

The Ghawini al-Ashwaq fi Ma'ani al-'Ushshaq

A treatise on the concept of love in classical and medieval Arabic heritage

Bearbeitet von
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ʿAbd al Muʿīn ibn Aḥmad
widely know as Ibn al-Bakkāʾ al-Balkhī

The Ghawānī al-Ashwāq fī Maʿānī al-ʿUshshāq

A treatise on the concept of love in classical
and medieval Arabic heritage

Edited and introduced by
George J. Kanazi

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Table of contents

The English section

Acknowledgment	
Transliteration	IX
The Author and the Book	XI

The Arabic section

Acknowledgment	
Introduction of the editor	
The author	
His education	
His books	
Manuscripts of the Kitāb <i>Ghawānī al-Ashwāq fī</i> <i>Ma'ānī al-'Ushshāq</i>	
Method of reduction	
Photos from the three manuscripts	
The text of <i>Ghawānī al-Ashwāq fī Ma'ānī al-'Ushshāq</i>	
Preface	2
Introduction	11
Chapter one	43
Chapter two	69
Chapter three	113
Closing chapter	167
Appendix: The story of Aṣma'ī	183
References	189
Indices	209
Index of Koranic verses	209
Index of the traditions of the Prophet	210
Index of poetry	211
Index of proper names	224
Index of books mentioned in the text	235

The Author and the Book

The Kitāb *Ghawānī al-Ashwāq fī Ma'ānī al-'Ushshāq* was authored by Mu'īn al-Dīn ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī al-Faṭḥ al-Balkhī, better known as Ibn al-Bakkā'. He was originally from Balkh, a well known city in *Khurāsān*, and hence his *kunya*. He was born and raised in Egypt, but his date of birth is unknown. In 980/1552 he left Egypt and settled in Mecca, and spent long years in the *Hijāz* till his death in 1040/1630.

Nothing is known about the early years of Ibn al-Bakkā' while in Egypt. Yet it appears that he studied Arabic literature and had a wide knowledge of Islam and the Muslim ethics. His tendency toward good and faithful behavior, his discussion of friendship and how relations between friends should be, the numerous quotations from well-known Muslim *Sufīs* in his *Ghawānī al-Ashwāq fī Ma'ānī al-'Ushshāq*, all reflect his education. One should also consider the influence of his father on him. The father, Aḥmad, is known as al-Bakkā', the weeper, a title usually given to Muslim ascetics who spend much time weeping because of their fear of doomsday. Ibn al-Bakkā' certainly was influenced by his father in this respect.¹

We do not know why Ibn al-Bakkā' decided to leave Egypt in the first place, and why he decided to settle in *Hijāz*; but Khafājī, his biographer, states that after what happened to him in al-Rūm (i. e. Istanbul) he settled in Mecca under the patronage of Banū Ḥasan, the appointed rulers of the area in the name of the Ottoman caliphs.

The Banū Ḥasan ibn Abī Numay were of an honorable origin (*ashrāf*). Their genealogy goes back to Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, the husband of Fāṭima, the daughter of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the forth Orthodox caliph. Ibn al-Bakkā' became a close associate of Mas'ūd ibn Ḥasan ibn Abī Numay who came into power after the death of his older brother Ḥussein. Even though he was described as a brave and generous young man,² he was not appreciated as a

¹ F. Meier: "BAKKA'," *EI*, 2nd ed. Leiden 1954.

² For further information about these emirs see: Muḥibbī: *Khulāṣat al-Athar*, several places; Khafājī: *Rayḥanat al-Alibbā*, ed. Abd al-Fattāḥ M. al-Ḥilū:

governor. He died while still young in 1012/1603, and following that Ibn al-Bakkā' seems to have encountered some difficulties, but he remained in Ḥijāz till his death in 1040/1630, as mentioned above. Ibn al-Bakkā's attempt to find better future with the Ottomans in Istanbul might have occurred around this year.

