinement, 125.
235 Zurayk, Refinement, 125.
as Massignon’s, seem to depend on their assumption that the friendship he describes in the Man of our Times poems is one based on pleasure. They might support their claim with the fact that the Man of our Times implies, on several occasions, that his friendship with the Brother began when they were young, since, according to Miskawayh, “Friendship among the young […] is motivated by pleasure.” If we allow for the possibility that the Man of our Times sought the good with the Brother, the poems appear in an entirely different light.

Earlier in this chapter, we discussed the difficulty of deciding whether to describe the state of emotional attachment between two men, as the Man of our Times poems depict it, as friendship or as chaste love; Miskawayh, however, does not allow the two concepts to overlap. Friendship according to Miskawayh is quite different from the love described in love poetry, and the latter is far inferior. He compares the love most often described in *ghazal* to the relationship between a singer and a listener, because one party seeks pleasure and the other seeks benefit. The lover “finds pleasure in beholding the beloved, while the [beloved] expects benefit.” The discrepancy between the two parties’ goals in the relationship is an inevitable source of conflict, and for this reason, “you see the lover complaining of his beloved and accusing him of unfairness.” This view is an excellent example of the difference between a systematic treatment of ethical philosophy and philosophy-flavored sayings in the *majlis*.

As for the Man of our Times, the Brother’s injustice toward him is one of his main complaints, but his accusations of injustice seem rooted in a sufficiently sophisticated

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understanding of justice to be more than simply an emotional outburst. The lovers’ quarrels Miskawayh describes stem from an uncritical understanding of friendship and love; the Man of our Times, at least, seems to have faith that the Brother will be convinced by his appeals to justice, as can be seen in “I Have Misjudged Time” [85], which we will study more thoroughly in the next chapter. Even in poems such as “Treat Me Well or Badly” [31], in which he resolves to endure the Brother’s ill treatment patiently, he acknowledges that the Brother has no moral obligation to reciprocate his affection, and that if it were within his power to free himself from his emotional attachment to the Brother, he would do so.

**Conclusion**

It would not be too far-fetched to say that ethics, rather than mere etiquette, is at the root of the Man of our Times’ *adab*. Ibn Dāwūd expresses it, however, in terms closer to those of the Arab poetic tradition and to the aphorisms of Persian-influenced ‘Abbāsid court culture rather than those of philosophy proper. Furthermore, he has chosen *ghazal* poetry as his vehicle, and he shows brotherhood in action more often than he makes dispassionate statements about it. Thus, he has achieved his aim of using love poetry to instruct the reader in the conduct of brotherhood. He was not an expert in Greek philosophy; what he knew of it he knew only secondhand, and even then, it was only a version of philosophy suited to non-specialists, only loosely based on Arabic translations of Greek texts. The Man of our Times poems make clear that the attraction the Man of our Times feels toward the Brother is based on the former’s perception of virtue in the latter and that their esteem was once mutual; their relationship can genuinely be called friendship rather than an exercise in hedonistic frivolity. Ibn Dāwūd states in the introduction to *Kitāb al-Zahra* that his book is an ideal companion
which will edify the reader and enable him to carry on successful and wholesome relationships with his friends.

The texts we have studied in this chapter reflect aspects of the concept of brotherhood in the society in which Ibn Dāwūd lived and ideas which his original audience would have called to mind when they read the Man of our Times poems. As classical Arabic poetry relied heavily on allusions, not only to concepts as abstract as the ones we have examined in this chapter, but especially to other poems, we shall discover, in the next chapter, how Ibn Dāwūd used the Man of our Times character to demonstrate the way a virtuous man should feel and behave toward his friend and how he employed the mode of love poetry (ghazal) for that purpose.
Chapter Three
This Book is a Brother: *Kitāb al-Zahra* and its Poetic Hero, the Man of our Times

I Have Misjudged Time [85]

1 May God preserve bygone times!
   I misjudged their rights,
   Though I was learned in such matters,
   Experienced

2 Nights when the north wind
   Did not bring me bad fortune,
   On your behalf, and your promises were not empty,
   Like lightning without rain

3 Nights when I gave to love
   More than its fair share
   Of fidelity and finesse,
   Righteousness and refinement

4 I have never seen a friend
   Respond like this to a lone fault,
   Even after so much time has passed;
   It pains a man in love to think of it

5 I have never seen an arrow pierce the breastplate,
   Aiming straight for the heart,
   Then fall short
   And miss its mark

6 There is no pardon for a sword
   If it reaches the bowels

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And then goes dull,
When even bones could not deaden its blow

7 Nor for a steed that outruns the wind
Without growing tired,
Then when it goes to stands up,
It is too weak, and it collapses

8 Then where is your pardon,
For casting me aside, belittling me,
And breaking the covenants
That we certified in our youth

9 If a miscreant is punished accordingly,
Then to do violence to him
Beyond what his crime warrants
Is unlawful excess

My friend, why have you broken your promises and cast aside our friendship?

Twenty-first century readers of English are not in the least surprised to encounter this theme in a poem, and the simplicity and sincerity with which Ibn Dāwūd expresses it are remarkable, even by today’s standards. He eschews clichés, rare words, and rare meanings of common words. More generally, this poem is entirely free of the self-aggrandizement and idealizing exaggeration for which classical Arabic poetry is famous. It defies the stereotype that, in the words of Ibn Dāwūd’s contemporary Ibn al-Rūmī (221/836-283/896), “God has reproached poets for saying what they do not do, but they are not guilty of this alone, for they [also] say what princes do not do.” The persona is someone modern audiences would consider a sympathetic character; he is capable of failure, and his emotional

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2 We will discuss the implications of this type of diction in more detail in the next chapter.
3 Gruendler, Praise Poetry, 5.
4 Irwin, Night, 43.

Ibn al-Rūmī was himself a poet and is quoted in Kitāb al-Zahra, so one must assume an element of tongue-in-cheek humor in his statement, but it does contain truth about the insincerity of much poetry. If being quoted in Kitāb al-Zahra does not connect him closely enough to Ibn Dāwūd, some biographers even claimed that Ibn al-Rūmī knew Ibn Dāwūd personally, to say nothing of the fact that Ibn al-Rūmī “wrote four poems on Ibn Jāmi” (Raven, MBD, 31).
response is lifelike. This poem makes it easy to understand why Massion and those before him believed that Ibn Dāwūd wrote Kitāb al-Zahra based on personal experience. Even Raven, in his valiant efforts to see the man behind the sensational story, admits that it is tempting for modern readers to see Ibn Dāwūd’s own emotions reflected in some of his poems. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how Ibn Dāwūd draws from poetic tradition in order to create a tone of emotional intimacy in his poetry and that his doing this serves the purpose that he describes in the introduction to Kitāb al-Zahra.

In Ibn Dāwūd’s time, it was accepted that the purpose of writing about love in the qaṣīda, held to be the highest form of poetry, was largely a rhetorical one. Ibn Dāwūd’s contemporary Ibn Qutayba (257/871-276/889)⁵ says

[The poet] lamented of his intense passion, the pain of separation from his beloved, and his overwhelming longing, in order to incline people’s hearts to him and to pique their interest, and to attract their attention, because poetry about young love is near to people’s souls, and hearts are sympathetic to it, for God has made it His servants’ nature to like erotic poetry and the companionship of women, for there is hardly a man among us who is not drawn to it.⁶

Ibn Qutayba was referring specifically to amorous verses composed in the nasīb so as to attract the audience’s attention and sympathy for the duration of the qaṣīda, but his argument could also apply to ghazal, love poetry composed outside the context of the qaṣīda. The poet composed it the way he did in order to develop a rapport with the audience, whether he did so in service of a more persuasive qaṣīda which would earn him the favor of a patron and a lasting reputation among poets, or whether love poetry was an end in itself, and the only

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⁵ Raven, MBD, 25.
⁶ Ibn Qutayba, Shi‘r, 31.
reward the poet sought his beloved’s favor or the amusement of his companions or contemporaries.

One needs only to read the poem to know that Ibn Dāwūd did not write it for the sort of ceremonious occasion for which the classical qaṣīda was used in the ʿAbbāsid era, and if he only meant to make his beloved forgive him, then expressing his bitterness so plainly may not have been the best strategy, especially if the beloved were accustomed to the sort of ostentatious flattery that led Ibn al-Rūmī to say what he said about the insincerity of poets. He intended to enlighten the reader in matters of love, and more specifically, of gentlemanly friendship, to guide the reader to be more conscientious in his relationships with others. If his only aim had been to give advice, however, he could have simply composed aphorisms in prose and in verse, as, in fact, he sometimes did, but how much more profound an impression does this poem make because its author understood so well the art and science of poetry? All this is to say, this poem and the other Man of our Times poems are meant as both poetry and adab, and Ibn Dāwūd succeeds on both counts. It is as though the Man of our Times leads us in a dance to an ancient rhythm toward a new and virtuous goal.

As we discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, Willem Raven became, in the 1980s, the first modern scholar to do justice to Ibn Dāwūd; rather than simply reading Kitāb al-Zahra through the lens of the increasingly lurid stories that had grown up around Ibn Dāwūd, he allowed the maligned judge’s writing to speak for itself. Before then, the story was repeated for no less than a millennium, without anyone challenging it. Perhaps the biographers’ claim that Ibn Dāwūd wrote Kitāb al-Zahra and all the Man of our Times verses
in order to express his sadness over his rejection at the hands of a particular friend seems so plausible because *Kitāb al-Zahra* begins with a brief introduction, seven pages in Nykl’s edition, on the subject of brotherhood, immediately followed by approximately five thousand lines, fifty chapters, of *ghazal*. The explanation for this that seemed most obvious to medieval readers of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, including the authors of the biographical dictionaries, was that Ibn Dāwūd compiled these amatory verses because they represented his feelings toward the unnamed male friend he addresses in the introduction, the “brother” to whom he dedicated the book. Raven makes a case for the dedicatee of the book being a “maecenas,” and lists among Ibn Dāwūd’s criteria for including particular poems in *Kitāb al-Zahra* several literary and poetic considerations, as well as, “sheer caprice.” He considers Ibn Dāwūd to be the first critic to devote a book entirely to the subject of love poetry, and he suggests that this might be because of, “the author’s awareness that love is the predominant motif in literature.” In my opinion, it is not possible to tell whether Ibn Dāwūd wrote *Kitāb al-Zahra* for a particular friend, much less to discern this friend’s identity, but he must have intended his advice to apply to every *majlis*-going gentleman in Baghdad, or else he would not have fashioned it as a book of *adab*. Thus, love poetry is the logical choice of subject matter, for love, unlike battle, asceticism, or any of various other poetic themes, was central to the existence of his intended audience, the *ẓurafā‘*. It would also make sense that Ibn Dāwūd, being a *ẓarīf* himself, had more extensive knowledge *ghazal* than of poetry on other

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7 “It is said that he wrote his aforementioned book for no reason other than this love” (Al-Anṭākī, *Tazyīn*, 333).
8 Raven, *MBD*, 100.
9 Raven, *MBD*, 94.
11 Raven, *MBD*, 29. Gruendler also demonstrates how prominently *ghazal* was represented in the poetry of the *ẓurafā‘*, the non-professional poets of the *majlis* (Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 5).
subjects, especially when he was young, and thus it dominates the first half of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, the part that, according to Raven, Ibn Dāwūd probably completed by the time he was thirty years old.\(^\text{12}\)

I accept Raven’s argument that love poetry, rather than love, is the main theme of *Kitāb al-Zahra*,\(^\text{13}\) and that Ibn Dāwūd selected most of the verses for inclusion because they contain certain motifs or express certain sentiments, but this does not answer the question about the brother in the introduction. It only makes sense for the poems in *Kitāb al-Zahra* to express a multiplicity of attitudes toward love, some of which contradict each other; this juxtaposition of diverse viewpoints, sometimes with little commentary from the anthologist himself, is an essential feature of *adab* itself. Certainly not every verse in *Kitāb al-Zahra* contains Ibn Dāwūd’s instructions to his real or fictitious “brother,” for this would be a confusing message indeed. Rather, his own verses, those attributed to the Man of our Times, continue his message about brotherhood and expand on its themes, just as they are consistent with the didactic and aphoristic tone of the introduction. Through the Man of our Times character, Ibn Dāwūd walks the reader through the vicissitudes of brotherhood toward the goal of harmonious and enlightened brotherly friendship, gentleman to gentleman, brother to brother, and he appeals repeatedly to the reader’s sense of justice and of logical argument, meanwhile demonstrating his mastery of an array of poetic conventions. The Man of our Times poems address a gentleman, one who knows right from wrong and reason from nonsense; we shall call him the Brother. Perhaps love is the province of the ṣarīf, but Ibn

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\(^\text{12}\) Raven’s assertions that the second half of *Kitāb al-Zahra* was written later than the first half and that the second half is less well organized leads me to believe that the second half was something of an afterthought, written for the sake of thoroughness in matters of *adab*, at least to the extent that the first half can stand alone as a book (Raven, *MBD*, 93).

\(^\text{13}\) Raven, *MBD*, 94.
Dāwūd’s poetry comes across as so disarmingly sincere because he admits that there is more to the soul of the adīb than mere erotic infatuation.

The introduction to Kitāb al-Zahra has been quoted far more frequently than any of Ibn Dāwūd’s poems, and its sense of raw emotion, the same unadorned bitterness we find in the above poem, sparked the imagination of readers and helped them accept at face value the biographical anecdotes, such as when Ibn Dāwūd says

Know that among the strangest things the days have brought and by which minds have been confounded is someone who behaves unjustly and claims that he is the victim of injustice, a deceiver who claims that he is remorseful, a tyrant who asks for help, and a conqueror who asks to be granted victory. [...] Do you deny that time changes things and that you are among those who change it? Do you deny being cruel to a brother when you yourself are a leader in such things? It is more appropriate for you to find a reason for it and apologize on behalf of those who do it than to blame and dishonor the victims of it. 14

Just as the story of Ibn Dāwūd’s love for Ibn Jāmi` distracted readers’ attention from the contents of Kitāb al-Zahra itself, and the introduction distracted them from the poetry, so did the above paragraph, apparently an artless and heartfelt expression of indignation, overshadow the rest of the introduction, where the connections to the Man of our Times verses can be found. Even if read apart from the chapters on poetry, the introduction to Kitāb al-Zahra reads like a chapter of adab, like a majlis where learned men exchange wise and witty sayings on a theme. His meditations on love and his expressions of hurt are punctuated by aphorisms such as, “When someone’s friendship is beautiful, it is grievous to make the friendship turn bad,” 15 and, “He whose friendship is true must be obeyed,” which would not

14 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 2.
15 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 1.
be out of place as chapter titles in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, as well as rhetorical questions such as, “How can someone devoid of virtue behave virtuously toward you, since the virtue is not reciprocated?” This rhetorical question, imbued with challenge and even cynicism, calls to mind some of Ibn Dāwūd’s verses, such as lines (6) through (8) above and

أنتَ تَصْلِينَ السَّقُيمَ إِلَى شَفَاءٍ ِإِذَا كَانَ الضَّنْنَى دُرْكَ المُعَافِي
When will the sick patient
Arrive at a cure
When the only one who can heal him
Makes him even weaker?

Perhaps the most poignant example is this one.

فلَسْتُ أَبْلَي بَالرَّدَّى بَعْدَ فَذِهْبِهِ ِوْهَا بِجْرُضُ المَتَّدُوْحُ مِنْ أَلِمَ السَّلَح
I do not fear what suffering may come,
Since I have lost him;
Does the victim, after being slaughtered,
Fear the pain of being skinned?

We will see later on how these rhetorical questions function in the larger context of the poems in which they occur.

If we read between the pain and the wisdom, we see Ibn Dāwūd’s views on brotherhood clearly in the introduction. It is not unusual that the introduction to his book is replete with *duʿāʾ* formulas, but it is worthwhile to examine them carefully in order to discern his individual concerns within the formulaic expressions. After wishing the dedicatee of the book long life, even offering his own life as a ransom for such, he says,

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18 Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 305.
19 Raven, *MBD*, 100. The word *duʿāʾ*, which Raven translates as “benediction,” is a prayer of intention, such as, “May God grant you long life,” or, “May I be your ransom.” In the introduction to *Kitāb al-Zahra* and books like it, the *duʿāʾ* formulas invoke God’s blessings on the addressee, but it is also possible to say a *duʿāʾ* against someone.
“May God grant you possession of everything you desire. May He make your friends act in your interest,”\textsuperscript{20} implying that the thing that the dedicatee wants most is good friendship. Unlike the rest of \textit{Kitāb al-Zahra}, where virtually every prose statement bears an attribution, whether to a named individual or simply, “a Persian king,” or, “a philosopher,” almost none of the aphorisms in the introduction do, the notable exception being the quotation from `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān, saying, “I have attained all the pleasant things in life, except a brother who sets me free from the trouble of caution,”\textsuperscript{21} that is, one who allows him to let down his guard.

Early in the introduction, Ibn Dāwūd describes a problem that he perceives in society, namely that men do not treat their close friends (“brothers”) in a virtuous manner.

Know that those who are content with their brothers are few these days. The only ones who remain are those who do things half-heartedly and do not act justly. If you give preference to them, they hesitate to receive your preferential treatment. When you treat them with respect, they abandon you. As long as they have any hopes or fears about you, they stay away from you. If neither of these two conditions (their hopes or their fears) is present, they do not abide by your brotherhood or keep their promise of fidelity.\textsuperscript{22}

He then goes on to offer \textit{Kitāb al-Zahra} as a solution to the problem. It represents an ideal companion, for it will be ever loyal, and it will suit the brother’s every mood.

I have decided, because of my overpowering longing for you, even as you have been inclined to inquire about the states of lovers, to send to you a companion (\textit{nadīm}) that will show you the states of those who have come before you and bring you the news of those from the past. It will share your enthusiasm and run out of energy only when you do. It will be near to you when you permit it, and it will be far away when you exile it.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibn Dāwūd, \textit{KZ}, 1.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibn Dāwūd, \textit{KZ}, 3.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibn Dāwūd, \textit{KZ}, 3.
It will not regard you scornfully when you need it. It will not turn away from you when you turn away from it and mistreat it. It will not keep your secrets instead of revealing them; rather, it would never cross your companion’s mind to reveal them. Your companion is not too proud to let you ask it questions, and it will not be angry with you when you are afraid or when it is tired.23

Of all the words meaning, “friend,” nadīm, which is sometimes translated as “boon companion,” is, as we discussed in the previous chapter, the one that referred to a man hired to accompany his patron (raʾīs) in recreational activities, almost a professional friend, and it fits very well into the context of friendship among wealthy, educated gentlemen. The most famous nadīm relationship in Arabic literary tradition is that of the licentious poet Abū Nuwās and the libertine caliph al-Amīn (reigned 809-813).24 Although all the qualities he attributes to the book, such as the keeping of secrets confided in it, being receptive to questions and tolerant of fickle moods, apply to the ideal brother the Man of our Times seeks throughout Kitāb al-Zahra, it is significant that, in this instance, he uses the word nadīm, since, unlike “brother,” it implies an unequal relationship, one based on pursuing the interests of the raʾīs but not those of the nadīm. He may have chosen this word in order to be consistent with the obsequious posturing typical of the dedications of books,25 or perhaps it was because, Kitāb al-Zahra, much like a nadīm, will help the brother achieve his ends, namely

If you give it to any brother you like, you will never lose him from among your circle of friends (dīwān). If you devote yourself to it to the exclusion of your other friends, it will allow you to rise above your peers.26

23 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 3.
24 Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, 9.
25 Raven, MBD, 100.
26 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 3-4.
If young statesmen received guidance from books of the “mirrors for princes” genre, then we may well consider *Kitāb al-Zahra* a “mirror for brothers.” Following the advice of *Kitāb al-Zahra* will make the reader an expert in the art of brotherhood, and he will be widely sought-after as a brother.

Ibn Dāwūd then goes on to tell us that brotherhood is not the only institution that is sorely in need of his guidance. In his opinion, a morally sound book of *adab* on the subject of love poetry remains a *desideratum*, since, “many who claim to be men of *adab* and who compose books with the same aim as this book are [...] far from correct.”27 He then outlines the moral parameters of *Kitāb al-Zahra* and, implicitly, of *adab* in general. He expresses his intention to avoid mentioning the legendary lovers of ancient times in the same breath as the prophets of Islam, since he believes that, “it is unlawful for a Muslim to make such a claim about them, that they killed people whose blood it was forbidden to shed or that they did unseemly things,”28 because, “the prophets, peace be upon them, and the righteous imams of the Muslims are of a station so high that the common people ought not speak of their affairs and deny them their proper status.”29 The verses of poetry in *Kitāb al-Zahra* greatly outnumber the anecdotes, because the reader seeking to be a more virtuous brother has more to learn from them, “because people are already familiar with many anecdotes, and few people benefit from them.”30 Thus, not only is *Kitāb al-Zahra* a mirror for brothers, but it is a particularly illuminating one, more morally edifying than other books of *adab*, because, as much as possible, it avoids gossip and anecdotes that speculate about the actions of believers.

The second aim, to write a book that enlightens the reader on the themes of ghazal while steering clear of hearsay and morally questionable subjects, is a rather simple one, and one can find evidence of Ibn Dāwūd’s success in this regard on virtually any page of Kitāb al-Zahra. The first aim is more complicated. How do five thousand lines of love poetry transform the reader into a wiser gentleman whose friendship is more desirable?

To begin, “love poetry” is a very broad term. Ibn Dāwūd quotes poets with diverse worldviews and poems written for diverse rhetorical purposes. Some of the poems in Kitāb al-Zahra were not written in the genre of ghazal at all; rather, in certain instances, he chose from panegyrics brief excerpts that deal with love, and other selections seem to come from elegies. The poets he quotes run the gamut from anonymous Bedouins to compilers of poetry anthologies like Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī, from seekers of notoriety like ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa and Abū Nuwās to so-called martyrs of love like Jamīʿ and Kuthayyir. Together, they make for a lively and cacophonous majlis, and it would be unreasonable to expect them to present a consistent and straightforward message for the discerning brother. This, as we shall explore momentarily, is the duty of the Man of our Times.

The purposes extended beyond expressing one’s feelings to the object of one’s love. Scholars of poetry, from Ibn Qutayba to Ibn Rashīq admitted that poets wrote love poetry as much for the enjoyment of the audience of “lovers of poetry” as for the enjoyment of the

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31 Raven, MBD, 120.  
32 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 366.  
33 Raven, MBD, 97-98.  
34 Irwin, Night, 54-55.  
35 Kennedy, Abū Nuwās, 20.  
36 Irwin, Night, 57.
beloved. Ibn Dāwūd’s contemporaries among Baghdad gentlemen, the ẓurafā’, were famous for their enthusiasm for love poetry and would have been likely to read a book about ghazal.

Other poets in Kitāb al-Zahra do make statements about brotherhood that accord with the views Ibn Dāwūd expresses in the introduction. Most of these come from Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī, both of whom seem to have influenced Ibn Dāwūd as a poet and a literary critic, since they are two of the most extensively quoted poets in Kitāb al-Zahra, and both of them wrote books, with which Ibn Dāwūd seems to have been familiar, on the motifs of Arabic poetry. Abū Tammām, embracing the Ḥabīsid mania for defining the meanings of Arabic words, describes a “brother” in a way that agrees with the concept, loosely based on Aristophanes’ speech in Plato’s Symposium, that the souls of people who love each other were once parts of the same whole.

1 I said, “My brother.”
They said, “A brother by blood?”
I said, “Yes,
Indeed those of like nature are kin.

2 He was my kinsman in thought,
Conviction, religion,

[References]

38 Raven, MBD, 29.
39 Raven, MBD, 24, 26.
40 Raven, MBD, 95-98.
41 “Some of the philosophers have claimed that God, may He be greatly praised, created souls in a spherical shape, like a ball, then He divided them and put each half in a different body. Whenever a body finds the body that contains the half that was split from its half, love arises between them because of their ancient affinity” (Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 15).
42 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 366.
Even though our origins
Were not the same.”

Likewise, Al-Buḥṭurī says

أَخَ لَي لَمْ تَصَلِّيُ نَسَبِيَّةَ يُفْرَتِي أَبِيَّ وَلَا أَمِّيَّ.

A brother of mine,
My relationship to him
Is not through his father’s family,
Nor his mother’s

But it is Ibn Dāwūd, through the medium of the Man of our Times, who excels at the
“brother from another mother” motif. Here he plays on the literal and figurative senses of the
word “brother,” by using the phrase أَخٌ سَيْقَ (brother with both parents in common, as
opposed to a half-brother).

لَقَدْ بَعْدَتْ عَنْكَ أُحْيَا شَقِيقًا
أَحْبَبْتُهُ إِلَيْ بِكُلِّ سَعْرٍ ۚ

You have cast aside
A full-blooded brother,
And do not be fooled
By my decorous patience.

If all mankind were gathered before me,
You alone
Would be the dearest of them to me
By all accounts.

On the virtues of brotherhood, al-Buḥṭurī says

وَأَخَ لَبْسَتُ الْعَيْشَ أُخْضَرَ نَاضِرًا ۖ بِكَرِيمٍ عِشْرَتِهِ وَفَضْلِ إِخْانَهِ ۚ

A brother,
I have decked my life in the vibrant green
Of his noble companionship

43 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 101.
44 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 165.
And virtuous brotherhood.

Abū Tammām praises most eloquently and exuberantly the feelings an educated man of letters (adīb) can feel for one like himself. Although he gives credit to the philosophical concept of the affinity of souls, the reader may refer to concrete proof of this theory’s veracity; two gentlemen who have sought and attained a profound understanding of love and virtue cannot but love each other.

1 What in the world
   Could be more beautiful
   Than one man of letters passionately in love
   With another?

2 I have gained dominion
   Over his heart and his love
   Since he first gained dominion
   Over mine

3 He almost wrote our love
   Between his eyes
   With the words:
   “This is the beloved of a beloved one,”

4 Except that, if I were in love
   With my own soul,
   I would fear lest a slanderer
   Find out about my love for it

The man of letters (adīb) is characterized not only by his awareness of philosophy but also by his encyclopedic knowledge of the Arabic language, so it is fitting that these four lines of

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46 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 60.
poetry\textsuperscript{47} include five different words meaning “love,” or, “a person in love.” If this display of lexical virtuosity were not enough to convince the audience of his love, he goes on to say that the only thing that has prevented his love from bursting through the floodgates is the law of poetic love, which requires that a lover guard the secret of his love from the snares of malicious gossip.

In these verses, as well, Abū Tammām expresses the exhilaration one feels at having a male friend who understands and accepts him, one who does precisely what Ibn Dāwūd has sent Kitāb al-Zahra for the purpose of doing,

\textsuperscript{1} أَزُورُ مُحَمَّدٍ وَاذَا التَّقَيْنا
\textsuperscript{2} فَأَرْجَعُ لِمَ أَلْمَهُ وَلَمْ يُلْمَنِي

1 I visit Muḥammad,
And when we meet,
Our thoughts speak
Within our hearts

2 I return,
I have not blamed him, nor has he blamed me,
For one mind
Has understood the other

A case can be made for Abū Tammām’s sincerity here, especially since he takes a step back from his famous \textit{modus operandi} of outlandish metaphors and dizzying paronomasia, but if we see ourselves in Abū Tammām, whose heart is about to burst from how well his friend

\textsuperscript{47} The version of this poem that appears in Abū Tammām’s \textit{dīwān} has an additional two lines preceding the four that Ibn Dāwūd quotes in \textit{Kitāb al-Zahra}. The first praises the poet’s tears, as per the nasīb, and the second asserts that the beloved is a peerless beauty (Abū Muṣilli, \textit{Abū Tammām}, 281). In my opinion, and perhaps also in Ibn Dāwūd’s, since he excluded them, these two verses detract from the theme of affinity and mutuality and from the tone of unrestrained happiness in the poem. If tears are beautiful, the beloved’s form is beautiful, and it is beautiful when like falls in love with like, then the poem’s exuberance comes across as mere bombastic hyperbole, rather than making way for the true inimitable radiance of loving one’s equal.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibn Dāwūd, \textit{KZ}, 92.
Muḥammad has understood the man behind the words, we shall see later how the Man of our Times lays us low with his compunction over a male friend also named Muḥammad.

