

## AN INVITATION TO DINNER FOR ABŪ NUWĀS AND HIS FRIENDS: AN EARLY TEXTUAL WITNESS ON PAPYRUS (YALE P. CTYBR INV. 2597(A))

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This article is a small contribution to the work done at Yale to re-image select papyri, and to promote the papyrus collection as a whole. It focuses on a single literary papyrus, P. CtYBR inv. 2597(A), which contains parts of an anecdote that involves the poetess 'Inān, as hostess of a literary salon, and several of her guests, including Abū Nuwās. The same anecdote has been preserved in several later anthologies, which are known only from relatively late manuscript copies. While the papyrus contains some interesting (and hitherto unknown) variants, the principal interest of this witness lies in its antiquity. While no precise date can be assigned to the papyrus, it can certainly be regarded as near-contemporary with the authors of the earliest anthologies which contain the text, though perhaps not with the protagonists of the event described in the text itself.

### A. INTRODUCTION

The Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale contains, among other treasures, a rich collection of Arabic papyri. Not many of these have been published, but short descriptions and images of the collection are available online.<sup>1</sup> Efforts have now begun at Yale to re-image select Arabic papyri, and to promote the use of the collection as a whole.

A papyrus in this collection (P. CtYBR inv. 2597(A)) contains the text of a literary anecdote (Fig. 1). The text of the papyrus is incomplete, but the anecdote has been preserved in several later sources.

The anecdote can be summed up as follows: A group of poets meets in Baghdad at midday. The list of attendees varies in the later sources, but all sources agree that the group includes Ibn Razīn (2nd–3rd/8th–9th century),<sup>2</sup> Abū Nuwās (d. between 198/813 and 200/815) (Wagner

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1 <[beinecke.library.yale.edu/collections/highlights/papyrus-collection-database](http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/collections/highlights/papyrus-collection-database)>. I would like to thank Tasha Dobbin-Bennett at Yale for bringing the newly imaged papyri to my attention, and gratefully acknowledge the help of Adam Talib, of AUC, in revising the translation below. My thanks are also due to the anonymous reviewers of this article for their helpful comments and suggestions.

2 Dāwūd b. Razīn, said to be a contemporary of Abū Nuwās and rāwī of Baššār b. Burd (d. c.168/784–785; see Blachère 1960), thus also in al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḥ Baġdād* VIII, 359.

1960; see also Kennedy 2005), al-Ḥalīʿ (d. c.250/864) (Pellat 1971), al-Raqāṣī (d. c.200/815) (Stern 1960; also Kennedy 1998), the slavegirl-poetess ʿInān (d. 226/841),<sup>3</sup> and two otherwise unknown poets by the name of al-Warrāq, and Ibn al-Ḥayyāṭ.<sup>4</sup> Someone asks where they will meet that evening, and ʿInān suggests a poetry contest. Each poet then takes his turn to issue an “invitation” in verse to the group. In most versions ʿInān is the arbiter, and settles the matter not by choosing a winner, but by inviting the group to stay with her. The event would have taken place in Baghdad around the turn of the ninth century CE, because two of its protagonists, Abū Nuwās and al-Raqāṣī, died around 815 CE.

The text of the anecdote in the Van Vloten edition of Pseudo-Ḡaḥīz’s *K. al-maḥāsīn wa-l-aḍḍad* is provided in full as an appendix to this article, in order to facilitate a comparison with the content of the papyrus fragment.

