

A CHESS MAQĀMA IN THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY

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THE John Rylands Library possesses a manuscript of Ibn Abū Ḥajala's work on chess entitled *Unmūdhaj al-qitāl fī li'b al-shaṭranj*,¹ at the end of which there is a chess *maqāma*. So far as I have discovered, this manuscript is the only place where the whole *maqāma* is to be found. Ahlwardt, in his catalogue of the Berlin manuscripts, mentions a manuscript which contains excerpts from Ibn Abū Ḥajala's *maqāmas*.² I obtained a photostat of this selection and found that it gives only the first part of some *maqāmas*. It gives less than half of the *maqāma* which the John Rylands manuscript gives in full. These excerpts are said to have been made from Ibn Abū Ḥajala's work, *Manṭiq al-ṭair* of which only selections are extant. The John Rylands manuscript was used by N. Bland in preparing his article "On the Persian Game of Chess",³ and by H. J. R. Murray in preparing his work, *A History of Chess*,⁴ but neither of them did more than mention the presence of the *maqāma*. That is only natural, as it does not supply material useful for their purposes. The manuscript is described in full in Mingana's Catalogue, no. 767.

THE AUTHOR

Ibn Abū Ḥajala, who was Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Abū Bakr b. 'Abd al-Wāḥid Shihāb al-Dīn al-Tilimsānī, was born in Tilimsān

¹ MS. Arab. no. 59. See A. Mingana, *Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester, 1934), no. 767.

² W. Ahlwardt, *Verzeichniss der arab. Hdss. der Kgl. Bibliothek zu Berlin*, 10 vols. (Berlin, 1887-99), no. 8379. Cf. nos. 8474, 8554 (1, 2).

³ *JRAS* (1852), pp. 1 ff.

⁴ Oxford, 1913. A slip has been made on p. 176, where this manuscript is called no. 93 instead of no. 59. On p. 175 the John Rylands manuscript *Nuzhat arbāb al-'uqūl fīl shaṭranj al-manqūl* (Mingana, op. cit. no. 766) is numbered 59 instead of 86.

(Tlemcen) in 725/1325. He went to Cairo, and after performing the Pilgrimage and paying a visit to Damascus, he returned to Cairo where he lived till his death in 776/1375, or 777. His interests were chiefly literary, and he was considered a writer of merit. He is praised for his *maqāmas*.¹

THE LITERARY FORM OF THE *maqāma*

The *maqāma*² is a somewhat strange literary form. It tells a story, but the interest is not so much in the story as in the language in which it is told. The writer of a *maqāma* must use rhymed prose, and adopt a highflown style, using many allusions. There is commonly a fair amount of verse, the fiction being maintained that it is composed extemporaneously. The chief purpose of writers of *maqāmas* is to show their erudition and ingenuity, and so a *maqāma* is difficult to translate, for it is impossible to give the flavour of the original in a translation. To use rhymed prose in English is out of the question. One must also be on the lookout for allusions and double meanings. A bare translation may therefore sound rather unintelligible to one who has not a background of knowledge of Arabic literature and Muslim civilization, and it is necessary to provide a commentary. Indeed, even for those who have such a background, a commentary is not out of place.

In the *maqāma* there is always a narrator who tells the story, and an author usually composes all his *maqāmas* about the same hero, who is a clever rascal, able by his erudition and trickery to get money out of people. There is one peculiar feature of the *maqāma* translated below. While it is usual for the hero to come off best and deceive everyone he meets, although Abul Riyāsh

¹ C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, ii. 13 and Supp. ii. p. 5, gives sources for biographical details. I have to thank Mr. C. F. Beckingham for copying out for me excerpts from the summary of Ibn Ḥabīb's *Durrat al-aslāk fī daulat al-atrāk* in *Orientalia*, ii, 440, and 'Asqalānī's *Kitāb al-durar al-kāmina*, where he tells me the reference is i, pp. 329-31, no. 826, and not as given in *GAL*, loc. cit. 776 is usually given as the date of Ibn Abū Ḥajala's death, but Ibn Ḥabīb gives 777, and Wüstenfeld, *Die Geschichtschreiber der Araber* (Göttingen, 1882), no. 437, gives 775 (or 770, 774, 777).