In Mecca Ibn al-Bakkā' studied under the famous Egyptian scholar Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī who had left Egypt in 940/1533³ to settle in Mecca. The biographers of Ibn Ḥajar state that he visited Mecca twice before till he finally decided to settle there in 940/1533. In Mecca Ibn al-Bakkā' studied under Ibn Ḥajar for long years. In his book he calls him "my master" (*sayyidī wa-shaykhī*).

Ibn al-Bakkā' mentions another sheikh, named Shihāb al-Dīn al-Shibāsī from whom he recites a story that he heard from him in 974/1566. Despite serious efforts I could not find any information about this sheikh.

A third sheikh is also mentioned several times in the book of Ibn al-Bakkā'. In one case he says: "The highly respected sheikh Abū al-Faraj Ibn al-Maylaq told us in his book titles *Sharḥ Asmā' al-Lāhi al-Ḥusnā*, quoting a certain authority who said:" (p. 170). When quoted again (p. 174) Ibn al-Bakkā' adds the words "*raḥimahu al-Lāh*" which means that he was referring to a dead person. These quotations might give the impression that Ibn al-Bakkā' heard some of his stories directly from Ibn al-Maylaq, but this seems not to have been the case. The book of this sheikh, *Sharḥ Asmā' al-Lāhi al-Ḥusnā*, was quoted several times in *Ghawānī al-Ashwāq fī Ma'ānī al-Ushshāq*, but the name of its author is given in different forms: Abū al-Faḍl, Abū al-Faraj, Ibn al-Maylaq, Ibn al-Maylaqī and Ibn al-Malīq. He is also titled *Qāḍī al-Quḍāt*. In the several books of biographies available to me I could not find the name of this sheikh, but I found that Ziriklī⁴ mentions Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Dā'im, widely known

Cairo 1386/1967; several places; Aḥmad Zaynī Daḥlān: *'Umarā' al-Balad al-Ḥarām*; Beirut, n.d., pp. 80-100.

³ Ibn al-ʿImād: *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*; Cairo 1351, vol. 8, p. 371; (C. van Arendonk-[J. Schacht]): "IBN HADJAR AL-HAYTAMĪ; *EI*, 2nd ed.

⁴ Ziriklī: *al-Aʿlām*, 6: 188.

as Ibn bint al-Maylaq, (731-797/1331-1395), who was nominated by Sultan Barqūq as a judge, and who wrote five books, none of them is titles *Sharḥ Asmā' al-Lāhi al-Husnā*.

Khafājī (977-1069/1569-1658), the biographer of Ibn al-Bakkā' met him and was deeply impressed by his knowledge. He praises him for his wide knowledge, good manners good relations with his colleagues. Ibn al-Bakkā' was also a poet, but a collection of his poetry was not mentioned in the sources. Khafājī quoted few passages in the biography of Ibn al-Bakkā', and he himself quotes in his *Ghawānī al-Ashwāq fī Ma'ānī al-'Ushshāq* several other passages.

The books of Ibn al-Bakkā':

Khafājī did not mention any of the books of Ibn al-Bakkā'. Muḥibbī, on the other hand, states that "he was highly efficient in solving enigmas, and wrote a widely known treatise on that (*wa-kānat lahu fī al-mu'ammā wa-ḥallihi yadun ṭā'ilatun, wa-lahu fīhi risālatun mashhūratun*).⁵ Baghdādī mention this treatise under the title *al-Ṭirāz al-Asmā' 'alā kanz al-Mu'ammā*, "an interpretation of the *Kanz al-Asmā'* of Qūṭb al-Dīn al-Makkī; he concluded its composition in the year 993."⁶ To this information C. Brockelmann adds that Muḥammad ibn 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Nahrawālī al-Makkī who died in 990 or 991/1582 wrote a book titled *Kanz al-'Asmā fī Fann al-Mu'ammā*, of which several manuscripts exist, and Ibn al-Bakkā' interpreted it in his book *al-Ṭirāz al-'Asmā*.⁷

The books of Ibn al-Bakkā' that we know about are the following:

1. *Jam'ū al-Manshūr min kullī Rawḍin Mamṭūr:*

It was mentioned by Ziriklī in the short biography of Ibn al-Bakkā', where he adds that a copy of it exists in the Dār al-Kutub in Cairo. In the catalogue of Dār al-Kutub we read the following

⁵ Muḥibbī: *Khulāṣat al-Athar* 4: 407.