## B. THE PAPYRUS

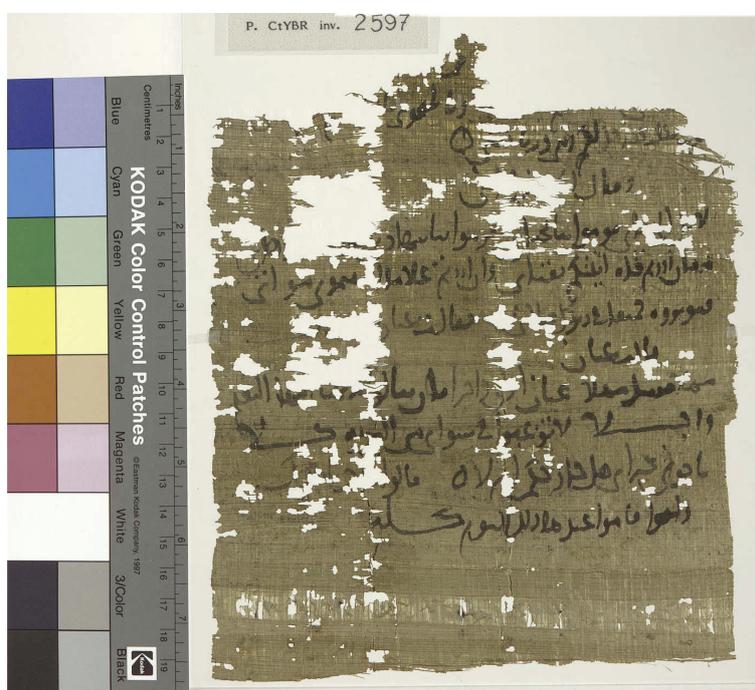


Figure 1 P.CtYBR inv. 2597(A). Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

### Description

Single sheet of light brown papyrus; circa 17 x 18 cm; Left, right and bottom edges are intact, but the top part of the sheet, with at least two additional lines of text, is lost; Two rows of lacunae run vertically through the document, at circa 5 cm from the left edge, and circa 7 cm

3 Bencheikh 1971 her entry in *K. al-Aḡānī* (al-Isfahānī B XXVII: 9218–9230); see also Caswell 2011: 56–81, for her biography, and translations of her poetry into English.

4 Not Khalīfah ibn Ḥayyāṭ, d. 240/854, traditionist and historian of Basrah (Zakkar 1971; Ḍahabī XI: 472–474); nor of course Ibn al-Ḥayyāṭ al-Dimaṣqī, who died 517/1123; see Ibn Ḥallikān I: 145–147.

from the right edge (indicating a fold); Twelve lines of text in black ink; Height of *alif* between 8 and 12 mm; Verso blank.<sup>5</sup>

The provenance of the papyrus is unknown, but it is likely that the piece hails from Egypt, like the vast majority of Arabic papyri. It was given to the Beinecke Library at Yale, as part of a donation by Hans P. Kraus, in December 1965.<sup>6</sup>

The papyrus does not contain any direct evidence that would allow us to date it with precision. That said, the earliest and latest recorded explicit dates for Arabic papyri are generally given as 22/643 and 480/1086, respectively (Sijpesteijn 2009: 452–472; in particular, 467, n. 6). The style of the script does not appear to be particularly archaic, though it displays some conservative features. For example, medial/final *alif* is written throughout with a separate stroke extending below the line, while *kāf* and *ʿayn* are extended horizontally (l. 12). The “baseline” appears to be rather flat, and the script angle is mostly upright at about 90 degrees (cf. Grob 2010: 166–168). Assigning dates to Arabic papyri is of course highly problematic (Grob 2010: 3–7), but perhaps one can tentatively ascribe the papyrus to the middle of the ninth to the middle of the tenth century CE. In other words, the fragment may have been created during the lifetime of some protagonists of the anecdote which it contains, or within a generation after their death.

## Text

١. [عذراء ذات احمرار اني بها لا احاشى قوموا ندماي روي]
٢. [مشاشكم ومشاشي] وناطحوني با[قداحكم نطاح الكباش]
٣. [فان] نكلت فقد حل لكم دمي ورياشي O
٤. وقال ابو نواس]
٥. لا [بل] الى [تقد]باتي قوموا بنا لحياتي] قوموا بنا [..... بقول هاك و] هاتي
٦. فان اردتم ف[ت]اة اتيتكم بفتاتي وان اردتم غلاما اتيتموني مواتي
٧. فتوثروه جميعا في زمن كل صلاتي ٥ فقالت عنان
٨. قالت عنان
٩. مهلا فديتك مهلا عنان اولى واحرا فان تنالوا لديها اشها النعيم
١٠. واجلا لا توعبوا في سواى من ال[بر]ية كلا
١١. يا خواني خبراني هل جاز حكمي ام لا O قالوا [قد اجزنا حكمك]
١٢. و{اقو} اقاموا عندها ذلك اليوم كله

## Pointing

Unpointed throughout, except the following:

٦. فتاه \ اتيتكم \ بفتاتي \ اردتم \ مواتي -- ٧. قالت -- ٨. عنان -- ٩. عنان -- ١٠. اجلا اتوعبوا

5 Images are available online at: <brbl-legacy.library.yale.edu/papyrus/oneSET.asp?pid=2597(A)>.

6 Though not a specialist in antiquities, Kraus repeatedly offered papyri for sale. One lot was purchased for Yale by Edwin J. Beinecke in 1961; a sales catalogue for an additional lot was published in 1964. There is no indication of the sources from which Kraus acquired the papyri in his autobiography, in which Kraus describes his acquaintance and dealings with Beinecke (Kraus 1979: 295 ff.).