We turn our attention now to how the Man of our Times of Ibn Dāwūd’s verses longs for a love like this one, a love engendered in the virtuous minds of self-aware men, one in which both parties play identical roles, neither lover and beloved nor master and slave, but brother and brother. If Abū Tammām and al-Buḥṭūrī occasionally acknowledge the worth and poignancy of ḵīḥā’s in their poetry, it is rather the central theme of the Man of our Times verses.

Let us consider the Man of our Times a fictional character in a series of poems connected to each other by association with the Man of our Times pseudonym. We may begin by thinking of him as the poetic persona of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, the way that nearly all poets wrote “in character,” hence Ibn al-Rūmī’s assertion that poets claim to do things that they do not do. Consider, for example, the poetic persona of Abū Nuwās the drunken hell-raiser or Abū al-ʿAtāḥiya the ascetic. Even Abū Tammām’s claim of descent from the tribe of Ṭayyi’ was a matter of poetic artifice.49 Perhaps Ibn Dāwūd was too convincing in creating a poetic persona, because readers interpreted his poems literally, as if they referred to his personal experience.50 On the other end of spectrum from mere poetic bombast are the poems and actions attributed to Qays ibn al-Mulawwaḥ, called Majnūn Laylā, the most famous of the martyrs of love, who may not have been a historical person at all.51 We may consider the biographical anecdotes about Ibn Dāwūd, complete with their

49 S. Stetkevych, Abū Tammām, xiii.
50 For a timely discussion of the phenomenon of audiences’ inability to distinguish between fact and fiction, see Alaa al-Aswany’s introduction to his short story collection Friendly Fire (Al-Aswany, Friendly Fire, xi-xxv).
51 J. Stetkevych, Zephyrs of Najd, 115.
spurious verses, as something of a Majnūn Laylā story, complete with its later getting caught in the divide between Şūfīs and legalistic thinkers. When we remove this “apocryphal” material and only consider as “canonical” Ibn Dāwūd’s verses, those that appear in Kitāb al-Zahra with the Man of our Times attribution, we are still left with a set of episodes, held together by Ibn Dāwūd’s statements about brotherhood in the introduction.

Ibn Dāwūd states in the introduction that he is sending Kitāb al-Zahra to be a nadīm to the reader and help him win the friendship of any brother he chooses. He achieves this purpose by inserting the Man of our Times into various scenarios, at least one per chapter, that will shed light on the art of ṭāriq. Ibn Dāwūd is not the first adīb to suggest that “a book is the best companion;” this idea goes back at least as far as al-Jāḥiz. Nonetheless, it is because the Man of our Times is a flawed character in whom the reader can recognize his own humanity that Ibn Dāwūd is able to make Kitāb al-Zahra such an indispensable nadīm.

While Ibn Dāwūd is not the only poet in Kitāb al-Zahra to deal with the subject of brotherhood and gentlemanly friendship, he is certainly the foremost one. The Man of our Times poems include mention the word “akh” (“brother”), twelve times and ṭāriq (“brotherhood”) seven times in 534 lines of poetry, the highest concentration of these words in the works of any poet in Kitāb al-Zahra. He refers to the “beloved” in his poems exclusively by the masculine pronoun, and the only time a female character appears in one of his poems, she is not a beloved but a detractor, deriding the Man of our Times for his old

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52 See Raven for further discussion of this matter (Raven, MBD, 20-22).
53 In the process, the Man of our Times encounters many different poetic motifs. I do not disagree with Raven’s that Ibn Dāwūd composed some of his poem specifically to fit into the themes of the chapter (Raven, MBD, 22), but even when he did, he never lost sight of the theme of brotherhood.
54 Irwin, Night, 86-88.
age, analogous to the woman in another poem who chides Kuthayyir for remaining faithful to `Azza. While the masculine pronoun in `Abbāsid love poetry did not necessarily denote a male beloved, the dawāwīn of most poets contain poems about loved ones of both grammatical genders, and we may consider Ibn Dāwūd’s exclusive adherence to the masculine gender significant. Ibn Dāwūd has us view this brotherhood through the lens of many different styles of love poetry. His poems range from witty couplets to sophisticated poems of between eight and eleven lines that employ Ibn Dāwūd’s unique interpretation of the qaṣīda structure, but whether the individual poem deals with kisses or admonition, wine in Baghdad or thirst in the desert, the Man of our Times, on behalf of the reader, is always seeking truth about brotherhood, always faithful to Ibn Dāwūd’s promise in the introduction. Many of the poems take the form of the Man of our Times admonishing the wayward Brother, as Ibn Dāwūd does in the introduction; in others, he alludes to some aspect of the ideal brotherhood in a less direct and more artistic manner, and on one occasion, he presents both a poem that was written to the Man of our Times, by “a brother of his,” “a man of letters,” followed by the response of the Man of our Times.

In Search of Brotherhood: The Man of Our Times as Hero of the Qaṣīda

A more careful reading of the poem at the beginning of this chapter reveals it to be a qaṣīda, as it tells of the poet’s quest to reach a particular destination, considering that the word “qaṣīda” is derived from the verb meaning, “to head toward a destination.” Although Ibn Qutayba’s definition of the sections of the qaṣīda has become standard, individual poets have interpreted the traditional sequence of motifs in many different ways, to differing

55 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 341.
56 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 55.
57 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 43.
effects, depending on the circumstances surrounding the composition of the poem and the poets’ individual styles.\textsuperscript{58} In recent decades Jaroslav Stetkevych and Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych have undertaken extensive structural studies of the \textit{qaṣīda} and likened the progression of its three sections (the \textit{nasīb}, the \textit{raḥīl}, and the \textit{madīḥ}), to everything from the sonata\textsuperscript{59} to ancient Near Eastern sacrifice rituals.\textsuperscript{60} For our purposes, it may be useful to think of the three sections of the \textit{qaṣīda} as the starting point, the quest, and the destination.

If we consider “I Have Misjudged Time” to adhere to the \textit{qaṣīda} structure, its sections are as follows:

\textit{Nasīb}

1 May God preserve bygone times!
   I misjudged their rights,
   Though I was learned in such matters,
   Experienced

2 Nights when the north wind
   Did not bring me bad fortune,
   On your behalf, and your promises were not empty,
   Like lightning without rain

3 Nights when I gave to love
   More than its fair share
   Of fidelity and finesse,
   Righteousness and refinement

\textit{Raḥīl}

4 I have never seen a friend
   Respond like this to a single fault,
   Even after so much time has passed;
   It pains a man in love to think of it

5 I have never seen an arrow pierce the breastplate,

\textsuperscript{58} For an overview of formulations of the sections of the \textit{qaṣīda} in pre-`Abbāsid and `Abbāsid poetry, see M.M. Badawi, “`Abbasid Poetry and its Antecedents,” in \textit{The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: `Abbasid Belles-Lettres}, 149-152.
\textsuperscript{60} S. Stetkevych, \textit{Abū Tammām}, 109-111.
Aiming straight for the heart,
Then fall short
And miss its mark

6 There is no pardon for a sword
If it reaches the bowels
And then goes dull,
When even bones could not deaden its blow

7 Nor for a steed that outruns the wind
Without growing tired,
Then when it goes to stands up,
It is too weak, and it collapses

8 Then where is your pardon,
For casting me aside, belittling me,
And breaking the covenants
That we certified in our youth

Ḥikma

9 If a miscreant is punished accordingly,
Then to do violence to him
Beyond what his crime warrants
Is unlawful excess

The *nasīb* begins, much like any other *nasīb*: “May God preserve bygone times!”

Lamentation over *dahr*, which conveys the sense of both “time” and “fate,” is nothing out of the ordinary in the first line of the *nasīb*, and this poem is not even the only one in *Kitāb al-Zahra* to begin with benedictions for long-lost times and places. But the forlorn poet standing at the time-forsaken encampment is not a desert Bedouin in the ancient past; his features are familiar. He reveals, through a series of self-referential statements, that he is a Man of our Times, one who ascertains people’s rights, one with a good reputation for his learning as well as for his work; he alludes to details of his life that would remind his audience that this Man of our Times is the *alter ego* of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, the judge and

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author of *adab* they know so well. In line (1), he says that he is learned and experienced in determining which rights are due to whom, and if that is not a clear enough description of the judicial profession, he uses the verb قاضي, from which is derived قاض، the Arabic word for “judge” (َقَاضِي). The word تَلَكَب (“refinement” or “polite behavior”) in line (3) shares its root with أدب (adab), the genus of books which includes *Kitāb al-Zahra*, and ظَرْف (“finesse, elegance,” الزرق) is frequently associated with the literary and cultural circles to which Ibn Dāwūd belonged. Ibn al-Nadīm and others refer to Ibn Dāwūd as أدب and الزرق. This is only what we can tell from the mere presence of these words in the poem; later we shall see which underlying ideas he conveyed by using them. This crestfallen judge is despondent not only because time waits for no one, but because even such an astute scholar as he has underestimated that to which mighty Time is entitled.

It is not caravans and elegantly arrayed ladies for which the Man of our Times is nostalgic, but for a brotherhood in which promises were made to be kept; the “bygone times” were the site of his meeting a faithful brother. The things that made the elusive nights of his youth so beautiful are not particular valleys and rivers in Najd but moral qualities, like fidelity (وشد) and polite refinement (ظرف). He uses the nasib image of the lightning as a *double-entendre*, since بريق خَمْلَب (“lightning without rain”) is a figurative expression, meaning “unfulfilled promises.”

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64 Another poetic technique is also at work here. Since he says, “your lightning” (بروقك), he is attributing a quality (lightning) to something that does not naturally possess it (the beloved, a human being), a device known as *istiʿāra*, usually translated as “metaphor” (S. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 77). Other Abbāsid poets, such as Abū Tammām, wrote *istiʿāra* based on figurative expressions (S. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām* 99).
I have classified line (4) as part of the raḥīl for reasons which will soon become apparent, but we may likewise consider it as a takhallus, the transitional section in which the poets resigns himself to the fact that the past for which he longs is unattainable and sets out on his raḥīl toward his destination, since, at the same time it looks towards the bittersweet memories of the nasīb and toward the quest that lies ahead of it. “I have never seen friendship repaid as if it were a fault” (لَمْ أَرَ وَذَّا عَادَ ذَنْياً (لم أر وذًا عاد ذنیا)) accords perfectly with Ibn Dāwūd’s description of the crisis of brotherhood in the introduction, and thus the Man of our Times is lost in the wasteland, either a desert wasteland that ninth-century audiences were likely to imagine when they heard about bygone times, nights, winds, and lightning, or else a moral wasteland of faulty brotherhood, for the same reason that Ibn Dāwūd outlined in the dedication of Kitāb al-Zahra. He adds to the tone of longing for the past with the phrase “a man in love” (مان صبي) in line (4), since the verb for “to love,” he uses here comes from the root ض و ص, from which derived words related to youth and childhood; his audience may have understood this phrase to mean, “a man who has been in love since his youth.” Among the recurring themes of the Man of our Times verses is a love that has endured in his heart since he was young, and the saying attributed to Ibn Dāwūd in the anecdotes that he had, “not been free from love since grammar school,” may be evidence of how believable the young love portrayed in the Man of our Times verses seemed to its original audience.

Just as Ibn Dāwūd’s nasīb mourns the loss of an affinity of minds, so his raḥīl consists of the arduous process of a series of logical steps, a journey of the rational mind. In this poem, he pays homage to several ancient images of the raḥīl, namely, the arrow, the

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66 The poem about old age (Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 341) is only one of several examples.
67 Al-Baghdādī, TB, 5:258.
sword, and the horse. Whereas the pre-Islamic poets made the journey in order to return
to their tribesmen, and most of the Islamic ones endeavored to reach the palaces of their
patrons, the Man of our Times is on a quest to make logical sense of the situation, so he sets
out to analyze things according to what, by the laws of nature, they can and cannot do.\textsuperscript{68}
using arguments that would not be out of place in a philosophical treatise. Consider, for
example, Yahyā ibn `Adī’s argument that begetting children does not, by itself, amount to
virtue, for, if it did, then dogs would be superior to men, because a dog bears a litter of seven
pups whereas, in most cases, a woman bears only one child at a time. As Yahyā bases his
argument on statements about the nature of dogs and men, Ibn Dāwūd’s argument rests on
statements about the nature of arrows, swords, horses, and friendship.\textsuperscript{69} Ibn Dāwūd’s entry
into such an argument shows a typically `Abbāsid self-awareness in dealing with tropes from
the poetic canon; by demonstrating his knowledge of the principles of logic through poetry,
he is engaging in what Suzanne Stetkevych would call the “metapoetry” of the `Abbāsid
qaṣīda.\textsuperscript{70}

In line (4) he undertakes the task of proving that it is illogical and against the natural
order for the beloved friend to behave as though the Man of our Times has done something
wrong by loving him, and to break his promises when the Man of our Times has been so
faithful to his. Lines (5) through (7) each contain an example of something that has reached

\textsuperscript{68} Poets and critics of poetry in the `Abbāsid era were concerned with whether innovative poetic images were
credibly realistic, and representing a species of plant or animal, for example, as possessing a characteristic alien
to it was considered an error (S. Stetkevych, \textit{Abū Tammām}, 60). The idea that no poet or interlocutor should
make us work too hard to suspend our disbelief is the impetus behind al- Āmidī’s long list of what are, in his
estimation, inappropriate and absurd metaphors found in the poetry of Abū Tammām. Among the worst of the
poet’s offenses are metaphors in which, “the nights menstruate,” and, “fate [has] epilepsy” (Stetkevych, \textit{Abū
Tammām}, 73-74).

\textsuperscript{69} Vincent Mistrih, “Traité sur la continence de Yahyā ibn `Adī, edition critique,” \textit{Studia orientalia christiana,

\textsuperscript{70} S. Stetkevych, \textit{Abū Tammām}, 106.
a difficult goal to achieve but has been unable to achieve something far simpler. The arrow has pierced the armor and the flesh; it has only to continue on its path to reach the heart, but it misses its mark at the last moment. The sword has penetrated the muscles of the belly, but it is not bone but entrails that render it too dull to kill its victim. The horse can outpace the wind, but trying to stand up overwhelms it. Each of these scenarios is contrary to the logical order, and they call to mind the arguments one might use in a philosophical treatise when using examples from nature to demonstrate how something works. As for why Ibn Dāwūd has chosen these three images rather than any other images his audience might recognize as belonging to the rahīl, it may be that he arranged them in descending order of acuteness of wounds. Death from exhaustion (line 7) happens gradually and affects the whole body, and, depending on how soon one acts, it may be possible to restore the exhausted horse to health. A stab wound to the belly (line 6) may cause a slow death; the mortally wounded soldier might at least have time to bid farewell to the companions who have carried him off the battlefield still alive. An arrow to the heart (line 5) kills its victim instantly, but all of these are less damaging than the “sharp stings” of unrequited love (line 4), the mention of which precedes them in the poem. It may also be significant that the martial images of the weapons and the cavalryman’s horse represent masculinity.\(^7\)

Whatever the reason for these images, the Man of our Times has demonstrated that it is logically absurd for these things to behave in the way he described them. The rational gentleman has “never seen” friendship or an arrow come so close to reaching their goals and

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\(^7\) For the sword and the horse as masculine symbols in Arabic poetry, see Monroe (James Monroe, “The Striptease that was blamed on Abū Bakr’s Naughty Son: Was Father Being Shamed, or Was the Poet Having Fun?” (Ibn Quzmān’s Zajal No. 133)” in Wright and Rowson, Homoeroticism, 100, 122. Suzanne Stetkevych has also made a case for lightning and rainclouds being symbols of virility in the ‘Abbāsid courtly qaṣîda (S. Stetkevych, Abū Tammām, 209).
then turn away from them. The dispassionate judge can find “no pardon” for a sharp sword and a swift horse that lose their potency for no apparent reason.

Accordance with nature is only the part of the argument; Ibn Dāwūd and his audience of gentlemen would be sympathetic to the idea of consciously seeking virtue, whether it was revealed scriptures or logical proofs, or a combination thereof, that convinced them of this. Ibn Dāwūd differentiates between that which cannot exist and that which cannot be pardoned. He does not say that an arrow that misses its mark is not an arrow, nor that a sword that falls short of delivering the death stroke is not a sword, nor that a horse that loses its strength is not a horse, nor even that a beloved friend who blames his lover unjustly is not beloved. Rather, these things have all fallen short of virtue, as has the brother to whom Kitāb al-Zahra is dedicated. The sword is still a sword, and the horse is still a horse, but they cannot be pardoned, because they have not remained true to their promises.

Line (8) forms the conclusion of the argument, the thesis that has been proven. At the end of the rahīl, the weary traveler has arrived at his destination. Since there is no pardon for someone who does not fulfill his promise, then the beloved should not be pardoned for treating the lover harshly after he had promised to be a friend to him. He uses the word صبأ (ṣibā, “love,” with association, by virtue of its root, with youth), at the end of the rahīl, as he used its verbal equivalent صبأ (ṣabā) at the beginning, in line (4). According to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, “ṣibā” refers specifically to one lover’s inclination to the other, rather than mutual inclination, thus reiterating the reason for the Man of our Times to undertake the rahīl.

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72 Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Rawḍa, 28.
Rather than the qaṣīda culminating with self-praise (fakhr) or praise of a patron (madīh), the final section, the destination after the journey, is a ḥikma, a wise saying. Ibn Qutayba counted ḥikma among the genres of poetry,\(^{73}\) but to my knowledge, Ibn Dāwūd is the only poet to make the ḥikma the concluding section of a qaṣīda. Thus, the poem represents a journey toward right thought that informs right conduct.

This particular ḥikma sounds almost like a legal pronouncement, a verdict, a fatwā, not merely a logical judgment but a legal one.\(^{74}\) He alludes to the system of what the Islamic legal tradition has deemed the requisite punishments for certain crimes. Every misdeed deserves a punishment, but the Man of our Times claims that to punish someone excessively after he has paid for his crime amounts to ribā (“usury” or “exploitation”). Of course, by composing this line, Ibn Dāwūd is weaving together his roles as a legal scholar and as a poet. This poem is not a fatwā; it is a poetic pastiche of one. The code of Islamic law contains no reference to a prescribed punishment for a person who is fickle toward the one who loves him. Breaking hearts is not a real crime, but ribā is. Ibn Dāwūd is not acting in his capacity as a judge in writing this poem; he simply wants us to remember that the Man of our Times is also a judge.

Only a judge would write a qaṣīda that culminates in a judgment, and only an adīb would write a qaṣīda the mamdūh of which is the wisdom (ḥikma) and truth cultivated in the majlis. Perhaps this also helps us to believe that Ibn Dāwūd is being sincere; this poem

\(^{73}\) Allen, *Arabic Literature*, 77.

\(^{74}\) This line of poetry may be one among the bases for Niftawayh’s allegation, in some versions of the deathbed anecdote, that Ibn Dāwūd disapproved of qiyās (“analogy” or “syllogistic logic”) in jurisprudence but allowed it in poetry (Raven, *MBD*, 17).
flatters no one. He has reached this conclusion, this destination, out of honest intellectual endeavor, not because he or his patron has anything to gain from it.

**Sober as a Judge: The Melancholy Wine Song**

1 People scorn me,
For ever since my youth,
I have been in love
With sound hearts

2 When the darkness has been mingled
And they are drunk
On cups of somnolence
Until the morrow

3 My intoxication
Is one that keeps me from sleep,
And I know not
Whether I am coming or going

4 Do I not have an entrance
To God’s pleasant country,
One that will lead me
On the path to success?

5 Indeed, this earth
Has pleasant spaces
But I am forbidden
To venture toward them

6 What good can come to an eagle

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75 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 329-330.
With sharp eyes for hunting,
If that eagle
Has no wings?

This poem executes the all the maneuvers of the qaṣīda in even fewer lines than “I Have Misjudged Time.”

Nasīb

1 People scorn me,
   For ever since my youth,
   I have been in love
   With sound hearts

Takhalluṣ/Wine Song

2 When the darkness has been mingled
   And they are drunk
   On cups of somnolence
   Until the morrow

3 My intoxication
   Is one that robs me of sleep,
   And I know not
   Whether I am coming or going

Raḥil

4 Will I find a way
   To God’s pleasant country,
   One that will lead me
   On the path to success?

5 Indeed, this earth
   Has wide open spaces
   But I am forbidden
   To venture toward them

Ḥikma

6 What good can come to an eagle
   With sharp eyes for hunting,
   If that eagle
   Has no wings?

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76 For a qaṣīda in which the takhalluṣ consists of a wine song, compare the qaṣīda attributed to al-Aṣma`ī that begins: قُلِّي الشَّمْسُ صَفْرَ صَفْرِ الْبَيْلِ هُوَ.
One could hardly wish for a more succinct qaṣīda. In one short line, Ibn Dāwūd evokes a scene rich with nasīb nostalgia. The word tašābī, like sībā, with which it shares a root, calls to mind a love that began during the poet’s youth. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya defines tašābī as wholehearted devotion to the person to whom one’s love inclines; tašābī, to the exclusions of other words from this root, carries the meaning of great devotion, whereas the others only signify amorous inclination. This single line is sufficient for us to recognize the Man of our Times by his modus operandi in matters of love. Long ago, the Man of our Times fell in love with “sound hearts” (ألبب وأفيدة صحاح). We may take “sound hearts” as a metonymy for “brothers,” such as the reader will have in abundance if he abides by the advice of Kitāb al-Zahra. His use of the grammatical plural šiḥāh to modify “hearts,” as opposed to the feminine singular sahīha, as would be used in prose, only makes the youthful love sound more archaic and more appropriate to the nasīb.

By the end of line (3), we have established that the Man of our Times is lost, and in the course of his rahīl, lines (4)-(5), he wanders aimlessly, and his situation only becomes more hopeless. The Man of Our Times reaches no destination but confoundment. If we only consider a place a destination if it is inhabited and only count as a mamdūḥ someone who is capable of bestowing a monetary reward, then this poem represents a journey to nowhere, but this poem, like “I Have Misjudged Time,” culminates in a ḥikma in line (6). The Man of our Times has arrived at the conclusion that, even though, with his intellect, sharp as an eagle’s eyesight, he can discern which upright heart is worthy of his love, he is as powerless to capture the love of a sound heart as a hunting bird with broken wings. To Western

77 Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Rawda, 28.
audiences, this may seem like a pessimistic moral, but it is perfectly in keeping with the pervasive sense in Arabic poetry that love is unattainable.

Lines (2)-(3) form the wine song, appropriately located between the *nasīb* and the *raḥīl*. Perhaps “anti-wine song” would be a more fitting term, since it is not wine but love that leaves the Man of our Times sleepless and disoriented. Here, as in his love of fidelity, of promises kept, and of “sound hearts,” the Man of our Times takes the moral high road. While everyone is asleep drunk, something more potent, and less morally corrupting, has a hold on the Man of our Times. It is fidelity born of that pure love accessible only to rational people, and it excludes him from the company of the sleepers. Elsewhere in *Kitāb al-Zahra* Ibn Dāwūd quotes a saying, attributed to Galen, that, “love takes place between two rational people by virtue of the affinity of their reason, but it does not take place between two fools because of the affinity of their foolishness.”78 Perhaps this is why the Man of our Times, unstrung though he may be over his hopeless situation, continues seeking out faithful friends with “sound hearts.”

Here and elsewhere in his pseudo-Bacchic verses, he draws in the minds of his readers the outlines of goblets of wine without actually saying the word *khamr* (“wine,” “alcoholic drink”). On one level, it only makes sense for the Man of our Times to turn away from his memories of the past and toward the quest at hand “when the darkness has been mingled,” since it is in accordance with poetic tradition for the *raḥīl* to begin at night. On another, he is making us imagine wine being “mingled” (َلَاخْتَطَطْ), especially since colors, especially dark colors, sometimes appear in poetry as a metonymy for wine.79 That is a

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78 Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 16.
subtle allusion compared to what he says next, that, “they are drunk on cups of somnolence,” with somnolence being one of the well-known effects of wine. It is possible that the sleepers have not been drinking at all, but as far as the lovesick Man of our Times is concerned, they might as well have been, for the fact that they are receptive to anything that might provide temporary relief from the pangs of love is sufficient to exclude them from his more perfect state of love. He then describes his own state by saying, “My intoxication is one that keeps me from sleep, and I know not whether I am coming or going.” Without mentioning wine directly, he has used the power of suggestion to create a wine song, and he has inserted it in its proper place in the qaṣīda.

In the following poem, the suggestion of wine, with all its erotic implications, is even more daring. As in the previous poem, the wine flashes in the reader’s mind like an afterimage of suffering that is beyond the soothing effects of wine.

1. I am passionately in love
   With the memory of Karkh,
   And I have no love
   Except for the one who dwells in Karkh

2. I have drunk a cup
   Of Muḥammad’s rejection;
   It has weakened my bones
   And overwhelmed my brain

3. I fear not what suffering may come
   Since I have lost him;
   Does the victim, after being slaughtered,

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80 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 305.
Fear the pain of being skinned?

As in “Where is the Path to God’s Country?”, we find the Man of our Times drunk on unrequited love, and its effects are unpleasant; the reader immediately assumes that it is that which (the Prophet) Muḥammad has forbidden Muslims to drink; because of the juxtaposition of the words, “cup” and “repulsion,” (صدود) and the name, “Muḥammad,” the reader can only think of wine. The corpus of Arabic poetry is rich with descriptions of delicious wine, pleasant gardens, rapturous music, amiable cup-companions, and comely cupbearers,81 but the Man of our Times mentions only the incapacitating effects of strong drink. To draw attention to the feeble bones and confused mind of the drunkard without mentioning any of the pleasant aspects of wine is more in keeping with a judge’s admonition than a reveler’s exhortation. The Man of our Times, like Kitāb al-Zahra, is a level-headed nadīm.

If we look more carefully into the drinking vessel we find that the substance that has impaired his body and mind is actually rejection at the hands of one “Muḥammad” who “dwells in Karkh.” It was widely accepted in ninth-century Arab culture and established early on in Kitāb al-Zahra that love is physically and mentally debilitating,82 but this is the only one of the Man of our Times poems to mention a person by name. The brevity of this poem, combined with the use of the personal name “Muḥammad”83 and the place name “Karkh,” which in `Abbāsid times was “the suburb to the south west” of Baghdaḍ,84 makes it seem that Ibn Dāwūd composed this poem for a personal acquaintance of his in order to

81 See Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, 233.
82 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 17.
83 Biographers such as al-Baghdādi, who held that Ibn Dāwūd’s beloved was called Muḥammad ibn Jāmi` or Muḥammad ibn Zukhruf, may have looked to this poem as evidence of the beloved’s identity.
84 Kennedy, Abū Nuwās, 13.
recite it in his presence or send it to him in a letter, as the exchange of verses was
standard practice among the zurafā’.