⁶ Ismā'īl al-Baghdādī: *Hadiyyat al-'Ārifīn* I. 623.

⁷ Brock. C., *GAL.*, Leiden 1949, II.501.

about this book: "It consists of the *amālī* of sheikh 'Abd al-Mu'īn, known as Ibn al-Bakkā' al-Hanafī, who died in 1040, as one concludes from what is written on the back of its first folio. He put together in it all the lines of poetry he knew by heart in description, *ghazal* and memories. He arranged it alphabetically according to the beginnings of the lines. The copy is in one volume written in a regular hand writing, lacks some material at the end; it consists of 86 folios and 33 lines to a page."⁸

2. *Al-Ṭirāz al-Asmā'*:

In his book Ziriklī mentions a *Risāla fī al-Adab*, a short treatise that exists in the al-Azhariyya library, in which he interpreted the *kanz al-Asmā' fī Kashf al-Mu'ammā* of Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Makkī who died in 988. This *Risāla* is described in the catalogue of the library as follows:

The *Risāla* of Ibn al-Bakkā', 'Abd al-Mu'īn ibn Aḥmad, known as Ibn al-Bakkā' al-Balkhī al-Ḥanafī al-Shādhilī, from the scholars of the tenth century of the *hijra*, an expert on riddles and enigmas. It starts as follows: ..." Then we read that he completed it in 979 or 993 A. H. The copy is written in a regular handwriting in eight folios, 23 lines to a page.⁹ G. Vajda mentions also *al-Ṭirāz al-'Asmā' 'alā kanz al-Mu'ammā* and says that it covers folios 12-21 from ms. no. 3714 in the *bibliothèque nationale* in Paris. C. Brockelmann names it *Risālat al-Mu'ammayāt* and adds that a manuscript of it exists in Istanbul in La La Li collection, no. 3706.¹⁰ Elsewhere he mentions it as *al-Ṭirāz al-Asmā' 'alā kanz al-Asmā' al-Alghāziyya* or *al-Ṭirāz al-'Asmā' 'alā kanz al-Mu'ammā*.¹¹

⁸ Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī: *Kitāb al-'A'lām*, 4; 155; *Fihris Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya*, Cairo 1357/1938; 7: 117.

⁹ *Fihris al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya*, Cairp 1368/1949; 5: 123.

¹⁰ Georges Vajda: *Index General des manuscrits Arabes Musulmans de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris*; Paris 1913, p. 699. C. Brockelmann: *GAL.*, S. I, p. 570; see also S. II, P. 906 where a *Risāla fī al-Mu'ammayāt* is mentioned.

¹¹ C. Brockelmann: *GAL.*, II, 382.

Also, The Ṣāhiriyya Library in Damascus owns two mss. of this book titled *al-Ṭirāz al-ʿAsmā ʿalā kanz al-Muʿammā*, nos. 206 and 5257. According to its catalogue "it is a treatise on enigmas written by Ibn al-Bakkāʾ in which he interpreted and commented on another treatise on the same topic titled *kanz al-Asmā fī Kashf al-Muʿammā*, by Quṭb al-Dīn al-Makkī al-Nahrawālī al-Ḥanafī who died in 990/1582." Then the catalogue quotes a few sentences from the beginning of the treatise and few more from the colophon in which the date of composition is mentioned, 993/1585.¹²