## Notes

**I. 1** only traces remain of a letter in the middle of this line; the text given here is that found in all other sources. – **I. 2** traces remain of *yā*’ (*nadāmāya*), and *mīm* (*mušāšakum*) – **I. 3** first three words are faded; *nakaltu* without top bar on *kāf*; there is a circle to mark the end of the verse – **I. 4** after *qāla*, there is clearly an *alif*; the following letters, containing the name of a poet, are lost due to a lacuna, with the exception of the last letter. Just above the lacuna, one can see the traces of an *alif*, preceded by a single dot; the last letter appears like a *yā*’, where the received text(s) require the tail of a final *sīn*: was the name of al-Raqāšī inserted here (by mistake?) – **I. 5** there are three lacunae in this line; only faint traces remain of *bal*; the first two letters of *tiqāti* are lost, as are the last two letters in *hayātī*; the words after *qūmū* are illegible, or partly lost; ‘*bi-qawli hāki wa-hātī*’ is restored based on parallel versions. – **I. 6** *fatāh* lacks a hook for *tā*’, but there are clearly three dots (one for *fā*’, two for *tā*’); after the *alif* of *gūlāman*, another *alif* follows immediately, leaving no room for *šād-alif-dāl* of *šādaftumūnī*, as in other versions. – **I. 7** *šalātī* hardly legible due to a lacuna; there appears to be a circle to mark the end of the verse; after the name of ‘Inān, there are faint traces of another word (*qālat*?) – **I. 9** the top part of *awlā* is lost; *dto.* for the top part of *ladayhā ašhā*. – **I. 10** *aḡlā* against all other versions, which have *aḡlā*; there is clearly a dot below the word for *ḡīm*; – **I. 11** there is a circle to mark the end of the verse; the last three words are hardly legible because of numerous lacunae; the space between *qālū* and the *ḡīm* of *aḡaznā* calls for *qad*, now entirely lost; we must read *aḡazna*, not *ḡāza*, because there are traces of initial *alif*, and clearly no *alif* following *ḡīm*. – **I. 12** some of the letters at the beginning of the line appear to be redundant, and have been crossed out.

## Translation

1. [“A blushing virgin – I am not timid with her! Come, then, my boon-companions, drink your fill
2. to your horns and mine,] and clink cups eagerly, [like rams beating their horns.]
3. If I break my vow, you can spill my blood with impunity, and take all my possessions.”
4. Said [Abū Nuwās]:
5. “No, trusted friends, come with me, by the life of me! Come let’s [have fun] with a game of ‘give me’ and ‘take that’:
6. If you want a girl, I will bring you my girl, and if you want a boy, come to me whenever it suits you,
7. and take your pick, at the time of each of my prayers.” Said ‘Inan:
8. Said ‘Inan:
9. “Hold on – with all respect – and wait a minute! ‘Inan is surely worthier, and should take precedence. While you find the most delicious pleasures with her,
10. freely, you won’t get a thing from anyone else but her.
11. Tell me, my dears, is my ruling valid or not?” They replied: “We approve your ruling!”
12. and stayed with her for the remainder of that day.

### C. DISCUSSION

As noted above, this anecdote has been preserved in several literary anthologies. In chronological order (by date of death of the compiler), these are:

- Abū Hiffān ‘Abd Allāh al-Mihzamī<sup>7</sup> (d. between 255/869 and 257/871), *Aḥbār Abī Nuwās*.<sup>8</sup>  
 Pseudo-Ġaḥīz<sup>9</sup> (wr. c.300/912?), *K. al-maḥāsīn wa-al-aḍḍad*.<sup>10</sup>  
 Abū al-Faraġ al-Iṣfahānī<sup>11</sup> (d. 356/967), *al-Imā’ al-šawā’ir*.<sup>12</sup>  
 Ibrāhīm b. al-Qāsim al-Qayrawānī, known as (Ibn) al-Raqīq<sup>13</sup> (d. after 418/1027–1028), *Quṭb al-surūr fī awṣāf al-ḥumūr*.<sup>14</sup>  
 Ibn ‘Asākir<sup>15</sup> (571/1176), *Tārīḥ madīnat Dimašq*.<sup>16</sup>  
 Ibn Manzūr<sup>17</sup> (711/1312), *Aḥbār Abī Nuwās*.<sup>18</sup>