If he did not have a specific person in mind but composed this poem as a representative of that type of poetry, he could hardly have chosen a more common name for a gentleman than “Muḥammad” or a place where they were more abundant than Karkh.

The first two lines, if taken by themselves, could be understood as a jesting admonition: Muḥammad from Karkh has rejected me, and it is making me as crazy and helpless as a drunk. The first line contains conventional nasīb imagery translated into a contemporary urban setting and simple, almost conversational syntax that could easily be extemporized in a majlis. It recalls the line by Abū Tammām in which his affinity for his friend Muḥammad is so great that their hearts cannot keep secrets from each other. It is only in the line (3) that the Man of our Times reveals his identity, with a devastating hikma that interprets the preceding lines in the most pessimistic of terms.

In the following poem, we find the Man of our Time setting an example for the reader about single-hearted fidelity, for his love deters him from distractions in which other disappointed lovers find comfort.

1. كَأَنَّ رَقِيَّاً مَنْكُ يُرِئُعَيْ خَوَاطِرِي
2. فَما عَايَنُتُ عَينَائِيَ بُعَدُّكَ مَنْظِرٌ أَ
3. لَعَفَّرَكَ إِلَّا قُلْتَ قَدْ رَمَقَانِ
4. وَلَا بُذِّرْتَ مِنْ فِيّ بُعَدُّكَ مَزْحَةً
5. عَلَى الْقَلْبِ إِلَّا عَرَجَا بَعْنَانِ
6. وَلَا حُطْرَتْ مِنْ ذَكْرُ غَيْرِكَ خَطرَةٌ
7. إِذَا مَا تَسْلُّ الَّالِغَابِرُونَ عَنَّ الْهُوَى
8. وَجَذَّتْ الْوَيْلِ يُسْلِي سَوَاهُ يَشْوَقُنِي
9. عَلِيْكَ إِلَّا أَمْلَ مَكَانِي
10. وَغَفِیَتْ طَرْفِيْ عَنْهُمْ وَلَسَانِي

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85 Raven, MBD, 29-30.
86 Raven, MBD, 22.
Fidelity Keeps Watch over Me [50]

1. It is as though you have sent a spy
   To watch over my thoughts,
   And one to follow my gaze,
   And to keep track of what I say

2. Since you left me,
   Whenever I see anything
   That would offend you,
   I say, “The spies have seen me.”

3. If ever a jesting remark
   Escape my lips
   Since you have gone,
   I say, “The spies have heard me.”

4. Every time a thought
   Of someone else
   Comes to my mind,
   They pull on the reins.

5. Whereas ardent lovers divert themselves
   From their love
   By drinking wine
   Or listening to singing maidens,

6. I find that things that would console someone else
   Only increase my longing
   To be near you,
   And I grow restless of being where I am

7. Honest young men,
   I have grown tired of their company;
   I have chastely restrained my eyes from them
   And my tongue

8. Whenever my continence
   Offers me consolation,
   Just then I see you
   Everywhere I look

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Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 146.
The part of this poem that deals with wine comes as a *takhallus*, not after a *nasīb*, but after an assessment of the present that shows that Man of our Times as possessing a rare and valuable quality that would make him an ideal brother, namely self-reflection that manifests itself in self-restraint. His fidelity to the Brother keeps him from misdeeds even more effectively than a spying, scheming slanderer (*raqīb*) would do; his own conscience is worth two spies. Beyond being a fresh variation on the poetic trope of the *raqīb*, this is poem also a powerful statement about the refinement of morals, a subject more typical of *adab* than of *ghazal*. The ideal friend, the one whose role Ibn Dāwūd has sent *Kitāb al-Zahra* to model, the one whose *dīwān* will never be empty of brothers, is so far advanced in his fidelity toward his beloved friend that not only would he not want others to see him inclining toward someone else, but he would be loath even to see himself being unfaithful in thoughts, words, or deeds. This poem says nothing about the circumstances that led the Man of our Times to a situation that would require such fidelity; we do not even know if it is a matter of involuntary separation (*bayn* or *firāq*) or rejection of his overtures (*hajr*, among other terms). It does not mention an exalted past when the Man of our Times and his beloved were together; the thing to which his heart attaches (*nasīb* in its most basic meaning) is fidelity itself.

In lines (1) through (4), the Man of our Times seems to bear his predicament with resolve. It is only in the wine song, beginning in line (5) that he expresses his sorrow. The wine song is not a pleasurable memory of revelry, but a painful reminder of lost love, and the Man of our Times continues on the moral high road. The cheap thrills of carousing have no effect on him, for his is a fidelity born of that pure love accessible only to rational people, and it sets him apart from the sleepers, as *adab* sets the *adīb* apart from fools.
In this wine song in which he abstains from that which intoxicates others, the Man of our Times may be alluding to the reputation held by the real Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, that is, a pious and God-fearing man who “took Islamic law seriously.”88 In the midst of the wine song, he is sober as a judge (all puns intended). The likes of Mughulṭāī and Ibn Abi Ḥajala would have been wise to have Ibn Dāwūd recite verses like these on his deathbed, rather than the spurious verses about dark hair on white cheeks, if they had wanted to represent his chastity in a way that would satisfy those who claimed that it is unchaste to gaze at a beautiful person. He may have chosen to play up this attribute to connect him, in the mind of his audience, to his father Dāwūd ibn `Alī, the imām of the Žāhirite school of jurisprudence, who was known for his piety89 or with the ẓurafā’, the fashionable gentlemen of Baghdād, whose conduct was characterized by both high morals and worldly sophistication,90 who knew verses about wine, whether or not they drank it.

The most poignant line is line (6), since the Man of our Times who loves “sound hearts” cannot even be distracted from his love by the prospect of finding another sound heart to love. He never really cared for wine and music, with all their erotic potential. What he really loves is brotherhood, but his fidelity to the Brother addressed in this poem is so powerful that no other virtuous men, no matter how virtuous they may be, can replace him.

We may read lines (5) through (7) as taking the place of the rahīl, as the Man of our Times takes grows tired of being near the mindless fun in which lesser lovers find consolation and becomes more desperate for something to assuage his suffering. Saying, “I grow restless of being where I am,” would suggest to the audience an impending journey,

88 Raven, *MBD*, 53.
especially since he has mentioned, in the previous line, that the spies “pull on the reins.”

In this poem as in the poem, “Rejection from Muḥammad’s Hand is Like Wine” [90], the rahīl does not lead him to relief, only, eventually, to a ḥikma. They likewise bear resemblance to the rahīl in the poem, “I Have Misjudged Time” [85], since Ibn Dāwūd fashions a rahīl out of steps in a logical argument. In this poem, he eliminates possible substitutes for his beloved, each resembling the beloved more closely than the last, until he establishes that there can be no substitute. Drinking wine has never appealed to the Man of our Times, and singing girls, even though they are human companions and their knowledge of poetry and witty sayings may be extensive, are associated with a more dissolute lifestyle than the one he seeks. The Man of our Times seeks a friendship based on the joint pursuit of virtue, rather than on fleeting pleasures, but his internal raqib compels him to avoid even the brotherhood of other virtuous men, until he arrives at the conclusion that there can be no substitute for his beloved brother. As in the poem “Where is the Path to God’s Country?” [97], he does not arrive in a prosperous present, only confounded, in the throes of unfulfilled longing, but wiser. It is as though the rahīl/wine song tests the hypothesis he posits in the first four lines, and the ḥikma declares it proven.

**Kiss from an Adīb: The Man of our Times Tastes the Wine of Mujūn**

1 خَلْيَلَیِّی أَگْرَانِی مِن الشَّوْقِ وَالْهُوَی ِ وَأَخْلَطْ مِن مَآءِ الشَّارِبِ بِالْخَمْرَ
2 فَصَدَّرْ عَلی صَدَرٍ وَنَحْرٍ عَلی نَحْرٍ وَحَدْ عَلی حَدٍ وَتَغْرُ عَلی تَغْرٍ
3 يَضَلُّ خَسُودُ القَوْمِ فِینَا مَفَکَّرٌ بَخْلِی مِن المَعْشُوقِ مَنَا وَلَا يَدْرِی.

Lovers Both, Beloved Both [14]

1 My two friends,
   He has made me cleave to him
   In longing and love

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91 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 65.
And mix the water of the drinkers with wine

2 Chest to chest,
   Clavicle to clavicle,
   Cheek to cheek,
   Mouth to mouth

3 The envious one lingers,
   Thinking, speculating,
   Which of us is the beloved,
   But he knows not.

After the moralizing endeavors with which we have accompanied the Man of our Times thus far, it is will be immediately obvious to the reader that this foray into the domain of ribaldry (mujūn) is a departure from the usual tone of austerity with which Ibn Dāwūd usually represents his poetic persona. In contrast to most of the other poets in Kitāb al-Zahra, Ibn Dāwūd eschews references to the beloved’s physical beauty, as he would have us believe that his love is based entirely on a moral affinity with the beloved. This is, without question, the most ribald poem to which the pseudonym of the “Man of our Times” was ever attached, yet its purpose is consistent with his poems that we have previously examined. As bold as this poem seems in comparison to Ibn Dāwūd’s other poems, this is mujūn for a noble purpose.

His intention is to draw our attention to the reciprocity of the lovers’ relationship, and, significantly, it is appropriate here to call them both lovers. In line (1), as appropriate to contemporary ghazal, he runs through a crash course of nasīb motifs, the invocation of the two friends, the longing, and the wine song, but even here the wine (خمر) refers to the

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92 Irwin defines mujūn as, “entertaining discourse about sexual matters in which vulgarity and refinement were mixed.” (Irwin, Night, 172). Badawi considers it a form of satire; mujūn poetry was “convincing and moving” because it “generally carried a degree of awareness of the expense of spirit in a waste of shame” (Badawi, “Antecedents,” 162).
intoxication of love; there are no drinking vessels, cupbearers, or musicians; our law-abiding Man of our Times is drunk on one who is his equal. Whereas in, “I Have Misjudged Time,” he weighed the rights of friends, in line (2) of this poem, the only time in all of Kitāb al-Zahra that the Man of our Times mentions touching the object of his love, he demonstrates their symmetry by representing them as matching up to each other physically, the mujūn way, and he leaves us with the impression that the two lovers are of equal height. Line (3) tells us that the sight of the two lovers is enough to confound a jealous spy, who cannot even tell who is the lover and who is the beloved. They are equal in their zeal for pursuit of each other,⁹³ and herein lies his reason for adopting the mode of mujūn. The audience would have expected the roles of the lover and the beloved to be clearly defined and related to concepts of social hierarchy, and nowhere are these defined roles more important than in mujūn, for they provide a context in which one can enjoy irreverent humor and play with taboos without breaking them entirely. In many of the bawdy lyrics of Abū Nuwās, the object of his affections, male or female, is often a slave⁹⁴ or part of a religious minority group,⁹⁵ someone of a less privileged social status than the poet and his audience. Thus, the trope in which the lover claims that love has made him a slave to his beloved represents a poignant subversion of social roles. While Ibn Dāwūd makes reference to this trope in one of his poems,⁹⁶ he subverts it in this one; each feels what the other feels.

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⁹³ Ṣafadī says in one of the anecdotes that Ibn Dāwūd’s beloved Ibn Jāmi` used to spend money on Ibn Dāwūd, “and who has ever seen a beloved spend money on a lover?” (Ṣafadī, Al-Wāfi, 58). It is possible that that anecdote has its roots in this verse, since the sentiment is the same.
⁹⁴ See Abū Nuwās, Diwān, 7-8.
⁹⁵ Abū Nuwās, Diwān, 56.
⁹⁶ Fussār, یُحْمَدُ، مَنْ ـُ، مَنْ ـُ. (Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 43). The poem in which Ibn Dāwūd employs this trope is one that he claims to have written in response to a letter from a “brother.”
Although we would not expect to hear such *mujūn* from the Man of our Times, we would expect to hear much, in the environment in which *Kitāb al-Zahra* came to be, about two gentlemen whose affection for each other is reciprocal. The scene Ibn Dāwūd illustrates is not so different from the saying in Plato’s *Symposium* that, if the two halves of the primordial pairs could have anything they desired, they would wish to be fused back together as one.  Although another anecdote derived from the *Symposium* appears in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, it is not clear whether Ibn Dāwūd was familiar with this particular part of the *Symposium*.

Line (2) calls to mind the reciprocity Abū Tammām describes when he takes his leave of his friend Muḥammad, saying, “I have not blamed him and he has not blamed me, for thoughts have understood thoughts,” or when he praises, “one man of letters passionately in love with another.”

As he often makes reference to the conventions of the *qaṣīda*, he is alluding here to the conventions of *mujūn*. The poem seems, at first glance, to echo, but, upon further examination, to stand in counterpoint to another one in the same chapter of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, a poem by al-Ḥasan ibn Hāni’, better known as Abū Nuwās, perhaps the most famous writer of *mujūn* poetry in all of Arab civilization, in which the poet describes, in equally vivid detail, two lovers who spend the whole night kissing.

1 أَخُسُنْ مَنْ زَحْفٍ قَبْلَتَيْنَ  
   وَمِنْ تَلاَقَي كَتَبَيْنَ  
2 وَمِنْ نَزَالٍ يُمْرِهُ فَاتَ  
   بَيْنَ مُغاوِرِ عَسْكَرَيْنَ  
3 فَمَنْ قَدْ أَعْمَلَا رَضِيَاءٌ  
   وَمَصْرُ رِيقٍ بِشْفَتَيْنَ  
4 لَمْ يُطْعَعَ الْعُفْنُصَ مَنْ نَفَأَرَ  
   مَحَادِثَيْنَ مَلَازِمَيْنَ  
5 حَتَّى إِذَا الصِّبْحُ لَأَحُقَّ قَامَ  
   عَلَى وَضُوِّ مُصَلَّيْنِ  

98 Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 70.
1 More beautiful
   Than the slow progress of two tribes,
   Or the confrontation
   Between two warring armies

2 The heat of battle,
   Nimble swords,
   Each army plundering
   The other’s camp

3 Are two mouths
   Made to suck on each other,
   Slurping saliva
   From each other’s lips

4 They have not been made
   To taste the darkness in solitude,
   Conversing,
   Cleaving to one another

5 And when the morning breaks,
   They arise
   To make ablutions
   And perform the prayer

On the surface, these two poems have much in common. They are both built around a centrally-placed line about a long-lasting kiss on the mouth. They both precede the description of the kiss with conventional poetic allusions to nostalgia and follow it with a reference to the lovers’ single-minded attachment to each other and by giving the reader a panoramic view of the outside world from which the lovers have retreated into their love. In Ibn Dāwūd’s poem, a malicious onlooker lurks just outside the safety of the lovers’ embrace; in the case of Abū Nuwās, the call to the dawn prayer lies in wait just beyond the lovers’ beloved night.

The poem by the Man of our Times differs from the one by Abū Nuwās in intention and in degree of coarseness. Abū Nuwās intends to poke fun at idealized scenes, the parting
of chaste lovers as their tribes migrate, the bravery of warriors in battle, and the piety of
the believers at the dawn prayer. With the earthy, reductionist description of the passionate
kiss (two mouths kissing, rather than two lovers kissing on the mouth), Abū Nuwās
challenges his audience to question the dearest images of its imagined past. How chaste were
chaste lovers, really, how noble were the warriors, and how pious were the pious worshipers?
At least for Abū Nuwās, the expected function of mujūn is to satirize individuals or, in this
case, social mores. Ibn Dāwūd uses a similar setting to refer indirectly to that same ideal of
love to which he alluded in the first poem in this chapter, a love in which both parties show
equal dedication and fidelity to their love, where they have equal entitlements and equal
obligations, a love where the nights are filled with sincere love and virtuous behavior.

While direct reference to embracing and kissing is uncharacteristic of the high-
minded Man of our Times, his poem about the two equally passionate lovers is quite tame, as
mujūn goes. If someone were to read the Man of our Times poems independently of the rest
of Kitāb al-Zahra, this poem would stand out as remarkably profane, but it is less bold than
the one by Abū Nuwās to which it alludes. The mention of saliva is not particularly vulgar in
the context of classical Arabic poetry, but “slurping saliva from one another’s lips” is.

When Abū Nuwās mentions the migration of Bedouin tribes, the thrill of the fight and the
spoils of war, these images are imbued with erotic meaning. He asserts that spending the
night in conversation and kisses is “more beautiful” than any of these familiar poetic tropes, he means that it is more pleasurable than any of these other erotic contexts; of
all the pleasures at his disposal in the erotic smorgasbord of Arabic poetry, he chooses the

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99 Irwin, Night, ix.
100 It also happens to be an allusion to the poet’s name Hasan.
all-night tryst. Ibn Dāwūd mentions the wine and the two companions, whose traditional function is to hear the poet’s lament over his lost love, only to heighten the effect of the word “longing” (شوق).

The fact that Ibn Dāwūd, in the guise of the pseudonymous Man of our Times, wrote this poem does not make him less of a moralizing poet; it rather means that his vision of love is recognizable even when he works in a strange medium like mujūn.

If Ibn Dāwūd is able to transform the sensual kiss of mujūn poetry into a sign of the brotherhood of equals, then how much more does the Man of our Times find guidance for gentlemen in more conventionally chaste symbols?

Your Brother is Ever Faithful: The Man of our Times as ʿUdhrī Lover

It is worth examining Ibn Dāwūd’s use of the tropes of so-called ʿudhrī poetry, if only because later biographers have singled him out for his chastity and even classified him among the martyrs of love, but the similarities go beyond that. If one were to represent the adab values expressed in the introduction to Kitāb al-Zahra through the medium of love poetry, the result would inevitably look something like ʿudhrī love, if only because the Man of our Times, like the martyrs of love, appears in many and various episodes, always pursuing the same beloved.

In this chapter I use the term ʿudhrī to refer to poetry attributed to the poets who gained the reputation for lifelong devotion to a single beloved, the so-called “martyrs of love,” such as the genre’s namesake Jamīl al-ʿUdhrī who loved Buthayna, Kuthayyir who loved ʿAzza, and Ghaylān who loved Mayy, and most famously the fictional Majnūn and Laylā. Chaste love, unconsummated, if not unrequited, as the subject of entire poems, even

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101 For an argument for the chaste nature of the conduct described in this poem, see Raven (Raven, MBD, 114).
entire \textit{dīwāns}, formed an important new genre of poetry in the Umayyad period, and Ibn Dāwūd was far from being the only \textit{majlis} poet of `Abbāsid period to imitate and allude to its themes, tone, and vocabulary,\footnote{See Gruendler, \textit{Praise Poetry}, 5.} including the names of the ladies for whom these martyrs of love gave their lives. These stories pleased later generations of poets that spurious verses and anecdotes were attributed to the famous martyrs of love and compiled in some of the same anthologies that spun the tale of Ibn Dāwūd’s love martyrdom, which we discussed in the first chapter. Modern scholars have argued that, while almost all the martyrs of love were actual historical figures and practicing poets,\footnote{G. Schoeler, “Bashshār ibn Burd, Abū al-`Atāhiya, and Abū Nuwās,” in \textit{The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: `Abbasid Belles-Lettres}, 282.}

\textquote[\textit{Udhrī} poetry is the product not of bedouin Arabia, but of Empire sophistication; that it is the romantic creation of the early `Abbasid age, projected backwards in history at a time when biographies of bedouin poet-lovers were a popular form of entertainment literature in Baghdad.\footnote{A. Hamori, “Love Poetry,” 205.}]

As we shall discuss further in the following chapter, it is an essential feature of `\textit{udhrī} poetry that the lover suffer his trials in the desert.

The idea of lifelong fidelity to one’s beloved, one of the identifying features of `\textit{udhrī} love, is also one of the central tenets of Ibn Dāwūd’s vision of \textit{ikhā’}. Despite its author’s strong preference for poetry over anecdotes, \textit{Kitāb al-Zahra} does include some stories about Jamīl and Buthayna,\footnote{Ibn Dāwūd, \textit{KZ}, 368.} such as the story of Jamīl’s death from love, in order to hold up their chastity and fidelity as a good example. Even more significantly, the Man of our Times poems contain an abundance of words that are featured prominently in `\textit{udhrī} love poetry, and their original audience would have recognized this association. The word \textit{wafā’}
(`fidelity’) appears twelve times, and `ahd (‘covenant of love’) appears nineteen times. The Man of our Times seems to have a predilection for words from the root عز، from which the word `udhrī is derived, as these words appear twenty-three times in his poetry. This is ostensibly because he intends to write about blamelessness, forgiveness, and asking for pardon, since these concepts have an important place in the conduct of the ideal brother, especially if he is a judge, but the fact that this root gives us the word `udhrī gives him an additional reason to use it, even though `udhrī love is named after the poet Jamīl ibn Ma`mar al-`Udhrī, so called because of his descent from the tribe of Banū `Udhra,106 not because of his chaste, blameless conduct.

Much like the qaṣīda, `udhrī love is more easily identified by a feeling than by an indisputable set of criteria. Like the qaṣīda, the `udhrī school of love poetry began as an expression of the ethos of a particular time and place, but as its reputation grew, imitators and encyclopedists added their voices to the mournful song, until spurious verses were added to the canon,107 anecdotes overshadowed the verses themselves, and the idea of dying from love became much more essential to the concept of `udhrī love than any aspect of the poetic craft. This is of interest to us, not least, because the stories of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd that came to be remembered show heavy influence from the `udhrī phenomenon, but also because the real Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd occasionally cast the Man of our Times as an `udhrī lover.

In addition to the emphasis on chastity, fidelity, and concealing the secret of love, all of which find frequent expression in the Man of our Times poems, when Ibn Dāwūd, a self

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107 The poem in which Jamīl claims to have loved Buthayna before they were incarnate (Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 15) is likely the work of a later poet, since it accords too well with the Platonic teaching about the primordial union of lovers’ souls, which was current in ninth-century Baghdad but would have been unknown to Jamīl.
consciously urban \textit{adib} of a poet, employs a desert setting, it is often in the `\textit{udhrī} spirit. This is to say, the desert does not represent nostalgia so much as the lover’s lot to wander, inconsolable, until he meets his fate of death.\textsuperscript{108}

This poem uses the `\textit{udhrī} trope of the forlorn wanderer to highlight the virtue of fidelity.

\begin{quote}
\begin{align*}
1 & \text{بَعْدُ لَمَّا قَرَبَ الْدِّيْارُ بَنَافِعٍ} \\
2 & \text{وَلَيْسَ غَرِيمَةً مَنْ تَنَاءَتْ دِيَارَهُ} \\
3 & \text{وَمَنْ يُعَزْتَرُ والْأَلْفُ رَاعٌ لِّمَعْلُودِهِ} \\
\end{align*}
\end{quote}

My Covenant is My Country [45]

1 By your life!  
Being close to home  
Does no good to a lover  
Without the bond of love with the one he loves

2 He who is far from home  
Is not a stranger;  
Rather, he who is treated cruelly  
Is a stranger

3 He who is far from home,  
While his beloved is faithful to their covenant,  
Even when he is at the ends of the earth,  
Is nearby indeed

The motif of the traveler asking the abodes is older than the `\textit{udhrī} school of poetry; indeed Ibn Qutayba mentions it among the characteristics of the pre-Islamic \textit{nasīb}.\textsuperscript{110} Ibn Dāwūd does not even mention this trope directly in this poem; he rather casts the brief poem, which consists of three \textit{hikam} such as might be found in combination with each other in a work of \textit{adab}, against the backdrop of the lovelorn wayfarer arriving at the abodes. `\textit{Udhrī} poetry

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{108} Irwin describes the `\textit{udhrī} poets as, “desert poets who devoted themselves to the intensely serious theme of chaste and doomed love” (Irwin, \textit{Night}, 56.)

\textsuperscript{109} Ibn Dāwūd, \textit{KZ}, 142.

\textsuperscript{110} Ibn Qutayba, \textit{Shīr}, 31.}
became famous as a series of anecdotes interspersed with verses, sometimes aphoristic,\textsuperscript{111} and the readers can imagine, based on what else they have read about the exploits of the Man of our Times, how he has arrived at this conclusion.

The language of this poem is evocative of `udhrī poetry, beginning with the oath لعمرك ("By your life!"). `Udhrī lovers are sometimes depicted as expressing the intensity of their emotion by prefacing their statements with oaths, such as when Majnūn Laylā says فوا الله ثم وَلَدَهُ أَبِيَّا إِنَّا لِبَيْحِيْلة ("By her father’s life! She is ungenerous indeed!")\textsuperscript{112} and ما ذئني ("By God! And then, by God! I cannot stop wondering what I might have done wrong!").\textsuperscript{113} The Man of our Times mentions the beloved “keeping the covenant” (رَاعُ لِعِيدهِ), which is what separates indelible `udhrī love from the daring amorous adventures of the likes of Waddāḥ al-Yaman, who visited his beloved “after her husband had fallen asleep, his head pillowed on her hand,”\textsuperscript{114} and the jesting flirtation typically depicted in wine poetry.

What connects this poem to the larger quest of the Man of our Times in the second half of line (2), where he says, “he who is treated cruelly (يَجَفَى) is a stranger.” In other poems, such as “Where has our Brotherhood Gone?” \textsuperscript{[36]}, the Man of our Times complains of his brother’s cruelty (جَفَا);\textsuperscript{115} he considers it, like breaking covenants, a violation of the code of brotherhood. Here he eschews his usual legalistic stance and says that cruelty on the part of the beloved would consign him to a fate like that of Majnūn Laylā.

In this poem, the desert provides a dramatic setting for the Man of our Times’ passion.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 119. This is an aphoristic couplet by Jamīl al-`Udhrī.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 47.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 137.
\textsuperscript{114} Hamori, “Love Poetry,” 204.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 125.
The Blazing Heat of Love [70]

1 Love called out to me,
   When the riders were sleeping,
   And the sun was blazing
   In the midsummer

2 The heat haze was blazing fiercely,
   The soul was about to depart,
   Opinion was dissenting,
   And death was resolute

3 The wilderness was dusty and desolate
   As far as the eye can see,
   As though its features
   Were trembling in the mirage

4 Obeying the command of love,
   I kept waking them up,
   Though most of them,
   Were half-awake, not asleep

5 Whenever I said, “Arise!”
   One of them would say,
   “This one has gone mad.
   Leave him alone; stay away from him.”

6 They know what they felt
   On that hot day
   When they set off,
   But they do not know what I feel

7 The heat of separation,

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\[\text{Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 208-209.}\]
Compounded by rejection
Is a heat that burns
Only on the inside

The moment that the lovers separated is a standard station in the qaṣīda, but to devote an entire poem to that moment is the province of `udhrī poetry. The audience would have remembered scenes of lovers bidding each other farewell, weeping over their impending separation. Instead, the Man of our Times is in an even worse state than the lover who knows that his beloved will soon be far away but will abide by their `ahd. Rejection (hajr) on the part of the one he loves, a problem that has plagued the Man of our Times from the outset, has driven him to distraction before the caravan has even set off. He cannot even sleep through the mid-day heat, and his companions think he has lost his mind. In this desert scene, far from the majlis in Baghdad, we recognize the Man of our Times because that which torments him is his frustrated search for brotherhood. As hot as the sun may be when it is in Gemini at the cusp of Cancer, that is, near the summer solstice, what is more grievous to him is that his beloved’s feelings have abandoned the Man of our Times (الروح منصرم) because of a disagreement (الرأي مختلف). He gives his desire for affinity with the Brother a new urgency by comparing the physical hardships of the desert with the emotional pain of disagreeing with a friend.