The Ṣāhiriyya Library owns also three copies from the *kanz al-Asmā fī ʿIlm al-Muʿammā* of Quṭb al-Dīn al-Makkī al-Nahrawālī who died in 988/1580. While describing it the catalogue mentions that Ibn al-Bakkāʾ wrote a commentary on it titled *al-Ṭirāz al-ʿAsmā ʿalā kanz al-Muʿamma*, completed in 993.¹³ In comparing the description of this ms. with what Ziriklī wrote about the *Risāla fī al-Adab* one concludes that both titles refer to the same book, the *al-Ṭirāz al-ʿAsmā ʿalā kanz al-Muʿammā*. One therefore should conclude that Ibn al-Bakkāʾ has no treatise titled *Risāla fī al-Adab*.

3. ***Al-Risāla al-Muʿammāʾiyya*:**

Ziriklī mentioned it in the biography of Ibn al-Bakkāʾ, but adds no information.

4. ***Muʿammayāt*:** Ziriklī mentions that a copy of it exists at the University of Riyāḍ.

5. ***Sharḥ al-Qaṣīda al-Khazrajiyya*:** According to Ziriklī, a microfilm of this *Sharḥ* (no. 63) exists at the University of Riyāḍ. It covers 70 folios.

Ziriklī mentioned six books authored by Ibn al-Bakkāʾ, but actually we believe that they are five, as shown above. Ziriklī did not mention the following title.

¹² Riyāḍ ʿA. al-Ḥamīd Murād and Yasīn M. al-Sawwās: *Fihris Makḥṭūṭāt Dār al-Kutub al-Zāhiriyya bi-Dimashq*, 1402/1982; part two, vol. II 364-365.

¹³ *Ibid.*, II. 95-97.

6. *Ghawānī al-Ashwāq*: Ismāʿīl al-Baghdādī mentioned it and quoted the opening words from it and added that the author, a student of Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, "completed its composition in 1165."¹⁴ As mentioned earlier, Ibn al-Bakkāʾ died in 1040 so that the year 1165 cannot be the year of the completion of writing the book. Baghdādī might have seen a copy of the text dated 1165 from which he concluded that it was completed in that year.

To conclude, it seems that we have six books authored by Ibn al-Bakkāʾ, and none of them, so far as I know, is already published. Yet C. Brockelmann adds a seventh book titled *Munāẓara bayn al-Ward wal-Narjis*, which, according to him was published in *Munāẓarat fī al-Adab* that was published in Cairo in 1934.¹⁵ When one goes back to this book one realizes that this *Munāẓara* was written by Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Mārdīnī and not by Ibn al-Bakkāʾ. This *Munāẓara* was published again, the first among four, in *Nūr al-Nahār fī Munāẓarāt al-Wurūd wal-Rayāḥīn*, under the heading: "al-jawhar al-fard fī munāẓarat al-narjis wal-ward."¹⁶

The manuscripts of Ghawānī al-Ashwāq:

The edition of this book is based on three manuscripts that we were able to find. These manuscripts are:

1. The manuscript of the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris. Its catalogue number is ARABE 6701.¹⁷ It consists of 61 folios, and each page is 11×21 cm. The text is written in a beautiful handwriting in double-lined frame, and on each page there are 17

¹⁴ Ismāʿīl al-Baghdādī: *ʿĪdāḥ al-Maknūn fī al-Dhayl ʿalā Kashf al-Ẓunūn*: Istanbul 1364/1945; II. 151.

¹⁵ C. Brockelmann: *GAL.*, S. II. P. 383. *Munāẓarāt fī al-Adab*, compiled and annotated by ʿIzzat al-ʿAṭṭār, 1934, pp. 20-29.

¹⁶ *Nūr al-Nahār fī Munāẓarāt al-Wurūd wal-Rayāḥīn*, ed. Muḥammad al-Shishtāwī; 1419/1999; pp. 9-17.