The manuscripts on which the printed editions of these anthologies are based are relatively late copies:

- Aḥbār Abī Nuwās* [of Abū Hiffān] (c.1100/1688)<sup>19</sup>  
*K. al-maḥāsīn wa-l-aḍḍad* (830/1426)<sup>20</sup>  
*al-Imā’ al-šawā’ir* (c.1200/1785?)<sup>21</sup>  
*Quṭb al-surūr* (798/1395)<sup>22</sup>  
*Tārīḥ madīnat Dimašq* (c.1118/1706)<sup>23</sup>

7 Bencheikh 2004.

8 Abū Hiffān A: 78–82. According to Wagner (1957: 312) (see fn. 17 below), this edition was prepared on the basis of a MSS in the Hakimoğlu Collection (now housed in the Süleymaniye Library?). Also: Ed. Faraġ al-Ḥawwār, 2011: 109–112. This “edition” reproduces the text of a manuscript in the National Library at Tunis (no. 18549), with corrections and additions from the printed editions of the Dīwān. At least one more MS of the work exists, in Princeton (MS Princeton Garrett 740) (MacDonald 1907; Hitti, Faris & ‘Abd al-Malik 1938: 244).  
 9 Gériès 1986; see also the introduction to the edition by Van Vloten 1898.

10 Pseudo-Jāḥīz: 194–196.

11 Nallino 1960.

12 al-Iṣfahānī A: 31–34.

13 Talibi 1971.

14 al-Raqīq: 178–181.

15 Elisséeff 1971.

16 Ibn ‘Asākir XVII: 74–76.

17 Fück 1971; see also the detailed study of Ibn Manzūr and his work by Zakharia 2009.

18 Ibn Manzūr: 111–115. Zakharia’s article (2009) is devoted to a detailed study of this source. It appears that the textual history of Ibn Manzūr’s *Aḥbār* is particularly problematic, as is shown by the extant printed editions, which differ significantly. The present author did not have access to the 1992 edition (ed. ‘Abd al-Amīr Muḥannā), which Zakharia establishes as the version of reference, but was able to refer to the appendix of the 1979 edition of *K. al-Aġānī* (ed. Ibrāhīm al-Ibyārī), which also contains an edition of Ibn Manzūr’s text (this anecdote: al-Iṣfahānī B XXIX: 9923–9925). Indeed, one wonders if the later Beirut edition simply reproduces this earlier work under a new name? The text given by al-Ibyārī appears to be based on manuscripts of the *Muḥtār al-Aġānī*, and differs entirely from the 2000 edition referenced here: the latter is much shorter, its material is arranged differently, and the content of both versions is not identical. For this article, it is significant to note that the anecdote which is discussed here does not appear in full in the longer version of Ibn Manzūr’s *Aḥbār*. In particular, one finds that ‘Inān is eliminated from that version altogether.

19 The manuscript source does not appear to be dated, but the editor notes that it seems to have been copied “about two hundred and fifty years ago” (Abū Hiffān B: 3).

20 Pseudo-Ġaḥīz: 14.

21 The unique manuscript in Tunis is not dated; the editor notes that the copy is “very late”; the estimate given here is mine.

22 al-Raqīq: xi–xii.

23 Ibn ‘Asākir XIV: 37–38.

In other words, a gulf of at least five centuries separates the manuscript copies of the anthologies from the time of ‘Inān and Abū Nuwās.

The anecdote also appears in the *Dīwān*. (Abū Nuwās I: 60–65) The manuscript tradition of the *Dīwān* has been described in detail by Wagner (1957), though one must add that his description of individual codices was based on reproductions of a subset only of the surviving manuscripts.

Wagner identified four major recensions of the *Dīwān*, which are attested by manuscripts. The most comprehensive of these recensions is that of Ḥamzah al-Isfahānī (d. before 360/970–971) (Rosenthal 1971), followed by an anonymous recension ascribed to Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad al-Ṭabarī, known as Tīzūn or Tūzūn (d. 355/966) (al-Qifṭī I: 158–159), followed by the recension of Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī (d. 335/947), (Leder 1997) while a fourth anonymous recension is said to be much more concise. (Wagner 1957: 316–326) He further identified two separate strands in the manuscript tradition of the recension of Ḥamzah, which is represented by at least seven complete copies, and some twelve partial copies of the *Dīwān*. (Wagner 1957: 363)