`Udhrī love stories inevitably have a catastrophic ending, with the lover languishing and dying from love. Both Majnūn Laylā and Jamīl are said to have been exiled because of their love and to have died in exile, and al-Baghdādī and those who came after him told of a similar fate for Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, except that the setting was Baghdad, and, rather

117 For example, Jamīl says فيا خُسْتَنَهَا إِذ يُضَلُّ الدُّمَحُ فَخُذْهَا وَإِذ تُقْرِي الدُّمَحُ مَا الأُنَامُل (Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 33.)
118 See Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 93.
119 Irwin, Night, 57.
than being a deranged stranger, Ibn Dāwūd died in the company of his friend Niftawayh the grammarian, who gave the impression that he knew Ibn Dāwūd’s beloved and was familiar with what had happened between them. In this poem, the Man of our Times is fated with the madness and exile of the original martyrs of love, but he still manages to arrive at a ḥikma.

The Abodes Gave me no Consolation [74]

1 I pass among the abodes
   Like a stranger,
   Asking everyone I meet
   About the one I love

2 It does no good
   To stop at the empty cauldron
   And the ruined campsite
   When you are weak with sadness

3 I tied up my mount,
   But the abodes did not answer me,
   And they certainly did not
   Console my weeping

4 I said to them,
   “Your silence is wondrous indeed,
   But it would be more wondrous
   If you would answer me.”

5 I lamented to the abodes,
   But they brought me no relief,

120 Al-Baghdādī, TB, 5:262.
121 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 219-220.
Rather, they increased my longing
To see my beloved’s face.

6 Who will rescue a man
   From the brink of death,
   When his affliction is the work
   Of one who could heal him?

Even though the Man of our Times is “like a stranger” and addressing abodes as if he were a madman, he knows, at least by the end of the poem, that this is no satisfactory solution. He is not quite as mad as Majnūn who lived out his days wandering in the desert, addressing everything he saw as Laylā. Furthermore, he passes among the abodes “like a stranger;” he may not actually be in exile. Perhaps lamenting to the abodes is just another unsatisfactory distraction, like the ones he tried in the poem, “Fidelity Keeps Watch over Me” [50]. Just as carousing does not suit the Man of our Times, neither does going mad for Love. He is still faithful to his purpose, the purpose of Kitāb al-Zahra, to be a nadīm who instructs his friend in the ways of brotherhood. We might even read this poem as a continuation of, “Fidelity Keeps Watch over Me,”122 as the next station of the quest. Wine, music, and the companionship of another brother do not console the Man of our Times; he rather sees his beloved Brother everywhere he looks. Thus, he tries to console himself as the `udhrī lovers do, by lamenting to the abodes, but this does not help either. Inconsolable as he is, he knows what has brought him to this state and what can relieve him of it. He ends with a rhetorical question meant to admonish the Brother, not the abodes.

We have shown in this chapter how Ibn Dāwūd has used the Man of our Times poems to dramatize his views on friendship and brotherhood as he explained them in the

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122 It is not actually possible that Ibn Dāwūd wrote this poem and “Fidelity Keeps Watch over Me” [50] as one poem, because they have different end rhymes, and the adherence to monorhyme in Arabic poetry was almost universal in Ibn Dāwūd’s time.
introduction. Whether the tone of the poem is lighthearted, aphoristic, or melancholic, the Man of our Times operates in service of the same values of fidelity and justice, and often through the same medium of rational argument, toward truths that will lead the reader on the path to brotherhood. Godspeed you, Man of our Times. May your brothers never be absent from your dīwān.
Chapter Four  
I shall not Exaggerate in Anything I Say: Some Stylistic Features of the Man of our Times Poems

Part of the beauty of Arabic poetry, as well as the challenge of understanding it, lies in its reliance on allusions, sometimes quite subtle, to other poems and to the intellectual issues of its times. In the previous chapter, we saw Ibn Dāwūd cast his pseudonymous alter ego the Man of our Times as various characters from the poetic tradition, a heroic desert traveler on a purely rhetorical quest, a joyless cup-companion, a ribald jester, an even a martyr of love. If we extend Gruendler’s comparison of “poems to fitted garments,”¹ thereby indulging the infatuation the ʿurafā’ felt for fine clothing,² then the focus of this chapter is not the characters the Man of our Times plays but the costumes he wears in order to portray them, that is to say, the stylistic techniques that allow the Man of our Times poems to achieve their rhetorical purpose.

In the course of this chapter, we shall discuss Ibn Dāwūd’s use of simple, prosaic diction, place names, and grammatical shifts in the Man of our Times poems. In order to understand the effect of Ibn Dāwūd’s use of these stylistic features, we must take into account the dynamic relationship among ʿAbbāsid poets, poems, and audiences. Westerners may have heard that poetry in Baghdad at the turn of the tenth century, in the society which Ibn Dāwūd inhabited, played a role in everything from politics to entertainment to cultural identity and even an auxiliary role in the religious sciences; that is to say, it was as much a part of social life as, say, clothing, with all its associations of individual personal expression and of identification with groups. The tendency of individual lines of poetry to achieve fame apart from the poems in which they were originally composed, which phenomenon we will

¹ Gruendler, Praise Poetry, 19.  
² Raven, KZ, 30.
discuss momentarily, combined with the tendency of Western scholars to pay attention only to the poets with the most towering reputations has led to the perpetuation of an inaccurate perception of the way in which poetry was composed and received in Ibn Dāwūd’s time. Recently, Gruendler has called into question the way that Western scholars have traditionally viewed the social function of Arabic poetry and drawn attention to how the sophistication of audiences in the `Abbāsid period affected the way poetry was composed and exchanged. It is worth considering the social functions of poetry in more detail in order to see where the Man of our Times poems fit in this intricate tapestry.

`Abbāsid poets, no matter how daring their innovations, never lost sight of their relationship to the poets and poems that had preceded them, even to the extent of giving the impression that poetry referred to, “pre-existing poetry rather than reality.” There was an unwritten rule that poets ought not stray too far from precedents of subject matter and diction, at the risk of sounding unpoetic, and the poet himself or a sympathetic scholar of poetry might defend his innovations by pointing to a precedent in the poetic canon and insist that his innovations were a matter of degree rather than of adding a truly new element to poetry. The poet and critic Ibn al-Mu`tazz (861-908) used this argument to defend the use of a whole host of rhetorical features, collectively known as badi` and including everything from paronomasia to metaphor, which were ubiquitous in `Abbāsid poetry. Thus, although Abū Nuwās was the first poet to write long poems on the subject of hunting, even

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3 Gruendler, Praise Poetry, 6.
4 See S. Stetkevych, Abū Tammām, 83.
5 Badawi, “Antecedents,” 162.
6 Irwin, Night, 143.
employing the more formal meters traditionally reserved for the *qaṣīda*, one could not claim that his doing so was alien to the poetic tradition, as references to the oryx hunt are found even in pre-Islamic poetry.\(^9\)

In Ibn Dāwūd’s time and the half century immediately preceding, we see Arabic poetry remaining connected to the traditional role from which it derived its prestige, meanwhile adapting to the realities of an urban, ethnically diverse society and its intellectual life. As Suzanne Stetkevych has demonstrated, the adaptation of Arabic poetry to an urban and, more importantly, literate society meant that less effort had to be reserved for memorization and the composition of easily memorized verse, and this in turn led to the rise of a “metapoetry,”\(^10\) in which poets showcased their knowledge of philology and made self-conscious use of intertextuality. Thus, the *qaṣīda* or formal ode remained the most highly regarded poetic form, and it retained its traditional sequence of themes, with some variation, as well as its role in connecting a poet to a patron, although by the `Abbāsid period, the patrons of poets had come to comprise viziers and other wealthy notables in addition to the caliphs and princes who had received praise in poetry in earlier times. The ninth-century *qaṣīda*, like its pre-Islamic ancestor, was written to be read once on a ceremonious occasion, before a large audience, and the measure of its success was how well its intended audience, particularly the patron to whom it was addressed, received it,\(^11\) not how frequently individual lines from it were quoted in someone else’s *majlis* years in the future. These poems were long, sometimes more than three hundred lines, and the ones that survive, at least, are the work of professional poets who pursued no other vocation than writing poetry for formal

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occasions. Abū Tammām, in his qaṣīda on the siege of Amorium, compares the poem to a bride being presented to her bridegroom in a wedding procession. I prefer the comparison of poems to garments; the formal qaṣīda is like a socialite’s wedding dress, prohibitively expensive, which takes months to fashion in all its detail, to be worn once on a once-in-a-lifetime occasion.

Even in poems written for less formal purposes, an archaic writing style similar to that of the pre-Islamic poets was still considered, in Ibn Dāwūd’s time, a way of remaining true to the aesthetic of Arabic poetry. Most patrons in the ninth century regarded this style of writing, along with the use of rare words (gharīb) alien to everyday speech, as the appropriate level of diction for the formal qaṣīda. We shall discuss the reasons for choosing to employ elevated diction or a simpler register later in this chapter.

If we may contrast archaic language with the contemporary idiom, we may also contrast the language of the desert with the language of the cities. A major source of the vocabulary of early poetry, which Ibn Dāwūd’s urban contemporaries came to regard as rare and obscure, was terms for the wildlife of the desert and the practices of the desert people, of which city dwellers would not ordinarily have had occasion to speak. Much of the work of the poets of `Abbāsid Baghdad takes place in a fictional desert setting, and when urban poets evoked the hallmarks of desert poetry, the traces of abandoned campsites, the campfires in the distance, the camels and oryx and sand grouse and tamarisk trees, and especially the hills and valleys and deserts called by their individual proper names, they were asserting their

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connection to the ancient poetic heritage. By casting himself in the role of the desert traveler, the urban poet is asserting that he is still, in essence, a poet, as the traveler was one of the pre-Islamic poet’s roles. By contrast, explicitly setting a poem in the city was a bold, even intentionally hubristic celebration of the present. While many students, especially poets in training, spent time in the desert to learn the language of the Bedouins, which was considered more archaic as it was free of urban non-Arab influences, the desert in which most `Abbāsid poetry takes place is a fictional one.

We can go no farther without mentioning a major development that influenced `Abbāsid poetry, both by its physical presence and by the ideas that circulated there. This was the majlis, the gathering of learned men. The majlis was, among other things, a venue for poetry. As we shall discuss in more detail later on, all educated people in Arab-Islamic society in Ibn Dāwūd’s time were educated, to varying degrees, in poetry. The majlis was a place of exchange of ideas, and there poetry was exchanged, not in the context of poetry contests or formal rivalries among poets, but purely in the spirit of conviviality. The poems quoted in the majlis were shorter than the formal qaṣīda and tended to be light-hearted and easily set to music, dealing with love or wine in their more entertaining aspects, or aphoristic, like poetic epitomes, sometimes improvised, of arguments under discussion in that night’s majlis. The measure of their success was how often they were quoted in subsequent majālis and appeared in books of adab where poetry and prose mingled, like they did in the majlis. This was the poetry not of ceremonious occasions but of social gatherings, not of dazzling linguistic feats but of simple elegance, not of patronage but of companionship and,

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16 Lyons, Identification, 4.
17 Gruendler, Praise Poetry, 8.
yes, brotherhood. If poems be garments, the majlis poems were less like a bridal gown at a fairy-tale wedding and more like our Sunday best.

While Gruendler refers to “dilettante poet-scribes”\textsuperscript{18} composing “mediocre poetry,”\textsuperscript{19} she recognizes the widely varied levels of skill among them and gives credit to the denizens of the majlis for creating another venue in which poetry could flourish, one with its own particular tastes and ideals. The amateur poets of the majlis were not bound to the whims of patrons; they rather wrote for their own enjoyment and to entertain their peers. Their less recondite writing style was shaped by the fact that many of them were, by profession, writers of prose.\textsuperscript{20} We may include in this category our own Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, the qādī of Baghdad, author of some fourteen treatises on jurisprudence,\textsuperscript{21} who never set foot in the deserts of Najd except when he traveled there for a short time to study poetry.\textsuperscript{22}

It is more useful to think of official poetry and majlis poetry than of official poets and majlis poets, as many poets do not fit easily into one or the other category. It was not a terribly rare occurrence for an amateur poet to write highly complex poetry or to try his hand at the genres typically associated with court poetry;\textsuperscript{23} we have seen in the previous chapter how the Man of our Times poems demonstrate a high level of sophistication and a wide-ranging knowledge of poetics. Likewise, the dīwān of virtually any professional poet of the `Abbāsid period will include informal, occasional poems, some as brief as a single line, especially when poets acted in the role of nadīm (“boon companion”) to rulers\textsuperscript{24} and would

\textsuperscript{18} Gruendler, \textit{Praise Poetry}, 7.
\textsuperscript{19} Gruendler, \textit{Praise Poetry}, 8.
\textsuperscript{21} Şafadī, \textit{al-Wāfi}, 58.
\textsuperscript{22} Raven, \textit{KZ}, 25.
\textsuperscript{24} Gruendler, \textit{Praise Poetry}, 11.
have had occasion to sit with them in a majlis of friends, to converse and versify about drinking and love. The prosaic diction that was the lingua franca of the majlis is also found in the long and formal poems of professional poets from Bashshār ibn Burd (95/714-167/783)25 to Abū al-`Atāhiya (130/748-210/845)26 to Abū Nuwās.

`Abbāsid poetry is, in general, the poetry of ideas, and we find as many species of ideas in the urban poetry of Ibn Dāwūd’s time as we find species of plants and animals in the poetry of the desert poets, for the poets’ mission was no longer simply to recall the names of the creatures and places of the natural world, but rather to make sense of abstract concepts. Thus Ibn al-Mu`tazz counted among the features of the muḥdath (“modern,” that is, `Abbāsid) style al-madhhab al-kalāmī, or imbuing poetry with “rational argumentation” and “dialectical mannerism.”27 We may see this principle at work in “I Have Misjudged Time” [85], where the Man of our Times builds an argument for why he should not forgive the Brother, on the grounds that the brother’s behavior was contrary to the nature of brothers, by presenting hypothetical examples of things behaving in ways contrary to their nature. Likewise, in “Fidelity Keeps Watch over Me” [50], the Man of our Times effectively makes a case for referring to fidelity as a spy (raqīb) by demonstrating that it does all of the things that spies do, namely preventing the lover from deeds, words, and thoughts that would threaten his relationship with the Brother.

The mass migration of ideas from other disciplines into poetry only serves to underscore the vitality of these disciplines and their resident ideas in Ibn Dāwūd’s world. Logic was not the only science to leave its imprint on `Abbāsid poetry. The development of

Arabic philology, and its logical extension, the systematic study of Arabic poetry, played a major role in shaping the tastes and predilections of the muḥdath poets. If the `Abbāsid period saw the patronage of the so-called foreign sciences, it also witnessed the patronage of the scientific study of the Arabic language. In some instances the incentive to compile pre-Islamic poetry and interpret its rare words came from the `Abbāsid caliphs themselves;\(^\text{28}\) it was in fact in the `Abbāsid period that most surviving pre-Islamic poetry was first committed to writing. Arabic philology was inseparable from the intellectual life of Ibn Dāwūd’s time; it had to do with Muslims studying the Qur’an, with non-Arabs becoming proficient in Arabic, with court poets crafting dazzling verses and scribes composing felicitous prose. Perhaps the ancient poetic tradition loomed so large in the `Abbāsid consciousness, precisely because it, like hadīth or logic or any of various other branches of knowledge, was a field in which educated Muslims were educated, because its debates were part of the collective intellectual and political frame of reference.

Philologists and scholars of poetry do not represent a discrete category, separate from professional poets or majlis poets; some belonged to each category, and some wrote no surviving poetry at all. Khalaf al-ʿAḥmar (733-796) is most famous for compiling pre-Islamic poetry, but the accusations that he forged some of it\(^\text{29}\) speak to his skill as a poet in his own right. Both Abū Tammām and al-Buḥṭūrī are more famous for their original poetic compositions than their anthologies of verses by earlier poets, but they both compiled such anthologies, both titled the ʿHamāsa.\(^\text{30}\) Ibn Dāwūd’s friend Nifṭawayh, famous as a grammarian, does not seem to have been much of a poet at all. If all we had before us were

\(^{29}\) Irwin, Night, 27.
\(^{30}\) Raven, MBD, 95-97.
the Man of our Times verses, we would be left to guess about Ibn Dāwūd’s familiarity with
the science of poetry, but instead we have hundreds of pages of Kitāb al-Zahra, in which Ibn
Dāwūd recorded the works of great poets, some of which he likely learned by reading the
above-mentioned anthologies, in addition to numerous occasional verses he probably heard
in the majlis. The verses in the latter category are often quoted anonymously, with
attributions like, “someone else said,” “a man of letters said,” or, “he did well who
said.”

Thus, by virtue of his studies, Ibn Dāwūd was an heir of the official poetry of former
times and of his own, but life experience made him a son of the majlis. We turn our attention
now to how Ibn Dāwūd’s choices of diction and use of place names and the dramaturgy of
grammatical shifts, by turns, transport the Man of our Times to the mythical deserts of the
imagined past and keep him anchored in the here and now, sober as a judge in an all too
familiar majlis.

**The Language of Brothers: Prosaic Diction**

Upon first reading, many of the Man of our Times verses sound less like poetry than
like particularly well-written sentences of prose. As we have discussed above, it may be
because Ibn Dāwūd was, by profession, a writer of prose. In the second chapter of this
dissertation, we have discussed how Ibn Dāwūd, in composing the Man of our Times poems,
has done in poetry what others have achieved in prose. Our concern here is the implications
of prosaic diction when Ibn Dāwūd employs it in verse.

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32 Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 258, 267, 270, etc.
33 Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 261, etc.
34 Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 289, etc.
The language of the majlis in Baghdad and other urban centers in the Islamic world in Ibn Dāwūd’s time was a particular form of *al-`arabiyya al-fuṣḥā*, theoretically the same Arabic language as that of the Qur’ān and of the pre-Islamic Arabs, the same in grammatical structure, but different in its applications. It was distinct from the colloquial Arabic of Baghdad or anywhere in the Arab world, although, it was believed, closer to the language of the Bedouins than of the city folk. It was the language of the Arabic prose of the master prose stylists such as al-Jāḥiz (170/776-255/868-869)\(^{35}\) and Ibn al-Muqaffa (103/721-139/757)\(^{36}\), as well as of the civil servants, called *kuttāb* (“scribes”), who populated the majālis where much of the less formal poetry flourished. The question of whether to speak of prosaic poetry or poetic prose becomes moot when we consider that some of the master poets of the `Abbāsid period wrote most or all of their poetry in this idiom and that some sentences of Ibn al-Muqaffa’s prose conform to the Arabic poetic meters.\(^{37}\) It is speakable *fuṣḥā*, the eloquence of polite society within reach of educated men.

Another reason to adopt this simpler diction is to distance oneself from the vanity of the ruling elite and its boasting, archaizing poets, to trade showmanship for gravitas. The poet most associated with adopting the unadorned style is Abū al-`Atāhiya, known for his poems on asceticism (*zuhdiyyāt*). What better way to represent turning away from the world than to eschew the idiom of the pagan poets and the pretense of those who imitated him. Abū al-`Atāhiya himself said that his writing style did not suit the tastes of kings and *rāwīs*\(^{38}\) (professional reciters of poetry).

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\(^{38}\) Badawi, “Antecedents,” 156.
Thus, the prosaic diction of most of the Man of our Times poems gives the Man of our Times a valuable asset for his mission to instruct the reader to be a more virtuous brother, namely, lack of pretense. He represents the true friend with whom secrets are safe, the one who tells unpleasant truths even as others continue to dispense flattery, the one who reveals his true counsel to the brother instead of trying to keep up appearances in front of him.

Connecting to this lack of pretense is a certain verisimilitude in the Man of our Times poems; the Man of our Times seems more concerned with appealing to the Brother’s sense of reason and justice and to the social conventions of educated gentlemen than to the literary conventions of poetry. Poems free of the hyperbole and self-aggrandizement so prevalent in classical Arabic poetry would have stood out to the audience as something taking place in the same world the audience inhabited, not the idealized world of the formal qaṣīda. For the Man of our Times, simplicity is the idiom of sincerity.

The message of fidelity to one’s friends comes across even more clearly and even more faithfully to the statement of ethical purpose in the introduction to Kitāb al-Zahra, in poems employing simple diction and avoiding poetic tropes than it does when Ibn Dāwūd has the Man of our Times assume more stylized poetic poses. Consider “Do Not Abandon your Brother” [3], how concisely and directly it expresses its author’s sentiment, and how it refers to Ibn Dāwūd’s concern for the meanings of the words “brother” (akh) and “friend” (khalīl), both of which appear frequently in the Man of our Times verses.

“Do Not Abandon Your Brother” [3] bears the marks of the majlis in its brevity and its lack of references to characters or setting. It may be an occasional couplet, improvised in response to something someone else said in the majlis. It is an aphorism; it could be
dispensed as a piece of advice by itself or be used to punctuate a speech or a letter. To compose an aphoristic couplet that maintains its simplicity and frankness is no great feat, and Kitāb al-Zahra abounds with noteworthy remarks of similar length made in verse by nameless poets, but even the following poem, among the longest of the Man of our Times poems, contains hardly a single attribute of poetic artifice.

 يا مَتْ قَبِلْكَ طَالَ الحُزْنَ والأَسفُ
وَانْتُ عَنِي رَحْيُ الْبَالِ مَنْحَرَفُ
فَلَسَ فِي عِنْدِي الْيَوْمِ مَنْصُرْفَ
فَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا لِي عِنْدِكَ مَنْصُرْفٍ
أَلْمُ يَكُنْ كَمْدُودًا أَنْ لَسْتَ أَنْتَصِفُ
طُولُ النَّحْنِينَ وَعِينَ دُمُعُها يَكْفُ
فَالآنَ مِنْ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُغْرَى بِهِ التَّلْفُ
وَلَيْسَ فِي قَبْلِهَا مِنْ شَكَرٍ هَا حَلْفٍ
إِنَّ التَّذَلِّلَ فِي حُكْمِ الْيَوْمِ شَرْفُ
وَلَا أَقُولُ لِشَيْءٍ قِلْتُهُ شَرْفًا

My Heart is Humble [13]

1 May I die before you!
Long have sadness and grief lingered,
And my longing is greater
Than I can describe

2 My heart inclines to you,
Even though you have abandoned me,
But you hard-heartedly
Turn away

3 Even though today you turn away
From our brotherhood,
God knows,
I will never turn away from you

4 Suppose that I have confessed publicly

That I am not entirely delirious with passion,
But is not the reason for my sadness
That my love for you is not merely half-hearted?

5 How many times I have lied to my heart!
But my lies were exposed
By never-ending longing
And eyes that incessantly shed tears

6 If you forgive me
For wrongs I committed in the past
Then do it now,
Before death is drawn to me

7 By God! By God!
My soul has become exhausted,
And it has no more thanks
Left to give

8 Longing has humbled my heart,
And it confesses:
To be humbled for the sake of love
Is an honor

9 Do as you see fit;
I shall not address you in enmity,
And I shall not exaggerate
In anything I say

This poem contains few stylistic flourishes, and the ones it does contain would not be out of place in prose writing. We might say that the Man of our Times fulfills the promise he makes in line (9), that he will not exaggerate in anything he says. As we shall discuss in further detail later, it does not move from one scene to another and address various interlocutors; instead, it presents the persona’s ideas in the same sequence as if he were saying it to the Brother in private or writing them to him in a letter, as though the Brother himself were the real intended audience. The Man of our Times does not play on the audience’s memories of their own lost loves by describing how beautiful his friendship with
the Brother once was, as he does in the nasīb sections of poems like, “I Have Misjudged Time” [85], but, instead, the pathos of the opening lines is rooted entirely in the present, as he complains of his suffering as a plea for forgiveness from the Brother who has turned away from their friendship, the same Brother, fictitious though the may be, whom Ibn Dāwūd addresses in the introduction to Kitāb al-Zahra. It begins with a duʿāʾ (“prayer” or “invocation of blessing”),⁴⁰ “May I die before you!” which is similar in word choice and identical in spirit to the adʿiyya (plural of duʿāʾ) that begin the introduction to Kitāb al-Zahra, most notably, “May He offer me, in ransom for you, as a victim of the vicissitudes and send me to meet death before you, leaving you alive.”⁴¹ Such adʿiyya are not the exclusive province of poetry, but rather, a standard way to begin a book of adab⁴² or a speech in the majlis of a patron.⁴³

Lines (2) and (8) contain instances of tībāq, the occurrence of a pair of antonyms in the same line;⁴⁴ line (2) contrasts “inclining toward” the brother (munʿaṭif) with “turning away” (munharif), and line (8) contrasts “being humbled” (tadhallul) with “honor” (sharaf) in a near approximation of tībāq, as these are lexical antonyms but not grammatically parallel. While tībāq is one of the most frequently occurring and immediately identifiable features of `Abbāsid poetry, its application is likewise not limited to poetry. The examination of opposites was virtually ubiquitous in `Abbāsid thought; the ninth century saw the rise of disputation (munāzara) literature, in which authors discussed the relative merits of

⁴⁰ Gruendler, Praise Poetry, xv.
⁴¹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 1.
⁴² Raven, MBD, 100.
⁴³ For example, “May God grant you long life for the sake of the people of learning, and may He grant long life, in you, to the things they seek” (Abū Ḥāyyān a-Tawḥīdī, Mukhtārāt min al-Imtāʾ wa-l-Muʿānasa, ed. Jawdat Fakhr al-Dīn [Beirut: Dār al-Manāhil, 1989], 45).
⁴⁴ Gruendler, Praise Poetry, xviii.
antithetical things, whether the author asserts the superiority of one over the other or attempts to reconcile them. Hardly a work of ʿAbbāsid literature, whether poetry or prose, is free of the awareness of antitheses, of the idea that every argument awaits a rebuttal, the desert or the city, Arabic or foreign languages, received truth or independent judgment, a primordial universe or a created one. Ibn Dāwūd’s engagement with antitheses (Ibn Dāwūd refers to this concept as ʿidd or muḍādda) goes beyond the instances of ʿibāq in this poem, as he examines opposing principles more extensively elsewhere in Kitāb al-Zahra. The fourth and fifth chapters of Kitāb al-Zahra present contrasting views on revealing one’s love to the beloved.