¹⁷ G. Vajda: *Op. cit.*, 359; C. Brockelmann: *GAL.*, S. II. P. 570.

lines. The name of the book is written on the title page (1a) within the frame in the shape of a reversed triangle where the first word (*kitāb*) covers the whole first line, followed by ten lines that contain the rest of the name of the book, the name of its author, and prayers on the Prophet Muḥammad. On the left upper side of the title page the ownership of the manuscript by Ḥussein Muḥammad Shamsī is recorded, and is dated in August 2, 1189?. The handwriting is clear and beautiful, and the text is written inside the frames, to exclude some cases where the scribe used to write outside the frame the word *shiʿr*, when quoting a line of poetry, or to complete a word that he started inside the frame. The attention of the reader was drawn in such cases in the notes added while editing the text. In many instances the scribe used to write certain lines with the full breadth of the pen, but with no regular pattern.

The text of the book ends on the upper part of folio 59 b with a reversed triangle, and is followed by a story told by Aṣmaʿī about three young women. This story ends at folio 61 b. On the right margin of 59 b the same Ḥussein Muḥammad Shamsī recorded that he could re-read the book and understand its details on Wednesday, the 5th of Jumād the first, 1194. Following that he wrote again that he could read the book again on Sunday, the 14th of Ramadān, 1199.

On folio 61 b there are two reversed triangles, the first contains the last lines of the story of Aṣmaʿī, followed by the date of the copy, Safar 16, 1088, and in the second the sentence makes it clear that the count is according to the Muslim era. Then comes the name of the scribe, Ghunaym ibn Sālim al-Shāfiʿī from Sīnīn. The year 1088 means that this is the oldest manuscript that we possess of the book.

The Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, MS. orient.. A. 1231, Bl. 42, referred to by the Arabic letter Ğ.

I discovered this manuscript while going through the catalogue of the manuscripts at Schloss Friedenstein in Gotha, Germany, in the summer of 2004. It consists of 42 medium size folios, and on each

page there are 19 lines, written in clear handwriting. The name of the book and its author are written on the title page in the shape of a reversed triangle in eight lines as follows: *Kitāb Ghawānī al-Ashwāq fī Maʿānī al-Ushshāq, taʿlīf ʿAbd al-Muʿīn ibn Aḥmad al-shahīr bi-Ibn al-Bakkāʾ al-Balkhī al-Ḥanafī, raḥimahu al-Lāhu taʿālā; tamma.*

The manuscript is in a good condition, and in most cases the lines of poetry are written in separate lines. On some pages there are spots of black ink, especially on folios 30a and 30b. Blank space in the line was filled with some dots, and the space between the two hemistiches of the lines of poetry was always filled with three dots in the shape of a triangle. The text of the books ends at the bottom of folio 39a, after which the scribe adds some invocations asking mercy for himself, then he writes his name: ʿAlī ibn Farḥāt al-Shāfiʿī madhhaban al-Aḥmadī qudwatan. It was copied from the original copy of Ibn Aḥmad al-Balkhī, known as Ibn al-Bakkāʾ al-Ḥanafī, by the son of the son of the son of the author, may Allah have mercy on him, *amīn*.

The words on folio 39b are written in 12 lines in the shape of reversed triangle, and to the left side of its sharp head, in the middle of the page, the date of the copy is mentioned: 14 Jumādā awwal, 1092 (=1681 A. D.).

On folios 40a-41b one reads the story recited by Aṣmaʿī about the three beautiful young ladies, and at the end we read: "the story ended, thanks to Allah and to His help, by the same scribe mentioned above, and thanks to Allah the Lord of the universe."

In chapter two of this copy a big part of the text is lacking. Its equivalent in the previous manuscript covers folios 25b – 37a.