Wagner’s edition of the *Dīwān*, though largely based on the recension of Ḥamzah, was established in accordance with the eclectic method, drawing variants from separate recensions (including al-Ṣūlī, and Abū Hiffān’s *Aḥbār*) (Abū Nuwās I: viii; IV: x–xi). However, the text of the anecdote which is being examined here appears only in the recension of Ḥamzah, and in Abū Hiffān’s *Aḥbār*. The edited text of this section draws on the 1953 printed edition of the *Aḥbār*, and three codices, namely MS Istanbul Fātiḥ 3773, MS Istanbul Rāḡib 1099, and MS British Museum Add. 24948. Of these three manuscripts, only MS Istanbul Rāḡib 1099 is dated – to the 17th or Šawwāl 1006 / 13 May 1598 – while remaining two codices are ascribed to the 6th–7th/12th–13th century (MS Istanbul Fātiḥ 3773; estimate by Rescher) and the 7th/13th century (MS British Museum Add. 24948; estimate by Rieu), respectively.

These manuscripts appear to be the earliest primary source for the text of the anecdote, but also provide the longest version of the text, as we shall see below. The reason for this lies in the methods of the compilers. Ḥamzah al-Isfahānī strove to produce an exhaustive collection of all material that circulated in his day under the name of Abū Nuwās, in contrast to the other known compiler, al-Ṣūlī, who made a conscious effort to expurgate all materials that he regarded as spurious (Wagner 1957: 317). Indeed, the present anecdote is not contained in al-Ṣūlī’s recension at all.

## Order

The order in which the poets present their verses varies from source to source. In the *K. al-Imā’ al-šawā’ir*, in Abū Hiffān’s *Aḥbār Abī Nuwās*, and in *Tārīḥ madīnat Dimašq*, the order is:

Ibn Razīn – Abū Nuwās – al-Ḥalī’ – al-Raqāšī – al-Warrāq – al-Ḥayyāt – ‘Inān

The same arrangement is given by al-Raqīq al-Nadīm in his *Quṭb al-surūr*, though he omits the verses by al-Raqāšī altogether.

In the *K. al-Maḥāsīn wa-al-aḍḍād*, one finds the following order:

Al-Raqāšī – Abū Nuwās – al-Ḥalī’ – al-Warrāq – Ibn Razīn – al-Ḥayyāt – ‘Inān.

while the *Dīwān*, on the other hand, contains a longer list, in the order:

Ibn Razīn – Abū Nuwās – al-Ḥalī’ – al-Raqāšī – al-Warrāq – al-Ḥayyāt – ‘Inān – ‘Ali b. al-Ḥalīl – Ismā’īl al-Qirtāsī – Razīn al-Kātib – Ibn al-Ġazzār

This extended sequence is also found in the *Aḥbār* of Ibn Manẓūr. The Cairo edition of 2000 omits the verses by Ibn al-Ġazzār, however, and adds an additional group of verses by Abū Nuwās at the very beginning. The version of the *Aḥbār* given in the appendix to K. al-Aġānī eliminates ‘Inān altogether, and retains only the following (see above, fn. 18):

Abū Nuwās – ‘Alī b. al-Ḥalīl – Ismā‘īl al-Qirtāsī – Zarzur

The text of the papyrus preserves yet another order, since the three groups of verses which are preserved are those attributed to al-Raqāṣī, Abū Nuwās, and ‘Inān in the other sources. It cannot be shown that the papyrus originally contained the remaining verses; it is equally likely that it only ever contained three groups of verses, an abbreviated version of the sequence in the K. *al-Maḥāsīn*, so to speak. It is also not absolutely certain that the second group of verses (beginning at l. 4) was attributed to Abū Nuwās in the papyrus. As noted above, only traces of a name remain, of which the last letter could equally be read as *yā*’.

In the printed editions, however, the attribution of each group of verses does not vary. In fact, this is partly ruled out by the verses themselves: out of the six poems, three have the rhyme in common with the name of the poet (al-Raqāṣī --šī / al-Ḥalīl’ --‘ī / Ibn Razīn--nī).

## Relationships

How do the different versions of the anecdote relate to one another? One would only expect that later authors drew upon earlier works, with or without indication of source. Indeed, the text of the anecdote in Ibn ‘Asākir’s *Tāriḥ* is quoted on the authority of al-Iṣfahānī, whose name appears in the *isnad* as a transmitter, albeit without mention of his work, *al-Imā’ al-ṣawā’ir*. The connector *aḥbarānā* in the chain of transmission may indicate that the anecdote was transmitted orally, but the word-for-word correspondence of the text in the editions of both works suggests otherwise.