The Majlis of Brotherhood and the Desert of Ideas: Places and Place Names

To one encountering classical Arabic poetry for the first time, the description of the desert is one of the most immediately striking features, and the frequent occurrence of proper names of places in the Arab lands is among the things that makes it difficult for readers, even native speakers of Arabic, to understand, unless they are sufficiently versed in the lore surrounding Arabic poetry. The proper names are not only of cities and large regions likely to be familiar to people from outside the Arabian Peninsula, although pre-Islamic poetry sometimes makes reference to such world-famous locations as Jerusalem and the river Euphrates, but include the names of individual mountains and hills, sand dunes, valleys, water sources, and fertile plains, and among the endeavors of the ninth-century compilers of

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45 Irwin, Night, 84-85.
46 Raven, MBD, 110.
47 Raven, MBD, 110.
48 Lyons, Identification, 5.
ancient poetry was identifying the locales mentioned in the works of the ancient poets.\textsuperscript{49} To make matters more complicated, some place names, such as the “crested dune” Liwā and the river `Aqīq have never been identified with any degree of certainty with any physical location.\textsuperscript{50}

For the pre-Islamic poets, the topographic allusions served to call to mind places familiar to their audience, especially if we consider that most of the place-names in the \textit{dīwān} of any given pre-Islamic poet refer to places within his tribal lands,\textsuperscript{51} places that would have been intimately familiar to his audience. It is not as if I, as we sit here in Washington, D.C., were to pretend that I had passed through Baghdad with my two companions, but rather, if I spoke of saying farewell to my beloved at Dupont Circle. The evocation of locations particular to one’s own tribe also added to the feeling of tribal pride which was so central to the poetic enterprise in pre-Islamic times,\textsuperscript{52} to say nothing of the more practical endeavor of a pre-literate society preserving knowledge of its natural environment.\textsuperscript{53} Later poets were free from these more practical considerations,\textsuperscript{54} especially after the early ninth century, at which point much pre-Islamic poetry was preserved in writing, and they evoked these same places in imitation of their poetic forebears, one of the effects was that it called to mind an idealized past of pride and heroism.

In the hands of Ibn Dāwūd’s contemporaries, the desert and its named locations took on new meaning. If references in pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry to places where the

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item Lyons, \textit{Identification}, 6.
\item J. Stetkevych, \textit{Zephyrs of Najd}, 111-114.
\item Lyons, \textit{Identification}, 6.
\item Lyons, \textit{Identification}, 6.
\item Irwin, \textit{Night}, 2.
\item S. Stetkevych, \textit{Abū Tammām}, 106.
\end{thebibliography}
poet had alighted long ago, and of which the audience had personal memories, evoked nostalgia for a past that never was, then how much more so in muhdath poetry, when that past is so obviously imaginary? Many `Abbāsid poems were set in entirely fictional deserts, although that did not stop a critic from complaining about Abū Tammām’s inaccurate descriptions of the plant and animal species of the desert.\textsuperscript{55} To employ the desert setting was to conform to the standard set by the ancient poets and to claim their prestige for oneself, even if one did not imitate their archaic diction. If a reference to a place in an ancient poem made its audience imagine that place, then the mention of the same place in a muhdath poem made its audience imagine that earlier poem. Through desert references, a poet could adopt the persona of the pre-Islamic heroes or lovesick `udhrī poets. We have seen the Man of our Times do this in “The Blazing Heat of Love” [70], where he borrows from the `udhrī poets not only their madness but also their heat haze and their dusty wilderness.

By contrast, a poet could cast the city as the site of a glorious present and even of a rejection of traditional values. The most famous example is the qaṣīda in which Abū Nuwās asserts that abandoned campsites hold no sentimental value for him and then goes on to describe the urban tavern to which his heart attaches,\textsuperscript{56} but the specifically urban setting can be found in much `Abbāsid poetry, especially in poetry suited to the majlis. In “Rejection from Muḥammad’s Hand is Like Wine” [90], the line in which he says that “a cup of Muḥammad’s rejection” made him drunk sketches an outline of wine, but the mention of Karkh suggests the entire genre of `Abbāsid khamriyyāt (Bacchic poetry).

\textsuperscript{55} S. Stetkevych, \textit{Abū Tammām}, 60.
\textsuperscript{56} Irwin, \textit{Night}, 123.
It was possible for poets to give the impression of a desert or urban setting even by making only vague references to it. The middle section of “I Have Misjudged Time” [85], the raḥīl of ideas, is able to suggest a desert setting without directly mentioning the desert or anything that can be found there exclusively. The succession of scenarios followed by their dismissal as absurd only creates the impression that the Man of our Times is traveling across something, and the reader is left to fill in the gaps with the image of a desert. The sword, the arrow, and the horse are all associated with pre-Islamic poetry and the ancient poets’ boasts of valor in the raḥīl, enough to make the reader imagine a warrior-poet crossing the desert on horseback, but Ibn Dāwūd uses them to a different effect, one consistent with al-madhhab al-kalāmī. Lines (4)-(5) of “Where is the Path to God’s Country” [97] demonstrate that the Man of our Times is lost, but they do not specify where, and the reader assumes, by association with countless other poems, that he is lost in the desert, even though he does not describe any of its features.

The few Man of our Times poems that mention specific locations in the desert57 are the exceptions that prove the rule that Ibn Dāwūd did not litter his poetry with topographic references for the sake of showcasing his mastery of the poetic canon.58 For the most part, Ibn Dāwūd’s desert wilderness does not play a central role, as it did in the pre-Islamic raḥīl or in the qaṣāʿīd of professional poets who needed to demonstrate their mastery of poetry by demonstrating their mastery of desert description. The following poem has Ibn Dāwūd’s style coming as close as it ever does to the realm of official poetry, and yet it remains true to the purpose of poetry found in the majālis of less powerful men. It is among the most replete

57 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 205, 271-272, 280.
58 See Kennedy, Abū Nuwās, 32.
with poetic conventions, but even here Ibn Dāwūd makes the desert a vaguely sketched backdrop against which the Man of our Times acts out his morality play.

Silent Tears [88]

1 When we stood together
   To say goodbye,
   We exchanged words
   Too many to count

2 My tears flowed swiftly,
   And I turned away,
   To spare you the sight,
   Lest you see that I was weeping

3 My eyes were like a cloud
   About to burst
   As its thunder
   Trails it hastily

4 The roll of thunder
   Kept urging the cloud on,
   And the winds of the north
   Seemed to blow it off course

5 It did not let up
   Until it had wept enough
   That the hillsides smiled at each other
   And the branches became green with foliage

59 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 297.
6 Does a lady string together
The jewels of her necklace
When its central stone
Has fallen off and been lost?

7 My companion said:
“Why are you so pale,
And why are your eyes
Pouring tears?”

8 I declined to give an answer
And stayed silent,
For silence is the best thing
For the hearts of lovers

Line (1), if taken in isolation, could take place either in the desert or in the city, but the association of the day of separation with pre-Islamic poetry and, to an even greater extent, with `udhrī poetry, would make the reader more likely to imagine a wilderness setting. The comparison of the poet’s eyes on the verge of tears to a raincloud in line (3) calls to mind the poets of `udhrī love, particularly Ghaylān ibn `Uqba (d. 117/735), 60 called Dhū al-Rumma, who heard all of nature lamenting with him for his ill-fated love; 61 it is rather an extended simile, typical of the formal genres of muḥdath poetry, and continuing for four lines, fully half the length of the poem. If, in the case of Ghaylān, “it often seems that to describe nature is the chief object of his qaṣīdahs,” 62 playing the `udhrī lover by sounding like Ghaylān is only a secondary aim of the Man of our Times in assigning the cloud such a prominent role in the poem. This is only the idea of a cloud; the heartbroken Man of our Times who can no longer hold back his tears once he parts from the Brother is like a dark cloud that can no longer hold back its rain once the thunder sounds, much as, when the Brother breaks

60 J. Stetkevych, Zephyrs of Najd, 63.
61 Badawi, “Antecedents,” 152.
promises in “I Have Misjudged Time” [85], he is behaving as illogically as a sword that can cut through bone but not through entrails. The Man of our Times does not say, or even imply, that the moment of separation in line (1) took place anywhere near the rain-refreshed hillsides in line (5).

The following poem is the most detailed of the Man of our Times poems as far as description of the desert and its perils, but even this is a story about the legendary past told in the unadorned language of the present, and thus the Man of our Times makes no pretense of trying to convince us that this desert is anything more than a rhetorical figure.

I Have Crossed Deserts to Find You [72]

1 How many valleys around your lands,
And how many banners so high
That the tops of them seemed
To be woven into the heavens

2 And how many meadows,
Dark as a solar eclipse,
Their pebbles like coal
In the darkness of night

3 So dark that, if the sun
Shone brightly on them,

63 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 211.
You would think their features
Were trembling in the mirage

4 And how many deserts
Spanning as far as the eye can see,
Lands of the jinn,
Blazing hot

5 Wayless, dusty deserts
Where even guides know not
In which direction
To seek relief

6 I have crossed
On an emaciated, hungry camel
Strong of hooves,
Swift of gait

7 Longing for you,
And if not for what passion I am suffering,
God’s country
Would have brought me relief

8 If you are generous with me,
It is your right to do so,
And if you are stingy with me,
I will not blame you or disgrace you

Lines (1)-(5) are devoted to characterizations of the attributes of the desert, its vast expanse, its darkness, its blinding sun, its heat, its dust storms, and its waylessness, for the purpose of describing a hopeless situation. If the desert is so vast and so inhospitable, and the Man of our Times is so hopelessly lost, how will he ever reach his destination safely? This extensive description adds dramatic weight to line (6), where the Man of our Times crosses these deserts in spite of their dangers and even more to line (7) in which his deliverance from them offers him no consolation. The harshness of the desert can cause great suffering, but the Man of our Times’ love is even greater, and, as in “Where is the Path to God’s Country?” [97], no
other comfort can bring him relief. The poetic description of the hardships of the desert would have been familiar to the audience, particularly from the *raḥīl* of the classical *qaṣīda*, but this is not any particular desert; it has no named landmarks. It is rather that the pain of love supersedes any trials nature can bring, in contrast to a poem we will discuss below, in which nature empathizes with the lovesick traveler.

The *Man of our Times* poems include the names of twelve geographical locations, including three regions, eight localities, and the Sea of China. In the case of most of these places, we have little indisputable evidence that Ibn Dāwūd visited them. It is likely that a lifelong resident of Baghdad would have visited Karkh at some time. He introduces some verses in *Kitāb al-Zahra* with the ascription, “a Bedouin in the land of Najd recited to me,” indicated that he was present and heard the recitation first-hand, although, as Raven points out, “Najd” was a fairly general term for the desert dwelling places of the Bedouin Arabs. In the poem, “Nothing is Worse than Waiting” [71], he uses the Sea of China to represent something vast, in order to create such a hyperbole as, “If the Sea of China were spread out around you, I would think it a mirage that would leave no trace.” Likewise, “The Slave of Longing does not Fear” [69] mentions Najd and Dīma simply as places of longing; the poem contains no details about events that took place there. The following poem uses the mention of Tihāma, the Red Sea coastal plain on the western coast of the Arabian Peninsula, to give a short piece of *majlis* poetry the flavor of a more formal poem.

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I lay awake,
As lightning flashed in Tihāma,
As though its luster
Were a lover’s heart

As it flashed,
It increased my longing,
And were it not for you,
Lightning flashes would not fill me with longing

When you are near,
My longing does not torment me like this,
But when you are away,
My every thought makes me miss you

Consider a servant
Whose only refuge is you
So that you might grant him the solace of your company
While he is still able to benefit from it

What is most significant about the mention of Tihāma in this poem is that the Man of our Times mentions a place name at all. Lightning can be seen, at least occasionally, everywhere in the world, and if the Man of our Times had said that he saw lightning flashing in Najd or Yemen or even Karkh, the reader would not have questioned it. Tihāma is simply a faraway place, far enough to convey the feeling that reuniting with the Brother is an unattainable wish. Furthermore, the poem does not even specify that the lightning of Tihāma was visible from the place where the Man of our Times lay awake. It is as though the occurrence of

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69 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 229.
lightning anywhere, whether or not he could see it, could heighten his pangs of love, like Ghaylān’s poems where nature laments with the lover, except that, this time, the very concept of lightning laments with the Man of our Times. “The Fires of Love” [78] only gives a slightly stronger indication that the sleepless Man of our Times actually saw the fire in Ṭulayḥa,⁷⁰ which may be the name of a dry riverbed in Yemen;⁷¹ perhaps its very existence kept him awake.

Like “Even the Doves Weep for their Love” [79],⁷² “Lightning in Tihāma” begins with a description of nature and then proceeds immediately to a psychological interpretation of that symbol from nature. Upon hearing the first line, the audience might expect a more detailed description of nature to follow in the subsequent lines, but the sudden turn to exploration of ideas serves to attract the reader’s attention to the appeal for forgiveness in line (4). The transition from nature imagery to ideas is effectively a transition from a fictional desert to an actual majlis, and thus, an invitation to the Brother to reflect on the current situation. Poems like “Lightning in Tihāma” [76] and “The Slave of Longing does not Fear” [69] are aphoristic in purpose, the latter ending on a particularly pious note, but the topographic references lend them an air of poetic prestige; if poems be garments, these are wedding dresses for the brides of commoners.

Of all the Man of our Times poems, this one contains the greatest number of topographic references.

1 سقِى الله زَمَّل القَاعِ في النَّحَالات فَذَاكَ الكَثِيب الفَرَّد فِي السَّمَرات
2 فقَّطُب الْعِبَادِيّ الَّذِي دوَن مِرْتَبَح فمِرْتَبَحَ وَالْمُذْرَان فَالْهُضْبُبَاتِ

⁷⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 239.
⁷¹ Wüstenfeld, GW, 4:543.
⁷² Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 245-246.
Naught Remains but a Memory [84]

1 May God pour blessings for the sands of al-Qā`,
   Amidst the palm trees,
   And the lone sand dune
   Among the acacia trees

2 And Qabr al-`Ibādī
   Outside of Murbakh,
   And Murbakh, and the rivulets
   And the hills

3 The twin peaks of Zarūd, and Țulayha
   And the dunes of Liwā;
   It is at their hands
   That I have grown weak

4 Naught remains of their delights
   But a memory,
   On account of which
   My soul has been rent

5 A fortress
   Overlooking the valley of Zubālā;
   In its shade
   I have held back my tears

6 Most dear to my soul,
   And most grievous
   And most worthy in its estimation
   Are these villages

7 Do not despair!

73 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 271-272.
Perhaps God will hasten
To help the victim of injustice
And release him from his suffering

8 And hearts will be content
That once were angry with me
And return to me
Without wrongful retaliation

Zubāla and Qabr al-`Ibādī are stations on the road from Kufa to Mecca.\textsuperscript{74} Yāqūt specifically refers to the former as a “village,”\textsuperscript{75} hence the “villages” which the Man of our Times holds in high esteem in line (6). Yāqūt describes Zarūd as a sandwaste, also on the road from Kufa to Mecca,\textsuperscript{76} but elsewhere he mentions five peaks, among them “the twin peaks of Zarūd” and Murbakh, “which is the most perilous of them.”\textsuperscript{77} As for Liwā, mentioned in poetry since the Mu`allaqa of Imru` al-Qays,\textsuperscript{78} the geographer is less certain or less specific about its identity, offering descriptions such as, “a sandy impasse,” “a dry riverbed in the territory of the Banū Sālim,” and, “a distant place often mentioned by poets.”\textsuperscript{79} The mysterious Liwā is the only truly mythical place in this poem, the most direct connection to pre-Islamic lore.

The rest of the place names underscore the poem’s pious orientation; all roads lead to Mecca. The nostalgia for places on the way, if not from Baghdad to Mecca, then at least from Iraq to Mecca leads to a hopeful prayer for divine intervention in line (7).

“All Naught Remains but a Memory,” is not simply a majlis epigram arrayed with a topographic accessory, as “Lightning in Tihāma” [76] is. The catalogue of places, and the Man of our Times’ wistful expressions of love for them is extensive enough to be the nasīb

\textsuperscript{74} Wüstenfeld, GW, 4:28.
\textsuperscript{75} Wüstenfeld, GW, 2:912.
\textsuperscript{76} Wüstenfeld, GW, 2:928.
\textsuperscript{77} Wüstenfeld, GW, 2:928.
\textsuperscript{78} J. Stetkevych, Zephyrs of Najd, 111.
\textsuperscript{79} Wüstenfeld, GW, 4:366.
of a much longer poem; this poem is something of a qit'a of longing for places. Rather than simply acknowledging that both the Man of our Times and the Brother, being Baghdad gentlemen, both know about the custom of mentioning place names in poetry, Ibn Dāwūd allows the audience to feel what they would feel if hearing a catalogue of far-off, beloved places in an ancient poem; he is truly showing his mastery of his motif. If these verses as they appear in Kitāb al-Zahra were actually the beginning of a qaṣīda that conformed strictly to the sequence of themes outlined by Ibn Qutayba, then the poem would proceed from line (6), where the lamentation over places ends, to the love story proper, but instead it returns to the predicament of the Man of our Times with an appeal to justice and then with hope for forgiveness from the unjustly angry Brother. The effect is that the Man of our Times has gone to the lengths of either traveling to all these distant places or, at least, of versifying about them, to appeal for the Brother’s forgiveness.

“My Soul Longs for Ḥijāz” [68] has several topographic references in common with “Naught Remains but a Memory,” namely Liwā, Zarūd, Murbakh, and Zubāla, and it evokes nostalgia for them in a similar way. The only place it mentions that is not mentioned in “Naught Remains but a Memory” [84] is Ḥijāz itself, the mountainous region in the western part of the Arabian Peninsula, between the highlands of Najd in the interior of the peninsula and the coastal lowlands of Tihāma. The significance of Ḥijāz, to Ibn Dāwūd’s audience, is that it is the region that contains the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, and the

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80 Perhaps the one of the Man of our Times poems that most deserves the classification as a qit’a of longing for places is “My Heart Cleave to Zubāla” [86], since all of its five lines are devoted to longing for places (Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 280), some of the same places mentioned in “Naught Remains but a Memory,” and it does not move on to other themes.
81 Ibn Qutayba, Shi‘r, 30-31.
82 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 205.
fact that al-Qā`,

The Story Between the Lines: Shifts of Grammatical Person

The technique of *iltifāt* (literally, “turning one’s attention toward” something) is part of what allows Arabic poets to create a detailed story in the minds of readers in relatively few words and within a complex formal structure, severely restrictive in comparison to the flexibility of prose narrative. In early Arabic poetry, it usually takes the form of a shift of grammatical person within the same verse. By the Abāsid period, the tendency had turned away from “single-line *iltifāt*” toward keeping the same grammatical person within the line but shifting persons from one line to the next, for example, from what could be an omniscient third-person narrator in one line to first-person narration to another, to direct address of fate in another, to address of the poet’s own heart in another. These shifts fill in the story between the lines, so to speak, by allowing various characters to interact with the poetic persona, while wasting none of the poem’s already scarce syllables on introducing their entrance. If the poet begins in a line in the middle of a poem by saying, “O my two friends,” the reader imagines that two companions were present with the poet during the events described in that line, and, perhaps, that they were not present for the previously described events. It also accounts for the poet speaking of his beloved in the second person and the third person, the masculine and feminine genders, or even the singular and plural

84 Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, xvi.
number, in the same poem. This, coupled with the infrequency of enjambment from one line to the next, and with the tendency of grammarians and anthologists to quote individual lines instead of whole poems, is part of what led earlier generations of scholars to claim that the individual line supersedes the entire poem in classical Arabic poetry. It is my opinion, however, that shifts of grammatical person between lines, a sort of interlinear iltifāt, add to the narrative unity of the poem instead of taking away from it.

Gruendler has demonstrated how, in long odes, “the switch of grammatical person […] constitutes an integral part of […] dramaturgy.” It allows the poet to play what Lyons calls the poet’s various “roles of hero, wise man, traveller, wine drinker, and poet,” all in the same poem. Ibn Dāwūd is able to make the heroic landscape of the qaṣīda flash in the readers’ minds across a mere ten lines not only through the arrangement of themes of nostalgia, travel, and destination, but through strategically placed shifts of scene, which he signals through grammatical shifts.

It warrants mention that part of the prose-like directness of some of the Man of our Times poems, such as, “I Have Misjudged Time” [85] lies in the lack of a pageant of interlocutors. In, “I Have Misjudged Time” [85], the Man of our Times proceeds unceremoniously from the mention of things he has seen to the mention of things he has not seen (because they are logically absurd) to the conclusion to be drawn from all this, addressing the Brother all the while. Likewise, in “Fidelity Keeps Watch over Me” [50], the spies of the nasīb and the minor characters of the rahīl, such as the carousers, the singing

86 Gruendler, Praise Poetry, 14.
87 Gruendler, Praise Poetry, 33.
88 Lyons, Identification, 36.
girls, and the honest young men, are “absent figure[s],” referred to in the third person in the Man of our Times’ continuous address of the Brother. Their presence in the margins in the *nasīb* and the rest of the poem underscores the Man of our Times’ unwavering fidelity and his single-minded search for the Brother, respectively, all the more so because the “you” always refers to the Brother and never to the audience.

The dramatic momentum of “Rejection from Muḥammad’s Hand is Like Wine” lies in shifts of verb tense that propel the Man of our Times toward his destination of a lesson for the reader.

**Present Problem**

1 *I am passionately in love*
   With the memory of Karkh,
   And all my love
   Is for the one who dwells in Karkh

**Flashback**

2 *I have drunk* a cup
   Of Muḥammad’s rejection;
   *It has weakened* my bones
   And *overwhelmed* my brain

**Ḥikma**

3 What other trials I may suffer
   Since I have lost him, are as one to me;
   Does the victim, after being slaughtered,
   Fear the pain of being skinned?

Line (1) sets the scene, using an imperfect tense (*muḍāriʾ*) verb for, “I am passionately in love” (*ḥāmil*), and, in the absence of any previous verbs to locate the scene in the past, the reader may assume that the action takes place in the present. Line (2) is a flashback to the event that brought the Man of our Times to his unfortunate state, and its verbs are in the

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perfect (mādī) tense. The first hemistich of line (3) returns to the present situation described in line (1), with a return to the imperfect tense. In the second hemistich (‘ajuz), the hikma, the imperfect tense stands outside time as a general statement, a condition that always applies. Although the English translation makes it appear that this hemistich has several verbs, it has only one, “fear” (بجعز), and the others are temporally neutral; “slaughtered” (ملحو) is a passive participle, and “butchered” (صلخ) is a verbal noun.

Line (1) of “The Abodes Gave Me No Consolation” [74] consists of first person narration in the imperfect tense. Line (2) employs the third person, as though it is a general conclusion to be drawn from the Man of our Times’ description of his predicament in line (1). Lines (3)-(4) continue the narration, albeit this time in the perfect tense, as though it were a flashback, and they include a rather one-sided conversation between the Man of our Times and the abandoned abodes. Line (5), still in the first person, summarizes the action in lines (3)-(4) and its consequences, and line (6) is a rhetorical question.

Lines (1)-(5) of “I Have Crossed Deserts to Find You” [72] contain no trace of the first and second persons except the reference to “your lands” in line (1). They simply introduce the scene, forbidding, wayless deserts that confound the traveler with their heat by day and their darkness by night. This is one of the longest descriptions of scenery in any of the Man of our Times poems. The reader is aware that there is a “you” somewhere in this story, but as the first five lines progress, we are taken farther afield of this person, until we are so lost that we almost forget that he even figures into the story. The narrator does not even announce his own presence until line (6), and we see the Man of our Times, not taking

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91 A more literal rendering of this hemistich would be, “I do not [the verb laysa, which is understood to have an imperfect meaning, although its morphology mimics the perfect] care [imperfect] about misfortune after losing [verbal noun] him.”
us on yet another purely mental *raḥīl* but riding a camel across a desert, the appearance of which we have a clear image. He even mentions the camel’s footsteps instead of the steps of a logical argument.

It is only in line (7) that we find out the reason for all the description that has transpired; we find out that Man of our Times has passed through all these places out of “longing for” the addressee. We only find this out as the Man of our Times reaches his destination, which is a mental destination, as it is in “Where is the Path to God’s Country?” [97], and it is an equally disappointing one. In both poems, his travels have taken him nowhere except the realization that his efforts are futile.

In this poem, the Man of our Times alternates between referring to himself in the first and third persons, inviting the reader to envision himself in the role of the Brother.

1 جعلت فدراك قد طال أنعطافي إليك وأنت قاسي القلب جافيف
2 ولا البلاد بوصلك كالمكافيف وان لا ترع يوشحك انصرافي
3 فان ترع الأمانة لا أضعها تطول عليه أيام التصافي
4 فبرضي من نوتك بالكفايف مخافة أن يملك باجتماع
5 فان يليك ذا الصندود صندود غلب وانت على المودة والتوافي
6 يوّلد ما يجل عن التلافي بتعريف من التصريح كافي
7 إذا كان الصنى درك المعافي

First Person
1 May I be your ransom!
Long have I been tenderly inclined to you,
While you, with your cruel heart,
Have treated me harshly

Third Person
2 Your brother does not
Harbor hatred for you
Nor does he make public the affection between you,
As though it were generosity on his part

First Person
3 If you nurture the trust that is between us,
I will never let it go,
But if you do not,
I will go away and leave you lonely

Third Person
4 It is not your right
To have a faithful friend
Whose rights have been violated
By the days of youthful happiness

5 One who so fears
Lest you grow tired of his company
That he is content to see you
Only when his situation is dire

First Person
6 If you are avoiding me
To teach me a lesson,
But your friendship
And fidelity to me remain

7 Then grant me some relief
Before my despair becomes so great
As to cause suffering
That knows no relief

8 But if not,
Then cast aside my friendship once and for all,
And be kind enough
To set me free

Third Person Hikma
9 When can the sick patient
Be restored to health,
When his weakness
Is the work of the one who can heal him?

It is as though the first person lines refer to a specific situation that is taking place between the Man of our Times and the Brother, and the third person lines are hypothetical situations (rather, a hypothetical situation within a hypothetical situation, if we consider the role of the Man of our Times poems as discussed in the previous chapter) in which Ibn Dāwūd calls on the reader to make his own judgment. *Brother*, I am faithful to you despite your cruelty. *Reader*, imagine that you have a friend who gives his friendship to you unconditionally and asks for nothing in return. *Brother*, I can no longer abide your abuse, and you must choose whether to keep me as a friend. *Reader*, bear in mind that this friend has endured harsh treatment at your hand and constantly endeavors to make you happy. *Brother*, if you consider me a friend, I beseech you to treat me like one. *Reader*, does such a situation make logical sense?

Of course, if Ibn Dāwūd had not intended the public to read the Man of our Times verses, he would not have published them in *Kitāb al-Zahra*. To some extent, every verse attributed to the Man of our Times appears for the purpose of guiding the reader to be a better brother, and they are all addressed to the same (possibly) hypothetical Brother. The third-person references to the Man of our Times in “Restore our Friendship or Release Me” [40] are rather like *ḥikam* addressed to an impersonal “you.” They are also in keeping with the polite, gentlemanly tone of the poem, as a polite challenge in a *majlis* ought to begin with “May I be your ransom,” and with the Man of our Times verses, as in the last line of “Where Has our Brotherhood Gone?” [36], where he declares that it would be rude to make direct mention of the brother’s obligations to him.
This poem shifts from addressing the Brother to addressing the poet’s heart and then back to addressing the Brother. The alternating address of the Brother and of the poet’s heart accord with the sections of the *qaṣīda*.