2. The Cairo manuscript at the Dār al-Kutub al-Qawmiyya in Cairo, no. *Adab Taymūr* 709, referred to by the Arabic letter ق:

It consists of 52 folios of small size, each page has between 17 and 22 lines written in clear handwriting. The name of the book is written in the title page in the shape of a reversed triangle as follows: *Hādhā Kitāb Ghawānī al-Ashwāq fī Maghānī (!) al-*

‘Ushshāq, ta’līf ‘Abd al-Mu‘īn ibn Aḥmad al-shahīr bi-Ibn al-Bakkā’, raḥimahu al-Lāhu ta‘ālā raḥmatan wāsi‘atan, āmīn. Below these words there are three lines in which the following information is written: "The author of this book is a student of Shaykh al-Islām al-hāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar al-Miṣrī al-‘Asqalānī, as appears on page five." To the left of the word ‘Asqalānī a correction appears: "the true reading should be Haytamī," and a line is drawn pointing to the word ‘Asqalānī, which means that one should read: Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī.

To the left of the title page 1b the title "The contents of the book" appears, and below the introduction, the three chapters of the book and the closing chapter are mentioned. This seems to be a new addition to the book. The text itself ends on folio 50b after the story of Sa‘īd al-Warrāq: "and I do not know what happened to him, but Allah knows." Then the story of Aṣma‘ī is written, and it ends on 52a, and then: and Allah knows what is right, and our return is to Him." Neither the name of the scribe nor the date of the copy were mentioned in this manuscript.

The above-mentioned information makes it clear that this book was written in the eleventh century of the Muslim era, the seventeenth century A. D. Up till that time a long series of books that deal with heavenly or profane love were written.¹⁸ Ibn al-Bakkā’ depended on this heritage and added much from his experience. Yet it is evident that he leans more toward heavenly and faithful love rather than the profane and the unfaithful. His book is one of the last links that were composed toward the end of an era.

When trying to check the influence of this book on other authors I found that it was not quoted anywhere. In fact, it seems that all possible points were already discussed and even exhausted, so that nothing could be further added. Ibn al-Bakkā’'s book seems to symbolize the end of an era during which the material was written and

¹⁸ For a partial list of these books see Shayzarī: *Rawḍat al-Qulūb wa-Nuzhat al-Muḥibb wal-Maḥbūb*, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 2003, introduction, pp. XVII-XXII.

the anecdotes were repeated in several books of the kind. To my knowledge the sole book written on the subject after Ibn al-Bakkā' was the *Ṣabābat al-Mu'ānī wa-Ṣabbābat al-Ma'ānī* of Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Dimashqī al-Saltī, written in 1064/1653. It might have been the last book written in the framework of the classical period. A copy of it exists in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin.¹⁹

Neither Ibn al-Bakkā' nor his book are mentioned anywhere in Saltī's *Ṣabābat al-Mu'ānī* in spite of the fact that both books have many anecdotes in common. This seems to be due to the fact that they both used the *Dīwān al-Ṣabāba* of Ibn Abī Ḥajla.

Method of redaction:

Depending on these three manuscripts the text of the book was unified, and the differences between the readings were always pointed to in the apparatus. Quotations from earlier sources were checked, and the *dīwāns* of the different poets were always consulted to make certain that the readings of the lines of poetry are correct. The author did not mention, in every case, the name of the poet quoted, and therefore we made considerable efforts to know the poet, but were not always successful.

To make the book more convenient and easy to use we added the following indices: an index of the Koranic verses, an index of the traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad, an index for the lines of poetry quoted in the text that gives both the first word and the rhyming word of the line, its meter and the name of the poet. When the quoted poetry is more than one line the number that follows the rhyming word specifies the number of lines quoted. If the name of the poet was not mentioned in the text itself we put it between brackets [...], and in case one line of poetry is ascribed to more than one poet we put their names separated by this line /. Then we added an index for proper names and for titles of books mentioned in the text.

¹⁹ Ahlwardt, W.: *Verzeichniss der arabischen handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, Berlin 1895, vol. vii, pp. 408-409. ms. no. 8431. we.219 (106 folios).

This edition required serious efforts, but this effort is worthwhile, because the addition of this book to the printed material is an important contribution to the classical Arabic culture and heritage, especially to those books that deal with love from its various aspects.

Nazareth, March 2007