The version in Ibn Manẓūr’s *Aḥbār* would appear to depend on that in the *Dīwān*, in that both printed editions contain an extended guest list, and additional poems roughly in the same order. However, it is difficult to make assertions about the *Dīwān*, which, as noted above, is presented in an eclectic edition (though Ibn Manẓūr’s work is not used as a source by the editor). On the other hand, the text of the anecdote in the *Aḥbār* carries a note by the editor, stating that: “this story appears in the *Dīwān* in a fuller version than the one contained in this book, and we have corrected it thereupon.” In other words, the similarities between the two texts may be the result of the work of scholarly editors (and would-be editors). Without consulting the manuscript copies of Ibn Manẓūr’s work, one has no means to establish a lineage between the two texts. Matters are even more complicated if one considers the different recensions of Ibn Manẓūr’s *Aḥbār* (see above, fn. 18).

If one assumes, for the time being, that one or other of the printed edition of Ibn Manẓūr’s *Aḥbār Abī Nuwās* represents the work faithfully, then one must conclude that the author did not draw on the earlier work by Abū Hiffān under the same title as a source for our anecdote. The introduction, the order of elements, and the texts of the poems themselves are substantially different in the multiple versions of both works.

Indeed, it would seem that the version of Abū Hiffān is closer to that in *Quṭb al-surūr*, since the introductions to the anecdote correspond almost word by word, though with two small omissions in *Quṭb*. On the other hand, the text of the poems in the *Aḥbār* is closer to that presented in the printed edition of al-Iṣfahānī’s *al-Imā’*. Again, the edition of Abū Hiffān’s

work records omissions (e.g. the fifth line of al-Raqāshī's poem), which the editor restores on the basis of *K. al-Imā'*.

Though the versions in *Qutb* and *al-Imā'* agree in the order of poems, they differ in other respects. Whereas the anecdote in *al-Imā'* is prefixed by an *isnād*, in *Qutb* it is introduced by a laconic *wa-dakarū anna*, the introductions contain different details, and the wording of the poems varies.

The statement by 'Inān in the introduction is very similar in *Qutb*, and *Maḥāsin*, but the latter presents the poems in a different order, and has textual variants that are closer to *al-Imā'*, and Ibn Manẓūr's *Aḥbār*.

Within the space of an article, it is impossible to compare the substantial number of variants across all sources. For the purpose of this discussion it will suffice to juxtapose the text of the papyrus with parallels in two of the anthologies. In the following table (Table 1), Roman numerals indicate the position of the verses in the sequence of poems in each source; distinctive variants are underlined>.

Table 1 Text of CtYBR inv. 2597(A) with parallel versions.

Qutb al-Surūr	Ta rīḥ Dimašq	CtYBR inv. 2597(A)	
--	IV لله در عُقَار حَلَّتْ ببيت الرقاشي    عذراء ذات احمرار إني بها لا أحاشي    قوموا ندماي ردوا مشاشكم ومشاشي    وناطحوني بأقداحكم نطاح الكباش    فان نكلت فحل لكم دمي ورياشي	I -- -- -- -- وناطحوني با[قداحكم نطاح الكباش] \\ [فان] نكلت فقد حل لكم دمي ورياشي \\ 10	1 5
II لكن الي ثقاتي قوموا بنا بحياتي    قوموا نلذ جميعا بقول هاك وهات    فان اردتم فتاة اتينكم بفتاة    وان اردتم غلاما صادقتموه مؤاتي    فتاوره جميعا في وقت كل صلاة	II لا بل الي تعالي قوموا بنا بحياتي    قوموا نلذ جميعا بقول هاك وهاتي    فان اردتم فتاة اتحفنكم بفتاتي    وان هويتم غلاما اتينكم بمؤاتي    فيادروه مجونا في كل وقت صلاة	II لا [بل] الي [ثق]اتي قوموا بنا لحياتي[تي]    قوموا بنا ... بقول هاك و[هاتي]    فان اردتم ف[ن]اة اتينكم بفتاتي    وان اردتم غلاما اتيموني مؤاتي    فتواتروه جميعا في زمن كل صلاتي	15 20
VI لكن لدينا أقيموا بالله كي نتسلي    وكي تنالوا لدينا أشهى النعيم وأحلى    فان عندي حراما من الشراب وجلا    لا تطمعوا في سواي من البرية كلا    يا اخوتي خيروني أجاز حكمي أم لا	VII مهلا فديتك مهلا عنان أحرى وأولى    يان تنالوا لذيها أشهى الطعام وأحلى    وان عندي حراما من الطعام وأحلا    لا تطمعوا في سوي ذا من البرية كلا    ثم اصدقوا بحياتي أجاز حكمي أم لا	III مهلا فديتك مهلا عنان اولي واحرا    فان تنالوا لذيها أشهى النعيم واجلا    -- لا توعبوا في سواي من البرية كلا    يا خواني خيراني هل جاز حكمي أم لا	25 30