1 أَبَيِ ليِ الْوُفَاءُ دُوَامًَ الْجْفَا َوْحَلُّ الحُنْنِينَ عَدِيمُ العِزَا
2 فَعَلَّكَ إِلَى الْوُصُولِ مُسْتَغْطِفًا َوَقَدْ كَتَبْتُ قَبْلِ شَدِيدِ الإِبَا
3 وَإِيَّي لِي طَوِيلً كُنْتُ الْهُوَى َوُسْرِيْهِ عَلَكَ بِقَرْطِ الْجْفَا
4 كُمْ يَنْفُجُ الْبَوَقَ مُسْتَخْفِيًا َوُضَّرِبِّ بِالْطُّبِل تَخْتَ الْكْسَا
5 فِيَا قُلْبُ وَيَحْكُكْ كُنْ حَازِمَا َإِذَا تَاهَ رَمَ سُبْبِلِ النَّجَا
6 وَلَا تَلْكَ ذَا غَرْمَةِ جَاهِلًا َإِذَا ما اعْتَدَدَ لَحْ لِفِ الْعَطَا
7 فَسُلُّ الْحَقْوُد بِرَغْعِي الْعُهْدِ َوُداُوِ الجَفَاةِ بِرَغْعِي الْوَفَا
8 فَاوْجِعُ مِنْ حَمِل عَنْبِ الصَّفَا زِوَالِ الصَّفَا وَقُطْعُ الْإِخَا
9 قَسَامُ هُوَلَكَ وَكُنْ مُدِنْفَا َأَحَبَّ الْدَّوَاءَ لَحُبَّ الصَّفَا

Make Amends, O Heart [59]

*Nasīb* – addressed to Brother
1 My fidelity persists
   Despite your cruelty,
   And I am overcome with longing
   That knows no consolation

2 I am still nostalgic
   For the times you visited me,
   Although, in the past,
   I was obstinate and stubborn

3 I continue to conceal
   The secret of our love,
   But it would be most cruel of me
   To conceal it from you

*Takhallus*– third person analogy
4 Like one who blows a trumpet
   And muffles the sound
   Or strikes a drum

Under a cloth

*Rahīl*- addressed to persona’s heart

5 Shame on you, O heart!
   Be strong,
   And when you lose your way,
   Hope for a path to deliverance

6 Do not make a decision
   In ignorance,
   And if you offend someone,
   Do not persist in your enmity

7 Console your anger
   By keeping covenants
   And salve your bitterness
   By remaining faithful

Arrival after *Rahīl*- third person

8 For more grievous
   Than bearing reproach for your pure happiness
   Is when pure happiness perishes
   And bonds of brotherhood are severed

*Ḥikma*- addressed to Brother and audience

9 Surrender to your love
   And be, in your weakened state,
   The dearest remedy
   For him who seeks a cure

Lines (1)-(3) address the Brother in a sort of *nasīb* that refers to the present time but is rooted in the Man of our Times’ long-established love for the Brother, rather like the *nasīb* of “Fidelity Keeps Watch over Me” [50]. It is typical of the Man of our Times’ *nasīb* sections, for example, that of “I Have Misjudged Time” [85], in that, rather than asking two companions to lament with him for the days of his youth that time has taken away from him and referring to his beloved in the third person, he laments to the Brother himself about the moral virtues of their relationship that have been corrupted through misdeeds on the part of
rational human actors. While lines (3)-(4) of “Make Amends, O Heart” [59] can accord
together grammatically as one sentence, line (4) marks a shift of person, namely to the third
person. Furthermore, it is an analogy for the lover who conceals his love and, as Gruendler
has demonstrated, `Abbāsid audiences may have understood analogies as representing a
transition between sections, an interlude between scenes in which the poet is directly
involved.94 This analogy further has the feeling of a takhallus because the mention of
musical instruments is reminiscent of a wine song. The Man of our Times then turns to his
heart in line (5) as if to invite it on a solitary raḥīl. This raḥīl consists of a series of
exhortations to the heart, as the Man of our Times urges it on toward the destination, and line
(8) marks the end of the journey and the conclusion, much like line (8) of “I Have Misjudged
Time” [85]. Like line (4), the third-person, abstract transition between the nasīb and the
raḥīl, line (8) is a third-person, abstract transition between the raḥīl and the ḥikma. It is as if
these third-person statements, addressed to no one in particular, make way for another
addressee, rather like smelling coffee beans after inhaling one perfume and before inhaling
another; the ẓurafā’ love perfume, after all.95 Line (9) is ostensibly addressed to the Brother,
but it contains advice for anyone who aspires to virtuous conduct in matters of brotherhood.

This poem begins and ends with general truths, with first person narration between
them.

95 Raven, MBD, 30.
Enjoy Bidding your Beloved Farewell [65]

General statement- addressed to impersonal “you”
1 Enjoy bidding your beloved
    Farewell,
    For after you part,
    You shall not meet again

Appeal to personal experience- addressed to individual reader
2 For how much unkindness and betrayal
    Have you been made to swallow,
    How much loss
    And deprivation?

Description of personal experience- first person
3 How many cups
    More bitter than death
    I have drunk,
    And never did my hand recoil from them!

4 In all that I have endured,
    I have never seen anything
    More painful
    Than separation without saying farewell

Ḥikma – third person
5 Exalted be God!
    All relationships,
    No matter how long they last
    Lead to separation

Lines (1)-(2) address the audience directly as “you.” Line (1) is an exhortation to the addressee to appreciate his time with his beloved, but this line is rather like a proverb, addressed to an impersonal “you.” Line (2) appeals to the addressee’s personal experience, in order to convince him to follow the advice in line (1). We may consider it addressed either to the Brother himself or to the reader as an individual. Lines (3)-(4) are a first person

96 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 185.
account of what has taught the Man of our Times the lesson in line (1). The mention of “cups” in line (3) makes it a suggestion of a wine song and therefore of a takhllus. Of course, their contents are bitter; has the Man of our Times ever had a pleasant experience with wine? Line (4) is a more general testimonial of the Man of our Times’ misadventures, without even an implied “you,” and line (5) is an unambiguous hikma.

We may understand the “you” either as an impersonal “you” referring to the audience or as an address to the same Brother addressed in the rest of the Man of our Times poems. This poem could contribute to a future majlis discussion about fickle friends, and it would be effective as a letter written to an unkind friend, offering admonition without specific accusations of misbehavior. When we understand the “you” as referring to the Brother who has left the Man of our Times searching for a more perfect brotherhood throughout Kitāb al-Zahra, it is consistent with the rest of the Man of our Times story. Line (3) in particular has a familiar tone, as the Man of our Times bases his advice on personal experience.

This poem begins by addressing fate and ends in an address to the Brother.

Shielding My Eyes from Broken Promises [28]

Second person- addressed to days

1 O days,
How you do violence to me!

97 It would make sense to me to read this phrase as لَمْ تَزِى. Raven has not included this among his emendations, as his deal only with the prose sections of Kitāb al-Zahra (Raven, MBD, 212).
98 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 99.
As though you have never seen anyone so aggrieved,  
Nor will again

Third person- analogy  
2 Generous gifts like dust  
Blowing into my eye,  
And meanness that relents no more  
Than closed eyelids trying to keep out the ashes

First person  
3 Who longs  
To see a promise fulfilled?  
I am one who longs  
For the fruits of promises

Third person-general statement  
4 Broken promises only come  
After promises are certified,  
And promises are only made  
Out of sincere friendship

Second person-addressed to Brother  
5 My soul has aimed for  
The best of luck with you,  
But the loss of good fortune  
Is only part of what it has lost

In line (1), the Man of our Times addresses “the days of time” (أيام الدهر), that is to say, the vicissitudes of fate. Line (2) is perfectly ambiguous; it could mean that the days’ generosity is like dust blowing into the eye, and that their meanness is as unrelenting as eyelids protecting the eye from ashes, or it could be describing the Brother’s extremes of generosity and meanness. Line (3) is not explicitly directed to a particular interlocutor, but it contains first person self-reference. Line (4) seeks to define the terms, “promise” and “broken promise,” and it contains no trace of the first or second person. We know that line (5) addresses the Brother and not the days, because the days, being a group of nonhuman

99 Defining terms was of interest to etymologically aware ‘Abbāsid intellectuals in general (S. Stetkevych, Abū Tammām, 235) and to Ibn Dāwūd the Zāhirite companion of grammarians in particular.
entities, would be regarded as grammatically feminine and singular, as they were in line (1), whereas the addressee of line (5) is grammatically masculine. The fact that the “you” is treated as a consequence of luck and not the bearer of it (this role belongs to the days, according to the poetic tradition), while luck is a third person “absent figure,” further establishes that this line is addressed to the Brother and not to the days.

Ibn Dāwūd tells us that the Man of our Times wrote the following poem to a brother after that brother failed to grant him permission to thank him, as the Man of our Times had requested in a previous poem, which appears immediately before this one in Kitāb al-Zahra. It is the only time in Kitāb al-Zahra in which Ibn Dāwūd provides any sort of anecdote explaining the circumstances surrounding the Man of our Times poems.

I Keep Watch over the Stars [39]

Question

1 Is it within the bounds of justice
To forbid your brother to thank you
And to cast him aside, but not to forbid him

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1 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 127-128.
2 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 128.
From rejection and exile?

Answer to question
2 Yes, for a lover, it is just
And within the bounds of love,
When nothing can save him
Except to receive pardon

Question
3 Is it good, according to the laws
Of neighborliness, let alone love,
That I should be left to spend the night
From the night prayer until the pre-dawn prayer

Impersonation of al-Khansâ’
4 Keeping watch over stars
Whose pastures have not been entrusted to me,
While love is aflame in my heart,
Hotter than burning coals?

Question- return to present situation
5 You are a brother to me;
You have the power to alleviate my sorrow,
But do you, or do you not,
Know what I am enduring?

Answer to question
6 At night your heart is devoid
Of the likes of my ordeal,
Just as I, on account of your love,
Am devoid of patience

Assessment of present situation
7 I know that in patience
Lies solace,
But I have already spent
My life’s savings of patience

8 Behold! When I am with you,
You find my company loathsome,
And when I am away,
No thought of me crosses your mind

Flashback
9 Behold! When friendship increased
   Until it became love,
   And you became my companion
   In private and public

10 You tired of my brotherhood
   And cast aside my friendship
   And dismissed me,
   Until I became confounded

We may consider this poem as one in which Ibn Dāwūd depicts the Man of our Times as a gentleman writing a letter in verse to a friend. Compared to the poetic characters whose roles the Man of our Times assumes in other poems, this is rather like Ibn Dāwūd attending a costume party dressed as himself. We might also consider it to be one that reveals much of Ibn Dāwūd’s own personality, the ideas that went into the compilation of Kitāb al-Zahra, although it is impossible to know for certain what Ibn Dāwūd thought while writing this poem. He poses questions as to whether various actions qualify as justice (1), neighborliness (2), and love (2). In line (7) he recalls a saying about patience as if to remind himself to be patient; he, like the reader, is an adīb seeking moral refinement. Line (8) about the boundary between friendship (wudd) and love (hawā) is reminiscent of the taxonomy of love in the first chapter of Kitāb al-Zahra, but it does not agree with it perfectly, since according to that taxonomy, the stage of love immediately preceding hawā is khulla (“intimate friendship”).

No line in the poem keeps up a general truth devoid of personal pronouns for an entire line. Every line makes reference to the narrator, as someone in such a distraught state as he describes cannot but return frequently to speaking of his situation, and the Man of our Times truly sounds as though he has no patience left. Every time he mentions the word “brother” or

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102 The word wudd does not appear at all in the taxonomy. The word mawadda, from the same root as wudd, does appear, but it is separated from hawā by two intervening states, mahabba and khulla (Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 19).
“brotherhood,” he mentions his own sorrow in the same line, as though the very mention of brothers reminds him of the Brother who broke his heart.

Regardless of whether this poem expresses Ibn Dāwūd’s own feelings or only those of the fictional Man of our Times, it does sound like a real letter written by a judge to a friend of his. Rejection of gratitude is more specific that the usual meanness in granting love, of which lovers often complain, and therefore less likely to be a purely artificial subject for a poem. The mention of neighborliness (jīwār) in line (3) and “company” (‘ishra) in line (8) further serve to make the setting of the poem sound more like real life in the majlis and less like the idealized world of love poetry. The poem does not conform to anything resembling the qaṣīda. It begins in the majlis with the Man of our Times, the judge, weighing evidence about the definitions of terms. In line (3) he alludes to his reputation as the austerely pious one among the żurafā’, spending the night not in entertainments, but sincerely trying to sleep after night prayer, but troubled by the questions raised thus far in the poem.

Line (4) marks a sudden change of scene, like a cut-away to a dream sequence in a movie. Instead of the city-dwelling judge puzzling over semantics, we see the Man of our Times in a scene from pre-Islamic poetry in the role of “pastor of the stars,” as poetic tradition held that it was the fate of lovers to keep watch over the stars at night the way shepherds keep watch over their flocks. This trope goes back as far as al-Khansā’ (575-645), and the first hemistich of Ibn Dāwūd’s line is almost identical to one of hers. This

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103 This word refers to a human “relationship” in the most general sense of the term, as neighbors, colleagues, members of the same tribe, or any two people who know each other for a long period of time and have shared experiences.

104 J. Stetkevych, Zephyrs of Najd, 148-151.

105 Irwin, Night, 25.

106 أرّغى النجوم وما تَلْفَتَ رُغْيَّتها وِتَارَة أَنْفَضْتُ فِصْلَةٌ أَطْمَارِي (J. Stetkevych, Zephyrs of Najd, 222).
line transports the Man of our Times into the role of wayfaring poet, even if he only remains there for one line, before returning to his appeals to reason. The Man of our Times answers the questions in lines (1) and (5) with statements based on observation and reason, but he answers the question in line (3) by paraphrasing a famous line by al-Khansā`. This does not detract from the poem’s realism, since, in the *majlis*, it would be appropriate to answer a question with a quotation from a poem.

The following poem uses second person narrative to build dramatic tension and then compounds it by quoting an earlier poem.

183

What Ghaylān ibn `Uqba Said [77]

Second person- Man of our Times addressing himself

1 Does lightning glistening
   In the middle of the night frighten you?
   Yes, everything that happens to a lover
   Frightens him

2 Do you fear the lightning even now,
   While your beloved is near?
   What, then, if it flashes

---

When the beloved is away?

Third person
3 Winds blew,
Increasing the lover’s passion,
And the rhapsodizing doves
Hastened to the thickets

Second person- Man of our Times addressing himself
4 And you kept the company of people,
But you did not find your friend among them,
And your tears fell
In spite of you

5 You ceased to recite poetry
When your beloved was away,
Even though poetry
Is widespread among the people,

Third person-quotation from Ghaylān
6 Except what Ghaylān ibn `Uqba said,
Remorseful,
“Will the days that have gone by
Ever return?”

Second person- Man of our Times addressing himself
7 He would wish
That you were not there,
That you had not traveled,
While your beloved stayed behind

8 Everything bothers you,
Even when your beloved is near,
And when he is away,
Everything makes you miserable

Second person- addressed to the Brother
9 Woe to you!
Do not be so quick to leave your beloved,
For it equals death,
So think of the consequences of what you are doing
This poem is unique among the Man of our Times poems in that it consists almost entirely, except for line (3), which shifts to the third person, and line (6), which is the quotation from Ghaylān ibn `Uqba, of the Man of our Times addressing himself in the second person. This, even more than the first person narration which had been the norm in Arabic poetry since pre-Islamic times, challenges the reader to empathize with the Man of our Times. After reading so many poems in which the audience hears the Man of our Times lamenting of his situation, it is as if Ibn Dāwūd hands the Man of our Times costume to the reader while he himself assumes the role of an omniscient narrator.

In lines (1), the Man of our Times directs a question to himself in the second person and then answers it in the third person, on behalf of all lovers. In line (2) he poses two more questions but does not answer them. Line (3) consists of third person narrative about “the lover” (ذكر الشوق, “he of desire”), again identifying the Man of our Times with all lovers and giving the audience a panoramic view of the scene. This line foreshadows the mention of Ghaylān with its depiction of the doves as empathizing with the lover, as they and he are both frightened by the impending storm; the audience would have associated this motif with Ghaylān. Lines (4)-(5) return to the second person narrative in which the Man of our Times addresses himself with an account of past events. Line (6) could be read as a continuation of the sentence that begins in line (5), but line (6) itself contains no second person pronouns.

The second hemistich of line (6) is a direct quotation (tadmīn) of a hemistich by Ghaylān ibn `Uqba, and the first hemistich is little more than its attribution. Lines (7)-(8) return to the Man of our Times’ self-directed soliloquy, with line (7) speculating over what Ghaylān, the

109 Lyons, Identification, 38.
110 Gruendler, Praise Poetry, 4.
third-person absent character, would think if he were in the Man of our Times’ situation.

This is the only one of the Man of our Times poems that explicitly mentions the name of another poet, but the practice was fairly widespread in `Abbāsid poetry, and Ghaylān was a frequently named poet. For example, Abū Tammām’s famous ode on the conquest of Amorium mentions Ghaylān in the context of his love for Mayy.111 Line (9) of “What Ghaylān ibn `Uqba Said” also employs the second person, but it is addressed to the Brother, admonishing him that all the suffering described thus far in the poem could happen as a consequence of his actions.

If poems be garments, the Man of our Times poems are garments of simple elegance, employing the flourishes of more festive costumes only sparingly. It is my hope that this chapter has provided some insight into the social context in which the Man of our Times poems were originally presented and into the subtle cues that Ibn Dāwūd sent to his audience by means of grammatical shifts and intertextual references. They may follow the fashions of the majlis or the desert, of dandies or ascetics, but the materials from which they are made, justice and discernment, fidelity and brotherhood, are always in style.

It is my hope that this dissertation will convince its readers of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd’s importance as a poet of the Arabic language and as a participant in the intellectual life of his times. I have also aimed to make a valuable contribution to the discussion of friendship among males in medieval Arab-Islamic society by studying a controversial figure whose name has been associated, both justly and unjustly, with diverse and contradictory views on the subject. Finally, I have presented the first ever English translations of all the poems in the first half of Kitāb al-Zahra that bear the “Man of our Times” attribution, in

order to lend English-speaking audiences an appreciation of one of the many talented Arab authors whose work remains insufficiently appreciated in the Arab world and almost entirely unknown outside of it.
Indescribable Love

1. He who has fallen in love to the utmost
   Cannot describe it,
   As one who is in the midst of a country
   Does not think about its features

Love is a Natural Property of my Soul

1. He who is sad about love
   Has no reason to do so,
   But I have reason to be sad
   About my situation

2. My love for him
   Is a natural property of my soul;
   The turning of the nights does not change it,
   Nor the vicissitudes take it away

3. If a lover
   Must inevitably perish,
   Then let his perishing be nourished
   In the love of one who is his like

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1 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 2.
2 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 15. For discussion of this poem, see page 74 above.
3 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 19. For discussion of this poem, see page 48, 60, 145-146 above.
Do Not Abandon your Brother

1 Do not abandon your brother
When he has done nothing wrong
For abandonment is the key
To forgetting

2 If a friend conceals a secret
From his brother,
Then how is a friend
Better than an enemy?

---

Which One of us is Sincere?

1 You claim that I
Am not sincere with you,
That I am distracted
By every heart

2 Look seriously
At your fidelity,
And you will see whether you are sincere
With the one who loves you

3 And then return to me,
With the debt that you owe me,
And then ask me
For that which I owe you

4 I shall offer my soul,
Come good or ill,
To every wayfarer
Traveling through the land

5 Until I see one

---

That safeguards my friendship,
And then I shall show him
The utmost fidelity

6 Would the likes of me break a covenant
Without just cause?
My Lord has afflicted me
With a terrible fate!

When Your Love Called Me

1 The heart is held captive
Every night,
By eighty sighs, no, ninety,
Or even more

2 It is ardent for one,
Then it is in love with another
And it forgets them forthwith
Come morning

3 My heart was carefree
Before it loved you;
In the love of all creation,
It sported and jested

4 When your loved called me,
My heart answered it,
And I could never imagine it
Abandoning your friendship

5 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 22.
May you reject me
If I am lying,
And if I have ever derived such joy
From anyone else

And if anything
In all the land,
Were beautiful to me
In your absence!

Visit me if you wish,
And if you prefer, do not visit me,
But I do not see my heart
Being faithful to anyone but you

I Have No Way to Forget You

If visiting the beloved
Increases a lover’s ardor
Then separation from the one I love
Also increases mine

I have no way
To forget you,
No matter how much
You chide me for loving you

If, when the patient is treated,
His sickness grows worse,
Then when will he ever
Be cured?

—Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 32. For discussion of this poem, see page 60.
1 When the beloved visits me,
   He awakens longing
   So intense that
   Bones crumble from its heat

2 With his eyes,
   He pours me wine
   That lends drunkenness
   To all who drink it

3 His visits
   Bring sickness to an ardent heart,
   And when he goes to leave,
   I am too weak to stand and stop him

4 Can the sick patient
   Be cured
   If his remedy and his affliction
   Are one and the same?

---

1 You gave me zeal for life
   When you became attached to me,
   But the length of my life
   Has since become one of my enemies

2 How can someone find relief
   If the one who could grant it puts him through misery,
   Or if he has exhausted his body,
   According to the doctors,

---

7 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 32.
8 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 32.
3 How will my heart
Be free of its love for your treatment,
When the way you treat me
Is my sickness?

When will my Sickness Go away?

1 O cure of my sickness,
When will my sickness go away?
Every treatment I try
Only makes me sicker

2 Behold! The one
Does not drive off the other,
But rather, my whole life
Will pass me by

May You Remain Innocent of my Love

1 By the sacredness of this month!
Why have you granted me relief
With your forgiveness?
I have behaved unforgivably!

2 If you knew
What love I am suffering,
My suffering would hurt you; 
Would that you did not know!

3 That I may suffer with my ordeal, 
And you may remain in your comfort, carefree 
While the fire of passion 
Runs wild in my heart

Make Peace with Fate

1 The one I regarded tenderly as a brother, 
Who left our brotherhood behind 
And then doubted 
My soul’s kindness

2 Until, if it was given the choice 
Between its own destruction 
Or being separated from you, 
It would certainly choose destruction

3 You have caused me to take time as a rival, 
So that misfortunes 
Now flock to me 
Stirring up anguish and regret

4 Until my soul became attached 
To having you for myself 
And it found sweet 
The fragrance of that drink

11 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 49.
5 You allowed me to make amends with the nights
And they righted their wrongs,
And if a victim of injustice is given the chance,
Let him make amends

6 O heart, when you speak of it
It only increases your longing for the one you love,
So bear the sorrow of being silent
About your ordeal, and speak not of it

7 If you are not sad about concealing the secret,
Then be sad,
And if you have not confessed
That the one you love has abandoned you, then confess

8 Say to the nights: “The power to judge is yours,
So be judicious,”
And to the calamities of fate:
“You have the power, so make things right.”

My Heart’s Wish

1 My heart wishes for you,
If I may have such great hopes,
You are my soul’s good fortune,
In this world and the next

2 Tell me, are you pretending to forget,
Or have you really forgotten,
The days when your opinion of me
Was not formed judiciously?

3 My heart’s desires
Were scattered,
But my desires were gathered into one
As soon as I saw you

4 The ones I had once envied
Came to envy me,
And I became a master of men
As soon as you became my master

5 When the envious ones despair
That they will ever catch me,
And my enemies are few,
Since you have considered few to be my equals

6 You have safeguarded my eyes against sleep,
And it has eluded me,
And the sweetness of sleep
Has become one of my enemies

7 To betray is to be disgraced,
And my heart forever persists
In its inclination to you,
Though you avoid me and reject me

8 I cannot stay away from you,
So treat me as you see fit,
For yours is the power
To kill me or keep me alive
My Heart is Humble

1 May I die before you!
   Long have I remained in sadness and grief,
   And my longing is greater
   Than I can describe

2 My heart inclines to you,
   Even though you have abandoned me,
   But you hard-heartedly
   Turn away

3 If today you turn away
   From our brotherhood,
   God knows,
   I will never turn away from you

4 Suppose I were to claim
   That I am not entirely delirious with passion.
   Is not the reason for my sadness
   That my love for you is not merely half-hearted?

5 How many times I have lied to my heart!
   But my lies were exposed
   By never-ending longing
   And eyes that incessantly shed tears

6 If you forgive me
   For wrongs I committed in the past
   Then do it now,
   Before death is drawn to me

7 By God!  By God!
   My soul has become exhausted,
   And it has no more thanks
   Left to give

8 Longing has humbled my heart,
   And it confesses:

13 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 58-59.  For discussion of this poem, see pages 60, 146-148 of this dissertation.
To be humbled for the sake of love
Is an honor

9 Do as you see fit;
I shall not address you in enmity,
And I shall not exaggerate
In anything I say

Forgiveness is Most Becoming

1 My lord, have I not refrained

Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 65. For discussion of this poem, see pages 120-125 above.

Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 67.
From making demands of you,  
And when you think about me,  
Do you not fear lest I die?

2 My lord, where is my refuge  
From love?  
Tell me,  
Why are you so quick to spite me?

3 Have you forgotten the promises we made,  
In a magnificent valley,  
Where only good things  
Are cultivated,

4 And are you off-limits  
Like the sacred pilgrimage,  
As love is only allowed  
Stolen glances?

5 Have I betrayed you?  
Forgiveness is most becoming of one in love  
Or have you told lies?  
Why have you given strength to my detractors?

Chastely We Guard our Love

1 Do not cause me  
To safeguard my love excessively,  
For I will only give it more  
Than what it warrants

16 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 71.
2 If you had seen us
   Together in the encampment,
   Zealously guarding our togetherness,
   Our friendship close at hand

3 His friendship and love
   Were equal to mine,
   As though we were two kinsmen
   Surrounded by our kin

4 We took as fellows
   The secrets of our hearts,
   Remaining chaste and cultivating friendship
   When we were together

5 Lest too much togetherness
   Extinguish our longing,
   Or lest we be kept apart by those who would scorn us
   Seriously or in jest

6 We guard against separation;
   Nevertheless,
   Our love could not be obliterated
   By well-meaning interlopers

7 You have seen a high level
   Of refinement,
   A level
   Of which all others fall short

8 In our chastity,
   We guard lest
   Speculations gather around it
   And suspicions destroy it

---

[18] Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 72.
My Heart is Jealous of my Eye

1 May I die before you!
   By God! I am suffering
   From longing for you,
   And will I have any luck with you?

2 My heart is jealous of my eye
   When it looks at you
   For a long time,
   And I am refreshed by your glances

How Can I be your Ransom?

1 May I be your ransom,
   If the likes of my soul is a sufficient ransom
   For your soul,
   Or my fidelity!

2 How can my soul
   Possibly be your ransom,
   If the stations of my soul and yours
   Are not the same?

I Beheld him Ardently

1 I beheld him
   With the ardor of a lover,
   And my gaze left an impression
   On his cheeks

2 He noticed me,
   And I was certain of my passion,

19 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 72.
20 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 81.
And he left an impression on my heart
With his eyes

Do Not Follow Baseless Suspicions

1 O my hope,
   Is your fidelity within reach,
   So that I may seek it out,
   Or is it beyond my grasp?

2 If that which you fear is really the case,
   Then do not do it again,
   For one whose heart is faithful
   Is not equal to a treacherous one

3 If it is not,
   Then do not chide me,
   For if a man allows his heart to speculate,
   Then he will think bad thoughts

I have Divided Time

1 I have divided time in two halves,
   One for chiding you

---

21 Nykl’s edition has عارّد (“one who grants pardon”), but عارض (“a traitor”) is preferable, even though it is not listed among the emendations.
22 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 82. For discussion of this poem, see page 53 above.
23 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 82-83.
About what you have done,  
And one for anticipation

2 If my soul is certain  
That you will not forgive me  
For speculating about you  
And being wary and reluctant

3 By the One who, if He so wished  
Could grant victory to anyone,  
And could lend comfort  
To a sound, reverent heart

4 I have come to doubt, and I do not know,  
Because my love is so great;  
When you run out of ways to cause me to suffer,  
Will it still seem to you that I am at fault?