As one can see, the order of poems differs from one source to another. A whole poem is missing from *Qutb*, where the first line of the sixth poem is also substituted in its entirety. One line does not appear in 'Inān's poem in the papyrus, which also contains variants not found elsewhere.

This brief sketch will suffice to show the bewildering level of variation that exists, for the same text, among a variety of later sources – or at least the modern printed versions of these sources. One might have expected the anthologists to cite explicitly from earlier works, or simply to draw on other anthologies without indicating the source. Even if one concedes that not all attestations of the anecdote have been traced above, one would think that direct borrowing would have resulted in a more uniform text. As the example of this anecdote illustrates, the courses of the compliers and anthologists were far more varied.

Let us compare a similar case. The methods and sources of al-Ṭaʿālibī's *Yatīmah* have been studied by Orfali, who was able to show that a wide variety of oral and written sources were used to produce that particular anthology (Orfali 2013: 1–47). Among these sources were private communications, direct submissions by authors (requests for inclusion, so to speak), and scrap collections. One would assume that the working methods and sources used by other compilers of literary anthologies were roughly similar.

The present specimen of a literary anecdote on papyrus, and its later attestations allow us to look at the process of compilation from a different perspective. One can show that the transmission and compilation process – which was evidently partly oral, and memory-based – could result in multiple variants. Some of these variations must have been accidental, due to misreadings (*aḥlā* >> *aḡlā*, l. 24 in the table above; probably also *taʿālī* for *ṭiqātī* in l. 11, col. 2). Other variants must have been caused by oral transmission (*aradtum/hawaytum*, l. 17). Other types of variation seem to be the result of more or less deliberate editorial interference, such as the addition or omission of stanzas, or their arrangement in order.

As the current example shows, the process of dissemination of literary work included notes on scraps of papyrus.<sup>24</sup> Consider now that the anecdote about ʿInān is set in Baghdad, that the text was possibly recorded in Egypt during the lifetime of the poetess (or soon thereafter), and that it was included in anthologies compiled all over the Islamic empire: it does seem, then, that the process of dissemination appears to have been rapid. This spread can be observed even without recourse to the papyrus, on the basis of the literary anthologies alone; what the papyrus document adds to the picture is evidence that the variation in the text was once much greater, and that the later anthologies only preserve a part of that variation.

The papyrus also shows that at an early date – relative to the later anthologies – the anecdote which it contains was perceived to be about ʿInān, who is clearly the arbiter in the text as we have it. This is supported by its inclusion, in a similar form, in the section on ʿInān in al-Ḥafḥānī's *al-Imāʿ al-šawāʿir*. It is interesting to observe that the focus shifts away from her to Abū Nuwās, as the anecdote gets attached to a corpus of lore surrounding the figure of that poet.<sup>25</sup> In fact, the shift in focus is so radical that in one recension of Ibn Manẓūr's *Aḥbār* (our youngest source), ʿInān is no longer the arbiter, whereas in another recension of the same work the female poet is eliminated altogether. Thus, the text of the papyrus and its parallels in printed sources provide evidence for the accretion of literary material around a central figure, and for the manipulation of the material in the process.

24 Compare also Abbott 1972.

25 Zakharia (2009: 159) concludes her discussion of Ibn Manẓūr's *Aḥbār* with the following observation: “L'examen des thèmes présentés, dans leur diversité, a mis en évidence la manière dont, autour d'un noyau partiellement historique, difficile à spécifier, des expansions de sont agglutinées au fil du temps, accentuant les traits saillants du poète, gommant des nuances, et contribuant à en faire un personnage de légende”.

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## APPENDIX

Text of the anecdote in Pseudo-Ġaḥiẓ's *K. al-maḥāsin wa-l-aḍḍad*. (Pseudo-Jāḥiẓ. *Le livre des beautés et des antithèses*. Ed. G. Van Vloten, 1898: 194–196. Leiden: Brill.)

قال واجتمع ابو نواس والفضل الرقاشي والحسين الخليع وعمرو الوراق ومحكم بن رزين  
والحسين الخياط في منزل عنان فنتاشدوا إلى وقت العصر فلما ارادوا الانصراف قالوا  
ابن نحن الليلة فكل قال عندي فقالت عنان بالله قولوا شعراً وارضوا بحكمي فقال  
الرقاشي

عَذْرَاءُ دَأَتْ أَحْمِرَارٍ	إِنِّي بِهَا لَا أَحَاشِي
فُؤْمُوا نَدَامَايَ رَوْوَا	مُشَاتِنُكُمْ مِنْ مُشَاشِي
وَنَاطِحُونِي كُؤُوسَا	نِطَاحِ صُلْبِ الْكِبَاشِ
وَإِنْ نَكَلْتُمْ فَحِلِّ	لَكُمْ دَمِي وَرِيَاشِي
وقال ابو نواس	
لَا بَلَّ إِلَيَّ تَقَاتِي	فُؤْمُوا بِنَا بِحَيَاتِي
فُؤْمُوا نَلْدُ جَمِيعَا	بِقَوْلِ هَاكِ وَهَاتِي
فَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ فَنَاءَةً	أَتَيْتُكُمْ بِفَنَاتِي
وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ غُلَامَا	صَادَقْتُمُونِي مُؤَاتِي
فَيَاذِرُوهُ مُجُونَا	فِي وَقْتِ كُلِّ صَلَاةٍ
وقال الحسين الخليع	
أَنَا الْخَلِيعُ فُؤْمُوا	إِلَى شَرَابِ الْخَلِيعِ
إِلَى شَرَابِ لَدِينِي	وَأَكُلْ جَدِي رَضِيعِ
وَتَيْكَ أَخَوِي رَجِيمِ	بِالْخَنْدَرِيسِ صَرِيعِ
فُؤْمُوا تَنَالُوا وَشِيكَا	مِثَالِ مُلْكِ رَبِيعِ
وقال الوراق	
فُؤْمُوا إِلَيَّ بِنَيْتِ عَمْرُو	إِلَى سَمَاعِ وَخَمْرِ
وَسَاقِيَاتِ عَلَيْنَا	ثُطَاعِ فِي كُلِّ أَمْرِ
وَبَيْسَرِي رَجِيمِ	بِرْهُوَ بِجَبْدِ وَنَحْرِ
فَذَاكَ بَرٌّ وَإِنْ شِنُ	خُتْمِ أَتَيْنَا بِبَحْرِ
هَذَا وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْنُكُمْ	أَوْلَى وَلَا وَقْتُ عَصْرِ
وقال محكم بي رزين	
فُؤْمُوا إِلَيَّ دَارَ لَهْوِ	وَضَلَّ بَيْتِ دَفِينِ
فِيهِ مِنَ الْوَرْدِ وَالْمَرْ	رَنَجُوشِ وَالْيَاسَمِينِ
وَرِيحِ مِسْكِ دَكِيٍّ	وَجَبْدِ الزَّرْجُونِ
فُؤْمُوا فَصِيرُوا جَمِيعَا	إِلَى الْفَتَى ابْنِ زَرِينِ
فقال الحسين بن الخياط	
فَضَنْتُ عِنَانَ عَلَيْنَا	بِأَنْ نَزُورَ حُسَيْنَا
وَإِنْ تَقَرُّوا لَدَيْهِ	بِالْقَصْفِ وَاللَّهِ عَيْنَا
فَمَا رَأَيْنَا كَطَرْفِ الـ	حُسَيْنِ فِيمَا رَأَيْنَا
قَدْ قَرَّبَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ	زَيْنَا وَبَاعَدَ شَيْنَا
فُؤْمُوا وَفُؤْلُوا أَجْرُنَا	مَا قَدْ فَضَيْتَ عَلَيْنَا
وقالت عنان	
مَهَلًا فَدَيْتُكَ مَهَلًا	عِنَانُ أَحْرَى وَأَوْلَى
بِأَنْ تَنَالُوا لَدَيْهَا	أَسْنَى النَّعِيمِ وَأَحْلَا
فَإِنَّ عِنْدِي حَرَامَا	مِنَ الشَّرَابِ وَجَلَا
لَا تَطْمَعُوا فِي سَوَائِي	مِنَ الْبَرِّيَّةِ كَلَا
يَا سَادَتِي خَبِّرُونِي	أَجَازَ حُكْمِي أَمْ لَا
فقالوا جميعا قد جاز حكمك واقاموا عندها	