5 Even if all I wanted with you  
Was to gain your affection,  
You would be most generous in my eyes,  
Whether you avoid me or keep me company

6 If I were near you,  
I would chide you only a little, not more,  
Nonetheless, you will see me  
Praising you exceedingly

7 But I have speculations,  
And I only hope that things about you  
With which I would not be content  
Are not substantiated

All My Love was Led to You

1 Your qualities have gathered my wishes together  
After they had been scattered,

24 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 83.
And my love was led to you,
Whole

2 Except one quality
Which holds my mind captive
And my heart remains in fear of it,
As long as I live

3 May you stay away from it,
Except that a man in love
Feels passion for the very thought of the one
Whose betrayal he fears

The More he Reassures Me, the More I Fear

1 The more faithful he is to our love,
The more I love him,
And I keep him to myself
Twice as much as both of these

2 The more he reassures me,
The more I fear,
And I have no such luck
That my fear should abate

3 May no detractor trouble himself
By giving me advice,
For the likes of me
Would pay no heed to his advice

4 Let him mourn not for me
In my lowliness and humility,
For in this lowly state,
I am the more noble and illustrious

25 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 86. For discussion of this poem, see page 60 above.
I Will Never Regret Choosing You

1 You started out with a promise,
   But you turned your back on it,
   And I used you consider your promises
   A gift from you

2 My thoughts tell me
   Even now
   That you do not remain true
   To your promises

3 If your covenants
   Had not been altered
   And weariness did not appear
   Amidst your pure friendship

4 You would have stayed faithful
   To what you established in the beginning,
   But I suspect
   That you regret your previous actions

5 If you have come to regret
   Choosing me,
   I have never regretted
   Choosing you

6 If you have not betrayed me,
   Then why
   Have you turned away from
   The brotherhood we promised?

---
26 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 88.
Chastisement Disguised as Gratitude

1 I entrusted the fickleness of time
   With you,
   But it brought betrayal
   Beyond my worst fears

2 Your fidelity gave me strength;
   But nevertheless,
   The consequences of my boldness
   Made me taste misery

3 I came to you graciously,
   And the least of my rights,
   If you behave uprightly,
   Is to receive your forgiveness

4 It is sufficient for you
   That a friend should come to you
   With chastisement
   Disguised as gratitude

---

I Only Meant to Give you Advice

1 Why, since you have made
   My heart melt with desire,
   Do you stay away,
   And why have you decided to leave?

2 Before that time,
   I had done nothing wrong,
   Except that I forbade you
   From rejecting me

3 I only wanted you
   To be led by good guidance,
   When wisdom reached you
   Through my words

4 I did not want you to be vexed
   By ignoble men,
   Lest rumors and hearsay about you
   Proliferate

5 Lest friend and foe
   Hear them,
   And you feel regret
   In the presence of illustrious men

6 Not everyone believes
   What I say about you,
   That you ought to enjoy
   The highest reputation

7 So safeguard a soul
   Dearer to me than my own;
   For the sake of sparing you from harm,
   I offer my wealth and my family

8 And be certain
   That I have done nothing wrong
   And I have loved no one

28 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 89.
Besides you

9 And you shall find me
   Content with your love
   Obedient to your command
   To do lawful or unlawful things

10 By God Almighty!
   If my heart
   Disobeyed you,
   I would want to distance myself from it

11 Forgive me;
   And on the Day of Resurrection you will receive blessing,
   When a person in need of rest
   Finds a resting place

[27]

1 لَنْنَ كَانَ الرَّقِيبُ بَلاَءَ قُومٍ فَمَا عَنْدِي أَحَلُّ مِنْ رَقِيبِ
2 حِجَابُ الْأَلْفِ أَيْسَرُ مِنْ نَوَاهُ وَهَجَرُ الخَلِّ خَيْرٌ لِلأَدِيبِ
3 وَلَا أَبِيكَ مَا عَابَنَتْ شَيْئًا أَشَدَّ مِنْ الفَرَاقِ عَلَى الْقُلُوبِ

Worse Than a Spy

1 If a spy
   Is the scourge of men,
   I have something
   Worse than a spy

2 The concealment of the beloved
   Is easier to bear than abandonment on his part,
   And staying away from a dear friend
   Is best for a man of letters

3 By your father!
   I have never seen anything
   More grievous to hearts
   Than separation

[28]

29 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 93.
Shielding My Eyes from Broken Promises

1 O days,
How you do violence to me!
As though you have never before seen anyone so aggrieved,
Nor will again

2 Generous gifts like dust
Blowing into my eye,
And meanness that relents no more
Than closed eyelids trying to keep out the ashes

3 Who longs
To see a promise fulfilled?
Here I am, longing
For the fruits of promises

4 Broken promises only come
After promises are certified,
And promises are only made
Out of sincere friendship

5 My soul has aimed for
The best of luck with you,
But the loss of good fortune
Is only part of what it has lost

[29]

1643
30 See Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 388 for Nykl's emendation.
31 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 99. For discussion of this poem, see pages 174-175 above.
The Noblest of Men

1 If hearts
   Are rewarded,
   And I follow an even course
   In love,

2 Then why am I
   The most inconsequential of all men and jinn
   In your sight,
   But you are the noblest of them to me?

3 I have spent years
   Pleading for pure love,
   And I have not been granted the satisfaction
   Of visiting you

4 But the vicissitudes of time
   Have not relented
   Until I can no longer come to you
   Now receive your greetings

5 Hate me as much as you can,
   But be well,
   For you are the dearest to me
   Of all creatures

I Shall Obey You

1 You have commanded me
   Not to complain of love,
   And it is imperative
   That I do as you like

2 But I will not go beyond the bounds
   Of what you have said:

32 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 102.
33 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 103.
Making my obedience apparent
Is enough of a declaration

1 rider: 31 & 31

1. 

2. 

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7. 

8. 

9. 

10. 

Treat Me Well or Badly

1 You have not quenched my thirst
For your love
Nor released this captive
From his fetters

2 I have become humbled
On account of my love for you
Not for the sake of attaining
That for which I secretly hope

3 It is painful enough for my soul
That I know I am in love with you,
And this is reason enough
For you to be pardoned

4 So where do I go,
And what do I want
From the vicissitudes of time?
I tell them falsehoods and lies

5 You are the one

---

34 See Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 389 for emendations.
35 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 103-104. For discussion of this poem, see pages 60, 80 above.
Whose soul possesses
My heart’s love,
Whether or not this pleases it

6 My heart does not love you,
Simply because you show it kindness,
So that it may forget you
If you slight it

7 It was not a choice
That I may abandon,
Nor was it a matter of compulsion
To which my heart was brought in chains

8 Rather, it is one of God’s commands,
Indescribable,
Which the Merciful One
Has ordained

9 Nothing is compelling to the rational mind
But that which it can comprehend,
And you will never see reason
Comprehending love

10 Treat me well or badly,
But always remain mine,
And I will be grateful to you
In either case

1 By your life! What an ordeal I endure
When you are with me!

36 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 108.
And when you are far away,
All the world is as a prison to me

2 Why do I see myself
Meeting ruin at your hands,
And not drawing near to you
As a companion?

3 Did you mean to reject me when you said:
“May you envy him who wishes for my love,
The one I take as my intimate,
Whose company I keep”??

4 Indeed, the one who desires your love
Can be moved to envy over you,
And the one whose love is ardent
Contends for your love

5 If I do not vie for your love,
And I am not jealous over you,
Then – would that I knew! –
For whom would I vie?

6 Do not disdain my soul
When you are its beloved,
For every man falls in love
With one who is his like

The Vicissitudes Have Laid Low a Bold Heart

1 Alas for a heart moved
By a daring spirit,
One whose springs have dried up
After they had run abundantly

2 Tūgāflū ṣūratul-dhār fagharir ba‘almu‘ni
Wasta‘at bi‘adhul-warā’ wadhabatar
Fellama āḍālu ḥarjum karrat ‘ussakirah
‘Alayh wadhallat ‘abd ‘asšari‘ah
As his heart has dried up after it flowed abundantly
He has ceased to exist

3 Fa‘asbir ‘alaihim almasur rata ‘udā‘atuh
Bkull alwarid bi‘a‘ tamam nabā‘irah
Then he has ceased to exist
He has dried up

4 Tal‘irat ‘alaihim alna‘ibat fasbir‘atat
B‘jab‘rat ‘alayhim alna‘ibat fasbir‘atat
If it has dried up
It has dried up

5 Waqdd ka‘an sa‘ruf dhār fi‘l ‘a‘khawatuhu
Iqab ‘alayhim min alfakhr khāṭirah
If it has dried up
It will not fall in its shame

[Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 109.]
2 Time has forgotten about him,  
And he is deceived by his own wishes,  
And when he lost his resolve,  
He became daring again

3 He has become like a captive  
Who has endured many trials,  
And whose once-great kinsmen  
Have been humiliated

4 The vicissitudes have punished him,  
And they have inflicted him  
With every misfortune  
Short of death

5 The vicissitudes of time  
Have advanced toward him  
Every time has wandered  
In the ocean of thinking

Forgiveness is More Becoming

1 Do you recall what sorrow  
I felt on that day,  
Or is it enough  
That I sent a messenger to tell you?

2 Such is the state of a man  
Whose master has alienated him;  
He tries to be patient for a while,  
But then he cannot be so patient

3 His resentment increases,

38 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 117.
But he conceals it,
Since his love compels him
To apologize

4 He has done nothing wrong,
And he knows what slights he has forgiven,
But he cannot see a time
When he will receive forgiveness

5 By God! By God!
Do not gloat over his misfortune,
For forgiveness is more becoming of the master,
If he is able

While the Slanderer Sleeps

1 Whereas the slanderer sleeps,
Content with what he has witnessed,
And it is easy for him
To be the cause of comfort or distress

2 He has left me sleepless
In my passionate love,
And he has left my heart infatuated,
Tormented

3 May I be deprived of love
If I have been a faithful companion
To anyone but you,
Even as I have traversed the east and the west

4 If you abstain from doing things I do not like
Out of a sense of propriety,
Or keep your covenant with me,
Then do it as a gesture of good will

39 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 122.
Where Has our Brotherhood Gone?

1 My brother,
   How rudely you have treated me!
   How your estrangement from me
   Has fortified my enemies!

2 Your estrangement has become
   Like nourishing food to me, but
   That food might be fatal
   To this patient

3 You are my master!
   Where is the pure friendship?
   Where is the love
   And the fidelity?

4 You are that same brother
   You were long ago, but
   This brotherhood is not
   That same brotherhood

5 I have done wrong; I do not deny this
   So forgive me,
   For unjust treatment of one who seeks to make amends
   Is an act of enmity

6 I have rights
   You are obligated to fulfill, but
   For someone like me to mention such a thing
   Would be rude indeed

---

40 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 125. For discussion of this poem, see pages 130, 169 above.
May You Be Well, Even as I Suffer

1 When my predicament becomes difficult to endure,
   It lessens my pain that I am content
   For you to be well,
   Even while I am suffering

2 My fear is dispelled
   By your fidelity to our covenant;
   If not for you,
   I would not have fallen in love

3 Is it good
   That you have all but forgotten me,
   Been silent about my ordeal and my sleeplessness,
   Cast me aside?

4 I will be faithful to you,
   Whether you honor me or disgrace me,
   For you are worthy
   To bestow grace and honor

5 I would be ashamed before God
   To behave unjustly
   Toward my beloved,
   Or to complain of injustices I have suffered

---

41 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 126.
6 I will take away my soul’s right
   And give it to your soul,
   And I shall graciously forgive you,
   Even if you do not keep our covenant

7 Even though my soul is alone,
   I shall protect my friend
   Even though he is
   Tyrannical and unjust

8 If it is said: “Choose between
   Being with him and his well-being,”
   I would prefer to see my love disobeyed
   And see you well

9 You have more right
   To my longing and love,
   And in my mind,
   You are the pinnacle of virtue

10 Why have I been rejected
   As if I were an enemy,
   When I was once the beloved friend,
   And the most highly esteemed?

Will You Allow Me to Thank You?

1 May I die before you!
   Will you allow me to thank you? If so, I will thank you.
   Or will for forbid me?
   If so, I will bear the slight patiently

2 I am ever in need,
   If you will grant it to me,
   Of pardon

Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 127.
For transgressing my bounds

3 What right do I have
   To been seen as grateful to you,
   And what right have my virtues
   To be thanked in verse?

4 What do you think
   About one who does not see himself,
   If you chide him,
   As worthy of thanks or pardon?

I Keep Watch over the Stars

1 Is it within the bounds of justice
   To forbid your brother to thank you
   And to cast him aside, but not to forbid him
   From rejection and exile?

2 Yes, for a lover, it is just
   And within the bounds of love,
   When nothing can save him
   Except to receive pardon

3 Is it proper, according to the laws
   Of neighborliness, let alone love,
   That I should be left to spend the night

---

43 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 128. For discussion of this poem, see pages 175-179 above.
From the night prayer until the pre-dawn prayer

4 Keeping watch over stars
Whose pasture has not been entrusted to me,
And love is aflame in my heart,
Hotter than burning coals?

5 You are a brother to me;
You have the power to alleviate my sorrow,
But do you, or do you not,
Know what I am enduring?

6 At night your heart is devoid
Of the likes of my ordeal,
Just as I, on account of your love,
Am devoid of patience

7 I know that in patience
Lies solace,
But being so patient
Has shortened my life

8 Behold! When I am with you,
You find my company loathsome,
And when I am away,
Not a single thought of me crosses your mind

9 Behold! When friendship increased
Until it became love,
And you became my companion
In private and public

10 You tired of my brotherhood
And cast aside my friendship
And dismissed me,
Until I became confounded

1 جَعَلْتُ فَدَاكَ قَدْ طَالَ الْعَطَافٍ
2 وَلَسْنَ أَخَاكَ مِنْ يَرَعَكَ كُرْهُا
3 فَإِنْ تُرَغُّ الأَمَانَةَ لَا أُصِيبُهَا
4 يَطُولُ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ تُلْقِيْ خَلِيَّاً
Restore our Friendship or Release Me

1 May I be your ransom!
   Long have I been tenderly inclined to you,
   While you, with your cruel heart,
   Have treated me harshly

2 Your brother does not
   Remain loyal to you against his will
   Nor does he show affection toward you,
   In hopes of a reward

3 If you nurture the trust that is between us,
   I will never let it go,
   But if you do not,
   I will go away and leave you lonely

4 It will be difficult for you
   To have a faithful friend
   Who has had to wait so long
   For your friendship

5 One who so fears
   Lest you grow tired of his company
   That he is content to receive from you
   Only a paltry reward

6 If you are avoiding me
   To teach me a lesson,
   But your friendship
   And fidelity to me remain

7 Then grant me some relief
   Before my despair becomes so great
   As to cause suffering
   That knows no relief

---

Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 128. For discussion of this poem, see pages 90, 167-169 above.
8 But if not,  
Then cast aside my friendship once and for all,  
And be kind enough  
To set me free

9 When can the sick patient  
Be restored to health,  
When his weakness  
Is the work of the one who can heal him?

Tell Me if You Have Grown Tired of Me

1 I advised you to be cautious,  
Lest you be accused,  
But my advice was thrown back at me,  
And my counsel

2 If you have grown tired of me,  
Do not betray me,  
But tell me so,  
So that I may avoid vexing you with my visits

3 He who avoids his friend  
On account of some fault  
And who breaks their covenant,  
Understands that he has rescinded his promise

4 I am prevented,  
On account of my fidelity to our covenant  
And thinking well of your intentions,  
From finding fault with you

45 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 132.
5 You become greater and greater
In my estimation,
And I become less and less
In yours

6 I will be patient
As much as I am able,
Until you grow tired of avoiding me
And wish to see me again

I Endure the Embers of the Tamarisk

1 By my soul! You have claimed
That you are enamored
With the very thought of me
And that I avoid visiting you

2 Look again honestly
At what you have claimed,
That you might know which of us
Is suffering and tormented

3 Is it the one who acts wrongfully
And then denies what he has done
To his beloved
Or the one who confesses but meets with chastisement?

46 Ibn Dawūd, KZ, 133-134.
4 If you received the punishment
   You deserve,
   You would be angry,
   But I flee from the thought of leaving you

5 I endure the embers of tamarisk wood,
   Fearing lest I be burned;
   Were it not for love,
   It would be so difficult for me to leave

6 How long until I, longing for relief,
   Am released from my chains,
   Trusting the one who calls
   My truthfulness with him a lie

7 What have I done wrong
   That you may count against me,
   Except that I have no way
   Of leaving you?

8 I do not wish
   To make a case against you,
   And your forgiveness
   Is all I seek

9 If I flee from you,
   I can only flee toward you,
   And my only means of reaching you
   Is that I am exhausted from loving you

10 If you do what pleases me,
    You will have granted relief to your servant,
    But if you do not,
    Then only your servant is to blame

11 What is your opinion
    Of the one you own as a slave,
    Now that hardships have visited him,
    And your avoidance of him is pleasant?
I Would Never Treat You This Way

1 You know what sorrow I am enduring,
   So be gentle with your eyes
   And do not destroy me;
   May my father be your ransom!

2 Do not withhold the forgiveness
   Of one doubled over in pain,
   With his liver hot
   And his heart on fire with the flames of longing

3 If you were in my situation,
   You could not bear this suffering,
   And if I were in your situation,
   I would not do what you have done to me

4 If you rejected me
   In order to teach me a lesson,
   Then you have already done enough;
   You have already been excessive in edifying me

One-Sided Friendship

1 Why do I try to turn
   A face that will not turn toward me,
   And soften a heart
   That is not tender?

---

47 See Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 390. This reading is preferable, although it does not appear among the emendations.
48 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 135. This poem is attributed to Ibn Dāwūd.
49 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 137.
He is enamored of avoiding me,
   As I am enamored of loving him;
       By my life!
This is a very different definition of friendship!

I have shielded my eyes
   From the world and its beauty,
Because of my love,
   And I have set it aside for sadness and remorse

If my soul does not,
   Perish for your sake,
By God! I have even come to wish
   That I might perish

My Covenant is My Country

By your life!
   Being close to home
Does no good to a lover
   Without the bond of friendship with the one he loves

He who is far from home
   Is not a stranger;
   Rather, he who is treated cruelly
Is a stranger

He who is far from home,
   While his beloved is faithful to their covenant,
   Even when he is at the ends of the earth,
Is at home indeed.

Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 142. For discussion of this poem, see pages 128-130 above.
Do Not Make Elegant Excuses

1 You began with a promise,
   So be faithful to it,
   And do not let it fall victim
   To the vicissitudes of time

2 Do not measure out for me
   An elegantly worded excuse,
   For admitting guilt is better
   Than some excuses

I Will Demand his Forgiveness

1 I lament to God,
   Of one who made a display of visiting me,
   And when my heart embraced him,
   He ungenerously dismissed it

2 I shall gladly commission my soul
   To sue for its debt from him,
   Until I see him distraught
   At what he has done

3 I will demand his forgiveness,
   As long as he is so ungenerous,
   And I shall restrain my tongue
   From responding in kind to his disapproval

4 Sometimes I wish,
   That instead of apologizing,
   I had kept my silence,
   And not said such things

---

51 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 143.
52 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 143. For discussion of this poem, see page 32 above.
My Crime Warrants a Punishment

1. My crime warrants a punishment,
   But it is possible to overlook it,
   And the more worthy thing,
   Is to have mercy on him who is truthful.

2. If you do not overlook
   Your rights,
   Then do not overlook
   My rights.

My Apology is Met with Distortions and Lies

1. My apology is met
   With distortions and lies,
   And I wish for nothing
   Except what pleases you.

2. I have acted badly,
   And by the beauty of bygone times,
   If you forgive me,
   It will not be without reason.

---

53 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 144.
54 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 144.
Fidelity Keeps Watch over Me

1 It is as though you have sent a spy
   To watch over my thoughts,
   One to watch where I look,
   And one to keep track of what I say.

2 Since you left me,
   Whenever I see anything
   That would offend you,
   I say, “The spies have seen me.”

3 Since that time,
   If ever a jesting remark escapes my lips
   When you are not present,
   I say, “The spies have heard me.”

4 Every time a thought
   Of someone else
   Comes to my mind,
   They pull on the reins.

5 Whereas ardent lovers divert themselves
   From their love
   By drinking wine
   Or listening to singing maidens,

6 That which would distract someone else
   Only increases my longing
   To be near you,
   And I grow restless of being where I am.

7 Honest young men,
   I have grown tired of their company;
   I have chastely restrained my eyes from them
   And my tongue.

55 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 146. For discussion of this poem, see pages 116-120, 133-134 141, 164, 171 above.
8 Whenever my continence
Offers me consolation,
Just then I see you
Everywhere I look

Your Brother Did not Mean to Shun You

1 Your brother, who has become infatuated
   With the very thought of you
   Turns to you today in repentance
   For what came before

2 If you do not visit him
   Out of sheer desire to visit him
   Or because you miss him,
   Then do it out of graciousness

3 Indeed the brother who wishes to spare you
   What he has suffered,
   Regrets what he has done,
   If it would please you for him to regret

4 By God! When he avoided you,
   It was not because he was tired of you,
   And when he spoke sharply to you,
   It was not merely to make you suffer

5 Do not be so angry as to betray
   The one who has only avoided you against his will,
   Who only pretended to oppose you
   And to express anger toward you

6 For nothing has consoled him

56 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 147-148.
Or distracted him from the thought of you;
He has only been delayed
In visiting you as soon as he wished

1 I turn to you, seeking forgiveness
   For breaking a covenant of friendship,
   So that you might safeguard
   My eyes from sleeplessness

2 I have done wrong,
   But my pleas have no effect on you,
   So here I stand,
   Confessing without witnesses

3 Your refusal
   Was easy on me,
   But I refuse to listen
   To your refusal

4 Tell me –
   May I no longer treat you badly! –
   Do you consider it permissible
   To violate the conditions of a covenant?

5 O soul,
   What you did was wrong,
   So even if you are granted salvation,
   Do not repeat your misdeed

6 How many people have acted cruelly,
   Intentionally,

---

57 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 148. For discussion of this poem, see page 31 above.
Repeatedly,
And never tasted the sleeplessness of regret?

O Heart, Your Beloved has Betrayed You

1 O heart, the one you have loved
   Has betrayed you,
   So do not weep for him
   Anymore

2 Your preoccupation with thinking
   About how he has changed
   Is even greater than
   Than what you have felt with others

3 So go, and if someone
   Does not arrive at the place where he began,
   His pure happiness
   Gives way to sorrow

4 So return to God
   In all things,
   For you will never be able
   To overcome His power

I Regret Apologizing to You

1 Choose which brother you will

58 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 149.
59 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 151-152. For discussion of this poem, see page 60 above.

232
And take him as a bosom friend,
For I do not want
A bosom friend

2 Today I repent
Of all my previous repentance;
You have become little in my eyes,
Though you once were great

3 If my beloved does not find a way
Not to betray me,
I will find a way
To be assuage my love of him

4 By God! I have neither satisfied
The urge to love you,
Nor moved anyone
To slander you

Which of us has Profited?

1 I limited my soul to you
Until it imagined,
Even, was certain,
That it should seek no one except you

2 It wished for a replacement for you
When you treated it cruelly,
But it was confounded,
As though God had created no one else

3 If you consider
How I went away disappointed
And how you betrayed me,

Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 154.
You will know which of us suffered the greater disappointment

4 You have earned blame,
   And I have gained insight
   Into your character,
   So see which of us has profited

5 I shall thank the days
   For the harm they have done on account of you,
   But I shall not be thankful for the wrongdoing
   Of anyone except the days

   Your Heart’s Treachery Cannot Be Concealed

1 I still lie about you
   To confound our enemies,
   But your heart’s treachery
   Cannot be concealed

2 Until I am satisfied that you are sad
   For mistreating me
   And giving our enemies
   Rumors to spread

3 When I told you,
   I remained vulnerable
   Before you
   In the midst of the Sura of the Heights

4 May God curse you!
   Go and find safety
   In the company of fools
   And the lowly!

61 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 154-155.
Anticipation

1 In fear of separation
   My body\textsuperscript{63} suffers such torments
   That my heart almost bursts
   From the pain

2 It fears the moment of separation
   Even when we are together,
   And it weeps
   With swiftly flowing tears

3 If it were as content
   With the present situation
   As it is
   With what it expects

4 Sickness or health
   Would be as one to it,
   But the anticipation of separation
   Is more grievous and more painful

---

You Have Cast Aside a Brother

1 You have cast aside
   A full-blooded brother,  
\[62\] Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 160-161.  
\[63\] Literally, “liver.”  
\[64\] Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 165. For discussion of this poem, see page 96 above.
But do not be fooled
By my decorous patience

2 If all mankind were gathered together,
   You alone
   Would be the dearest to me
By all accounts

3 May God preserve you!
   Do not think
   That I have betrayed you
   Or even thought to betray you

4 By God Almighty!
   If my heart loved anyone else,
   I would not suffer it
   To reside in my breast

5 The greatest thing
I have suffered at your hand,
Is that I remain faithful to you,
But you know not

65 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 167. For discussion of this poem, see pages 169-172 above.

Make Amends, O Heart

1 My fidelity persists
   Despite your cruelty,
   And I am overcome with longing
   That knows no consolation
2 I have waited
   Longing for your visit,
   Although, in the past,
   I was obstinate and stubborn

3 I continue to conceal
   The secret of our love,
   But it would be most cruel of me
   To conceal it from you

4 Like one who blows a trumpet
   And muffles the sound
   Or strikes a drum
   Under a cloth

5 Shame on you, O heart!
   Be strong,
   And when you lose your way,
   Hope for a path to deliverance

6 Do not make a decision
   In ignorance,
   And if you offend someone,
   Do not persist in your enmity

7 Console your anger
   By keeping covenants
   And salve your bitterness
   By remaining faithful

8 For more grievous
   Than bearing reproach for your pure happiness
   Is when pure happiness perishes
   And bonds of brotherhood are severed

9 Surrender to your love
   And remain in your weakened state,
   This is the dearest remedy
   For him who seeks a cure
I Lament to God, Not to You

1 You tell the calumniators
   That I have behaved shamefully toward you
   And that I have not kept
   The covenant we made

2 I have intended no harm –
   May God be my witness! –
   But you have cast shame on me
   With your accusations

3 You have intentionally betrayed our covenant
   And caused me to fear, and I have feared,
   And if you reassured me,
   I would be assured

4 I lament to God, not to you,
   For whenever I lament
   To you of my suffering,
   You make me suffer even more

I Shall be Content with what God Has Ordained

1 I shall consign
   All my troubles to God,
   And be satisfied with what He has ordained
   And content

2 I shall do this until

---

66 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 172.
67 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 172-173.
I reach the thought
Of that which was between us,
Which I cannot offer up

3 By God, if I had to choose
Between you, though you betray me,
And between all that is in Heaven and Earth,
Once and for all

4 I would consider you
To be my good fortune,
Except that I am not content
With that which pleases you

Between Thirst and Vicious Dogs

1 Because of my overwhelming longing,
I cannot but be near you,
But you avoid me and revile me,
So I can only stay away

2 You have sent a spy
To be my heart’s fellow;
Whenever I think your rejection easy to bear,
He makes it difficult

3 Here I stand before you,
Laid low by trials;
Whenever your caravan is far from me,
I wish for it to be near

4 It is not out of exasperation
   That I have avoided you,
   Nor is it for sport
   That I have kept your company

5 When I scolded you,
   I only meant to give you advice,
   And when I left you alone,
   It was only out of respect

6 You leaving me,
   Is like taking back a gift;
   I will be content with anything from you,
   Because it is so painful to miss you

7 If a man is forbidden to drink
   From fresh, cool streams,
   Kept away by angry dogs
   Baring their teeth

8 If he has nothing else to drink,
   And he fears lest death
   Humiliate him,
   He drinks

9 If what a man wills
   What has not been destined for him,
   Then he wills what has been ordained,
   Whether he likes it or not

Sincerity is Elusive

1 I visit a barrage
   Of compliments upon him,
   And who has ever seen a lover
   Dispense flattery?

69 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 178.
2 When I fear lest he betray me,
He affects fidelity,
And my fear abates,
But my apprehension remains

1 Alas, O people,
For the ever-increasing love
And the never-ending homesickness
Of the traveler when he is far from home

2 I set out seeking my good fortune;
If I return,
Then leaving again
Will bring me great misfortune

3 I am like one who has been bitten,
And the doctor knows not the nature of his sickness,
So he treats him
With the venom of snakes

4 The treatment has the same effect
As the sickness already present,
What a strange and deadly
Sickness you are!

The Snakebite

Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 178.
Enjoy Bidding Your Beloved Farewell

1 Enjoy bidding your beloved
   Farewell,
   For after you part,
   You shall not meet again

2 For how much abandonment and betrayal
   Have you been made to swallow,
   How much loss
   And deprivation?

3 How many cups
   More bitter than death
   I have drunk,
   And never did my hand recoil from them!

4 In all that I have endured,
   I have never seen anything
   More painful
   Than separation without saying farewell

5 Exalted be God!
   All relationships,
   No matter how long they last
   Lead to separation

My Love has Reached the Highest Level

1 I have seen that my love
   Has reached such a level
   That I cannot
   Go beyond

---

71 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 185. For discussion of this poem, see pages 172-175 above.
72 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 197.
2 When we parted, I remembered
What had happened before,
And I was certain
That I had only been jesting

3 By the One who, if He had so willed,
Might not have created separation,
I am afflicted,
And I know not where to go

Memories Mingle Life’s Sweetness with Sadness

1 Enough sadness!
Every time I see that land
My longing for you
Increases

2 Whenever I begin to enjoy
Life’s diversions,
I remember the bygone days
I spent with you

3 These memories
Have tainted my life’s sweetness;
I say, “This sweetness will pass;
How sad I am over you!”

Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 203.
My Soul Longs For Ḥijāz

1 I lament to God
   Of tears that cast a shade
   And a soul that, whenever its longing became strong,
   Was humbled

2 It pines for the land of Ḥijāz
   And its surrounding deserts,
   Where the winds pass through
   And dissipate

3 There I am,
   Unless my soul is deceived by its wishes,
   For I have heard the riders urging on their mounts
   In the distance

4 Do I refrain from drinking
   From the valley of Zubāla?
   The dogs have drunk from it
   And fallen ill

5 May God pour blessings on al-Qā`
   And its sands, and Liwā!
   My soul is tenderly inclined to it
   And longs for it

6 May He make Liwā
   Water the twin peaks of Zarūd and Murbakh!
   May they know no thirst,
   As long as the clouds cast their shade!

7 I began, but I did not remain
   Lost in thought even for a moment,
   For it is my soul’s lot
   To be delayed in going there

8 I have become heartbroken
   Over what I have lost;
   Such is one’s opinion

---

74 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 205. For discussion of this poem, see page 162 above.
When it is unsubstantiated

The Slave of Longing does not Fear

1 May God water the sands of al-Qa`\textsuperscript{\textdegree} with torrents, and Dim\textsuperscript{\textdegree}
That the effaced traces may spring to life

2 I long for Najd, but all around it
Are things that I fear will keep me away
And obstacles

3 But he who is a slave to longing
Does not fear
The sadness of the deserts
And the blazing hot nights

4 Whatever they may bring, so be it,
For that which God decrees cannot be prevented

\textsuperscript{75} Ibn D\textsuperscript{\textdegree}w\textsuperscript{\textdegree}, KZ, 208. For discussion of this poem, see page 157 above.
The Blazing Heat of Love

1 Love called out to me,
   When the riders were sleeping,
   And the sun was blazing
   In the midsummer

2 The heat haze was blazing fiercely,
   The soul was about to depart,
   Opinions were going their separate ways,
   And death was resolute

3 The wilderness was dusty and desolate
   As far as the eye can see,
   As though its features
   Were trembling in the mirage

4 Obeying the command of love,
   I woke them up,
   Though most of them,
   Were half-awake, not asleep

5 When I say, “Arise!”
   One of them said,
   “This one has gone mad.
   Leave him alone; stay away from him.”

6 They know what they felt
   On that hot day
   When they set off,
   But they do not know what I feel

7 The heat of separation,
   When combined with rejection
   Is a heat that burns
   Only on the inside

76 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 208-209. For discussion of this poem, please see pages 130-132, 151 above.
Nothing is Worse than Waiting

1 Your beauty is more
   Than that of visage and voice,
   And you are more radiant
   Than the sun and the moon

2 If you but knew
   What sleeplessness I have suffered,
   And what sadness I feel
   Thinking about you

3 And what love for you
   I hold in my heart,
   Then you would not mourn
   For what the rain has done to my body

4 How can the rain
   Harm one
   Whose liver is aflame
   And whose heart burns with love?

5 If the Sea of China
   Were spread out around you,
   I would think it
   A mirage that would leave no trace

6 If you allowed it,
   Though scorching heat might be between us,
   Then my desire would make even the fires of Hell
   Seem little by comparison

7 Do not lie,
   For nothing is more painful
   To one who longs for his beloved
   Than the pain of waiting

---

77 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 209. For discussion of this poem, see page 157 above.
I Have Crossed Deserts to Find You

1 How many valleys around your lands,
   And how many banners so high
   That the tops of them seemed
   To be woven into the heavens

2 And how many meadows,
   Dark as a solar eclipse,
   Their pebbles like coal
   In the darkness of night

3 So dark that, if the sun
   Shone brightly on them,
   You would think their banners
   Were trembling in the mirage

4 And how many deserts
   Spanning as far as the eye can see,
   Lands of the *jinn*,
   Blazing hot

5 Wayless, dusty deserts
   Where even guides know not
   In which direction
   To seek relief

6 I have crossed
   On an emaciated, hungry camel
   Strong of hooves,

---

78 Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 211. For discussion of this poem, see pages 155-156, 166-167 above.

---
Swift of gait

7 Longing for you,
   And if not for what passion I am suffering,
   God’s country
   Would have brought me relief

8 If you are generous with me,
   It is your right to do so,
   And if you are stingy with me,
   I will not blame you or embarrass you

You Have Only Yourself to Blame

1 Do you avoid the ones you love
   When they are close at hand
   And seek them out
   When they are far away?

2 Do you miss them
   After they have gone away,
   And do you ask the encampments
   Where they have gone?

3 You did not ask about them
   When they were nearby,
   And now you beseech
   The abodes for an answer

79 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 219.
4 You are like one who buys
Effaced ruins,
Your heart about to take flight
With passion

5 Blame yourself;
Do not blame the mounts,
And die of grief;
For it is right to be cautious

6 You heard that they were leaving,
But you remained at home,
And I have lost you;
How could you make such a decision?

7 When rejection
Hands a lover over
To separation,
His heart is forced to obey

8 The one you have loved is far away,
Though you are nearby;
Do not tire yourself,
For you have no valid excuse

9 When the one you love
Turns away from you and leaves,
Your love is stubborn,
And your patience is disgraced

The Abodes Gave me no Consolation

1 I pass among the abodes
80 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 219-220. For discussion of this poem, see pages 132-134, 166 above.

250
Like a stranger,
Asking everyone I meet
About the one I love

2 Indeed, being far from home
   Does not help
   One who is already
   Desperate and despondent

3 I tied up my mount,
   But the abodes did not answer me,
   And they certainly did not
   Console my weeping

4 I said to them,
   "Your silence is wondrous indeed,
   But it would be more wondrous
   If you would answer me."

5 I lamented to the abodes,
   But they brought me no relief,
   Rather, they increased my longing
   To see my beloved’s face.

6 Who will rescue a man
   From the brink of death,
   When the one who caused his affliction
   Is the only one who can heal him?

---

When the Breeze Hastens

1 When the breeze hastens
   Toward the one I love,
   It is more grievous to me

81 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 224.
Even than being separated from my beloved

2 My beloved went far away
   And my heart became jealous
   Of the East wind
   And the South

3 If the West wind
   Could determine what comes to pass,
   It would forbid the North wind
   From leaving me

4 My friend, from your departure
   I have derived my fate;
   Is it my destiny
   To meet you again?

5 May I be denied love
   If my heart ever called out
   For a far-away friend
   Besides you!

---

Lightning in Tihāma

1 I lay awake,
   As lightning flashed in Tihāma,
   As though its luster
   Were a lover’s heart

2 As it flashed,
   It increased my longing,
   And were it not for you,
   Lightning flashes would not fill me with longing

3 When you are near,

---

82 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 229. For further discussion of this poem, see pages 157-159 of this dissertation.
My longing does not torment me like this,
But when you are away,
My every thought makes me miss you

4 Consider a servant
Whose only refuge is you
So that you might grant him the solace of your company
While he is still able to benefit from it

What Ghaylān ibn `Uqba Said

1 Does lightning glistening
In the middle of the night frighten you?
Yes, everything that happens to a lover
Frightens him

2 Do you fear the lightning even now,
While your beloved is near?
What, then, if it flashes
When the beloved is away?

3 Winds blew,
Increasing the lover’s passion,
And the rhapsodizing doves
Hastened to the thickets

4 And you kept the company of people,
But you did not find your friend among them,
And your tears

Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 232-233. For discussion of this poem, see pages 179-182 above.
Rebelled against you

5 You ceased to recite poetry
   When your beloved was away,
   Even though poetry remained
   Widespread among the people,

6 Except what Ghaylān ibn `Uqba said,
   Remorseful,
   “Will the days that have gone by
   Ever return?”

7 He wished
   That you were not there,
   That you had not traveled,
   While your beloved stayed behind

8 Everything bothers you,
   Even when your beloved is near,
   And when he is away,
   Everything makes you miserable

9 Woe to you!
   Do not be so quick to leave your beloved,
   For it equals death,
   So think of the consequences of what you are doing

The Fires of Love
1 I have lost sleep over a campfire in Ṭulayḥa;
   It was kindled
   And remained long enough to be seen,
   Then it veiled itself

84 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 239. For discussion of this poem, see page 158 above.
254
2 It flared up and died down,
   Then it appeared again
   And rose high above the sand dunes
   And then diminished

3 But my love did not die down
   As the flames died down,
   But my heart’s passion was aﬂame
   With a blazing fire

4 It was too far away
   To meet my gaze,
   But when it glistened,
   So did my tears glisten

5 I recalled the times
   That will not return,
   Those days have not been forgotten,
   And I cannot pretend to forget them

6 As soon as the flames diminished,
   They sharpened my love pangs as they were kindled again,
   And the fires of love were not extinguished
   When the flames were extinguished

Even the Doves Weep for their Love

1 Behold!  The mourning of the doves
   Stirs longing in the hearts of me,
   But for me, the mourning of the doves
   Is a consolation

2 If doves weep,
   And they are only beasts,
   But they are disturbed
   By separation from their loved ones, and abandonment

85 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 245-246. For discussion of this poem, see page 159 above.
3 Then what dread does a friend feel,
    When he has loved since his youth,
If he can no longer visit his friend
Or be near him?

O heart, do not fear being far
From your beloved, and be patient,
For you cannot avert
What has been decreed

If you are a believer,
And He will keep you safe.
Spare me from the vicissitudes of fate!

Everything God ordains
Will come to pass,
And what He does not ordain
Will not come to pass

Trust in the Merciful One

Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 251.
Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 258.
Lead My Camel, O Caravan Leader

1 When we came to our mounts
   And brought the saddles,
   And we had not even yet
   Tied them on

2 I went directly to you
   To delay you for a moment,
   Because if I left you,
   I might not see you again

3 I have not forgotten
   Since you fastened my camel’s saddle,
   And I said to the caravan leader,
   “Why do you not lead her?

4 It is as though you do not know
   That some moments pass you by
   And you never know
   When it might benefit you to have seized them”

5 “If you did not want to be separated from your beloved
   You would have slaughtered her;
   You would not have sought out
   Someone to lead her”

6 How wondrous of me,
   And how patient my heart’s core has been with me,
   Though I am powerless against the one
   Who deceives it

7 I guard it zealously against the one
   Who owns all that surrounds it,
   And I will willingly surrender it
   To one who wants it
Why Does the Vision of You not Visit Me?

1 May I be your ransom!
The thought of our impending separation
Has only entered my mind
In the past few nights

2 By your love!
Your absence has caused me
Desire upon desire,
Though you despise me

3 It has made certain that,
These last few nights,
I have lain awake,
And the imaginary vision of you has not visited me

4 As I lay on my bed,
It was as though your love
Was turning my heart over
Above a cooking fire

5 The phantom vision
Has discovered what I feel,
But you do not see him visiting me
In this state

6 Tell me,
By the One who chose you to be my friend,
Have you forbidden the vision of you
From visiting me?

7 Or is it the sleeplessness,
Which you have caused,
That keeps the phantom vision away?
It matters not to me

---

88 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 260-261.
Godspeed You, Phantom Vision

1 In the past, I was not content with
   The happiness of being with you,
   Nor did I remain
   In such great joy

2 When we parted
   And distance set in between us,
   I was content when a phantom vision of you
   Came to visit me

3 It assuaged my weakness
   To see you in my dreams;
   Your vision entered and greeted me,
   Then rose up and bade farewell

4 By my soul and my family!
   A phantom vision came near to me
   And cured my sickness
   And then went away and made me sicker

5 Alas! I know not
   Whence he came to me,
   And I know not, since he left,
   Where he has gone

6 May God protect him,
   Come what may,
   Though I, on account of his departure,
   Shed tears of blood

89 Nykl’s edition reads

90 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 265.
Naught Remains but a Memory

1 May God pour blessings for the sands of al-Qā`,
   Amidst the palm trees,
   And the lone sand dune
   Among the acacia trees

2 The tomb of al-`Ibādī
   Outside of Murbakh,
   And Murbakh and the rivulets
   And the hills

3 The twin peaks of Zarūd, and Tūlayha
   And the dunes of Liwā;
   It is at their hands
   That I have grown weak

4 Naught remains of their delights
   But a memory,
   On account of which
   My soul has been rent

5 A fortress
   Overlooking the valley of Zubāla;
   In its shade
   I have held back my tears

6 Most dear to soul,
   And most grievous
   And most worthy in its estimation
   Are these villages

7 Do not despair!

---

91 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 271-272. For discussion of this poem, see pages 159-162 above.
Perhaps God will hasten
To help the oppressed
And release them from their suffering

8 And hearts will be content
That once were angry with me
And return to me
Without their anger having been assuaged

I Have Misjudged Time

1 May God preserve bygone times!
I misjudged their rights,
Though I was learned in such matters,
Experienced

2 Nights when the north wind
Did not bring me bad fortune,
On your behalf, and your promises were not empty,
Like lightning without rain

3 Nights when I gave to love
More than its fair share
Of fidelity and finesse,
Righteousness and refinement

4 I have never seen friendship repaid as a fault,
Even after such a long time has gone by

[85]

Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 274-275. For discussion of this poem, see pages 80, 83-85, 102-110, 112, 119, 121, 141, 148, 151-152, 154, 164, 171-172 above.
It pains a man in love
To think of it

5 I have never seen an arrow pierce the breastplate,
Aiming straight for the heart,
Then fall short
And miss its mark

6 There is no pardon for a sword
If it reaches the bowels
And then goes dull,
When even bones could not deaden its blow

7 Nor for a steed that outruns the wind
Without growing tired,
Then when it goes to stands up,
It is too weak, and it collapses

8 Then where is your pardon,
For casting me aside, belittling me,
And breaking the covenants
That we certified in our youth

9 If a miscreant is punished accordingly,
Then to do violence to him
Beyond what his crime warrants
Is unlawful excess

My Heart Cleaves to Zubāla

1 God bless Zubāla
And grant it water,
And many times more
Than these prayers!

2 Is there a way back to Najd
And the water of its valley
And the sweet-smelling
Breezes there?

3 Will I return
To Ṭulaḥa
In my present state
Before I die?

4 That I may drink
From the water of its skies
And be refreshed
And pasture with the gazelles in the wilderness

5 That my heart may cleave
To the sands of Zubāla
And be the companion
Of its ostriches and antelopes

Dearer than my Soul

1 You who have denied my eyes
The pleasure of sleep,
My soul safeguards you
Against indignation and sadness

2 By God! My soul has found rest
Nowhere except in you,
And it has longed
For no country

87 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 288-289.
3 I will not answer in kind,
   Even if love weakens my body,
   To what you have said to me.
   You have betrayed me; I have not betrayed you

4 Consider me a stranger,
   Blamed on account of you;
   Do I not say truthfully
   That time has treated me unjustly?

5 Do not cease to abide
   By that which you know
   For certain about me
   To abandon me over mere rumors

6 For since I first came to know love
   In my heart, you have been
   Dearer to me, by God,
   Than my soul is to my body

Silent Tears

1 When we stood together
   To say goodbye,
   We exchanged words
   Too many to count

2 My tears flowed swiftly,
   And I turned away,
   To spare you the sight

95 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 297. For discussion of this poem, see pages 153-154 above.
Lest you see that I was weeping

3 My eyes were like a cloud
   About to burst
   As its thunder
   Trails it hastily

4 The roll of thunder
   Keeps urging the cloud on,
   And the winds of the north
   Seemed to blow it off course

5 It did not let up
   Until it had wept enough
   That the hillsides smiled at each other
   And the branches became green with foliage

6 Does a lady string together
   The jewels of her necklace
   When its central stone
   Has fallen off and been lost?

7 My companion said:
   “Why are you so pale?”
   And your eyes
   Are pouring tears!”

8 I declined to give an answer
   And stayed silent,
   For silence is the best thing
   For the hearts of lovers

May My Tears Console Only Me

1 If you reject me,
   I will not let you see my distress,
   But do not think

---

Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 302.
That I can stand it if you leave

2 The only thing that stops
My tears from flowing
Is my fear lest someone who envies me
Take pleasure in my suffering

3 The flood of tears,
Even after they have ceased to flow,
Is a great comfort
To one wracked by sorrow

I am passionately in love
With the memory of Karkh,
And all my love
Is for the one who dwells in Karkh

2 I have drunk a cup
Of Muḥammad’s rejection;
It has weakened my bones
And overwhelmed my brain

3 I fear not what suffering may come
Since I have lost him;
Does the victim, after being slaughtered,
Fear the pain of being skinned?

Rejection from Muḥammad’s Hand is Like Wine

1 I am passionately in love
With the memory of Karkh,
And all my love
Is for the one who dwells in Karkh

2 I have drunk a cup
Of Muḥammad’s rejection;
It has weakened my bones
And overwhelmed my brain

3 I fear not what suffering may come
Since I have lost him;
Does the victim, after being slaughtered,
Fear the pain of being skinned?

97 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 305. For further discussion of this poem, see pages 29, 90, 114-116, 151, 165 above.
98 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 309.
I Always Keep Promises

1 Even if rumors
   About my personal matters reach you,
   The things you have confided in me
   Will never be spread as rumors

2 May God guarantee
   That I be faithful
   To one who keeps his covenants with me
   Or one who allows our alliances to lapse

3 Be certain
   That I will never disclose your secrets
   For I would never disclose
   Even my enemies’ secrets

4 I am not to be praised
   For keeping covenants,
   For the least of men’s rights
   Is to have promises kept

---

Sleepless Nights

1 How many nights
   Have I lain awake until morning,
   With the stars in the sky
   Inching by ever so slowly

2 My right hand on my heart,
   Cooling its heat,
   My left hand under my cheek,
   My eyes shedding tears

---

99 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 314.
3 I have become determined
To be steadfast in love until I am exhausted,
But my heart is about to overflow
With passion

4 Calumniators do not know,
To say nothing of enemies,
About my secret,
For I am not the sort to reveal secrets about you

5 If what I am saying is a valid excuse,
Then may you accept it,
But if it is only an apology,
Then may you be forgiving

[93]

1 ارَئِ كَلَّ مَرْتَابٍ يَخَافُ خَيَالَهُ كَانَ عُبُوْنَ الْعَالَمِينَ تُرَاقِيَّةٍ
2 يُكَادُ لَقُرْطٍ الْحَوْفِ يَبْدِي صَنِمْرُهُ لْكِلّ إِمْرٍ يُخْشِى عَلَيْهِ عَوَائِيْنَْ
3 عَلِيَّ بَوَادٍ مَضْنُ يَخَافُ اغْتِيَابَةٍ يُثْبِتُ لَدِينَهَا فِي الأَنَامِ مَنَاقِيْبٍ
4 فَايَاكُمَا يَا صَاحِبِي وَمَشْهُدًا تَسْيِكُمَا مَا سَرَّ مِنْهُ عَوَائِيْنَْ
5 وَإِيَاكُمَا وَالْذِنْبُ تَرْكِبَانِهْ وَإِنَّ كَانَ فِي الأَخْيَانِ يُعْدَرُ رَاكْبِيْنَْ
6 فَمَا كَلَّ مَعَذُورٍ حَقِيقًا يُعْدَرُهُ وَلَا كَلَّ مَعَذُولٍ تَعِبُ مُعَابِيْنَْ

Anxiety

1 He who is in doubt
Fears his own shadow
As if the eyes of all the world
Were watching him

2 His fear is so great
That he nearly reveals his counsel
To everyone
At whose hands he fears punishment

3 I am in the presence of Bedouins;
If someone is feared lost,
They praise his virtues
Among men

4 Beware, my two friends,

100 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ. 316-317.
Of a scene so gruesome
Its horrors make you forget
How beautiful it can be

5 Beware, my two friends
Of the crime you are committing,
Even though, in some cases,
The criminal might be forgiven

6 Not everyone who is pardoned
Deserves his pardon,
Nor does everyone who is blamed
Deserve his blame

He Cannot Conceal his Love

1 It does no good for a lover
To conceal his passion
In words, when his longing
Is evident in his sighs

2 He conceals his love
But it is not concealed from anyone,
Not even the roan camels
And the riders and the caravan leader

I am Forced to Complain of Injustice

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101 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 321.
102 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 321.
1 Suppose that I have concealed
   The love I feel;
   Have my thoughts not conveyed
   The torments I am suffering?

2 I am still loath
   For people to see me
   As guilty of injustice
   Or complaining of injustice done to me

3 By God!
   I have never turned away
   From our covenant;
   I have rather regarded it as a blessing

4 Today my heart melts
   With desire and passion for you,
   But you do not mourn
   For my heart

5 Do not be surprised
   If I have no choice but to complain of injustice,
   For the time has come
   For the victim of injustice to speak out

---

Stars in the Daytime

1 You have shown me the stars
   Coursing through the daytime sky,
   And I see no difference
   Between morning and evening

2 I concealed my love for you
   Until I became too weak,
   And my concealment came to reveal
   What I conceal

---

103 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ. 322.
Where is the Path to God’s Country?

1 People scorn me,
   For, ever since my youth,
   I have been in love
   With sound hearts

2 When the darkness has been mingled
   And they are drunk
   On cups of somnolence
   Until the morrow

3 My intoxication
   Is one that robs me of sleep,
   And I know not
   Whether I am coming or going

4 Will I find a way
   To God’s pleasant country,
   One that will lead me
   On the path to success?

5 Indeed, this earth
   Has vast, pleasant lands
   But I am forbidden
   To venture toward them

6 What good can come to an eagle
   With sharp eyes for hunting,
   If that eagle
   Has no wings?

---

104 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 329-330. For discussion of this poem, see pages 53, 109-114, 120, 152, 157, 167 above.
The Black-Haired Shaykh

1 She said: “It would have been easy
   To pardon you
   In the days when your hair
   Grew black on your head”

2 I said to her,
   With tears running down
   Like a necklace unstrung,
   Its beads scattering

3 “If this white hair
   Has fooled you, then know
   That I have taken old age as my fellow
   Since I was a beardless youth

4 Is it on account of white hair
   That the consolation of love is withheld?
   Were it not for love,
   I would not take solace in white hair!”

I Give you my Soul

1 I shall give you my soul
   And never betray you
   Nor listen to anyone
   Blame or chastise you

2 Despair the likes of which

---

Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 341.
Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 347.
No man has seen,
And patience that resists
The vicissitudes of fate

3 Beyond anything I have been told
And anything I have seen,
But I can see no way
To leave you

No One can Override God’s Power

1 I tried to decree something,
But it had not been ordained,
And I have not seen anyone
Able to override what has been ordained

2 I have been patient with God’s decrees,
Judicious,
But despair is so very similar
To victory

3 Praise and thanks be to God!
There is none like unto Him!
How passionately zealous
Are the vicissitudes of time!

Tears of Despair

1 He says: “Is it on account of despair
That you weep for love?”
I said: “Does one weep
Before he reaches the point of despair?

I weep for him
For whose return I no longer hope,
And weep
Because I have no more hope"

I Will Never Forget the Days of Pure Happiness

1 Because of you I was safe from the vicissitudes of time,
   But time is treacherous,
   And I consoled my heart about you,
   But the heart is wary

2 This is not because of some other friend
   Whose company I have chosen
   Instead of yours,
   And that I have never betrayed our covenant of friendship

3 But the vicissitudes of time
   Have hastened to bring calamities
   And made me despair
   That my fortune would ever turn for the better

4 I do not hope for it,
   Nor do I fear it,
   For does a rational man hope
   For what he cannot avert?

5 When loathsome things

---

109 Ibn Dāwūd, KZ. 350.
Hasten to me,
And the greatest disgraces
That fate can bring

6 You forget the days of pure happiness
That you have spent,
But I shall remember them
For all time

7 I assure my heart about you
When our friendship is certain,
But can the heart be patient,
When sadness is also patient?

8 I lament to God,
Not to you,
For it is He who can bring back
The days of pure happiness

It Is Best to Hope

1 You, who have sown love
Between my heart and my liver.
By leaving me,
You have rent patience from steadfastness

2 When despair beckons my heart away from you,
My heart answers,
“It is best to hope,”
And it neither leaves nor enters

3 Separation from you
Is tantamount to death,

[103] Ibn Dāwūd, KZ. 359-360.
And you occupy the same position in my body
As my spirit

My love has reached
The highest level;
I have sought a greater love,
I would not find it

By God! My soul would cleave
To no one but you,
Even if you were to separate
My spirit from my body

As long as you are faithful to me,
I shall never seek a replacement,
And if I ever find solace,
I shall not become attached to anyone

Despair

1 Can patience withstand
What has happened to me,
So that I might be patient,
Or will adversity destroy my resolve?

2 If I let my experiences
Deceive me,
I might as well
Lose my ability to reason

3 My passion for him

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Ibn Dāwūd, KZ. 368.
Has ceased,
And I no longer imagine him
Nor remember him

4 My hopes have abated,
And my fears have been quelled,
And nothing remains
But sorrow and regret

5 My only hope
Is to be near to death,
And my only fear
Is long life

6 For if the snare of death
Separates me from him,
It matters not to me
What time has done to me

7 Would that death itself
Let it be so,
For separation has pitted me against him,
And abandonment and betrayal
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