² For a fuller account of the *maqāma* see T. Chenery, *The Assemblies of Al-Harīri* (London, 1867), Introd. ; R. A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1930), pp. 328 ff. ; Enc. of Islām, iii. 161 ff.

gets the better of his first opponent, he is beaten by the second and third. A game of skill certainly presents no opportunities for trickery, but one would have expected the author to make his hero the winner each time.

The art of the *maqāma* has had quite a long history. The earliest examples we possess are those of Hamadhānī (358-398/969-1007). The *maqāma* was brought to perfection by Ḥarīrī (446-516/1054-1122), and there have been imitators at different periods and in different languages. Even last century Nāṣif al-Yazījī (1800-71) produced a collection of sixty *maqāmas*, in which he shows not only a cultured Arabic style, but also great erudition. It is unlikely, however, that any modern writer will attempt to write in this form, and one may safely conclude that this type of literature has died out.

Ibn Abū Ḥajala says that he modelled his *maqāmas* on those of Ḥarīrī.¹ His hero, Abul Riyāsh, corresponds to Ḥarīrī's Abū Zaid, and his narrator Al-Sāji' b. Ḥamām to Ḥarīrī's Al-Ḥārith b. Hammām. He further explains how he has given fanciful names.² His own name is Ibn Abū Ḥajala, and *hajala* means *partridge*, which, he says, is a class of pigeon. *Sāji'* means *a cooing pigeon*, and *ḥamām* means *pigeon*. *Abul Riyāsh* literally means *the father of feathers*.

The *maqāmas* of Ibn Abū Ḥajala were, as he tells us, dedicated to Al-Malik al-Nāṣir Ḥasan. This ruler had two brief periods as Mamlūk sultān in Egypt, and disappeared after the second period in 762/1361, never to be seen again. Ibn Abū Ḥajala refers to him in a manner which suggests that he knew of his death.³ The chess *maqāma* was written later and was dedicated to Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ, governor of Māridīn.⁴

¹ Ahlwardt, MS. no. 8379, fols. 102b, 103a.

² Ibid. fol. 103a.

³ Ibid. fol. 102b, where he calls the sultān "the martyr".

⁴ See Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-zuhūr* (Cairo, 1311), i. 214; M. van Berchem and J. Strzykowski, *Amida* (Heidelberg, 1910), p. 113. I am indebted to Dr. D. S. Rice for these two references. Ibn Battūta, who visited Māridīn in Ṣāliḥ's time, speaks highly of his enlightenment and generosity (*Tuḥfat al-nuzzār*, Cairo, 1322, i. 178). Ṣāliḥ was governor of Māridīn from 712 to 765 (1312-64), but Ibn Iyās, loc. cit. says he died in 766, aged 71. See further Abul Fidā', *Mukhtaṣar ta'riḫ al-bashar* (Constantinople, 1268), iv. 69; E. de Zambaur, *Manuel de généalogie et de chronologie* (Hanover, 1927), p. 229. (Continued overleaf).

THE MANUSCRIPT

The *maqāma* extends from fols. 81b to 86b. Vowel signs have been added, but obviously by someone who knew very little about them, as they are frequently quite impossible. The text is written clearly, but here and there mistakes occur. It has been possible to correct some readings from the Berlin manuscript,¹ but in the latter part of the *maqāma* which is not included there, it has been necessary sometimes to make conjectural emendations. In the textual notes I have used B for the Berlin manuscript and R for the John Rylands manuscript.

I have to thank Dr. A. A. Abdel Meguid, whom I have consulted about difficult passages, for his very willing help. Some emendations which I have adopted were his suggestion, and I have put the letter M in brackets in the textual notes to indicate where the reading in the text is an emendation suggested by him.

TRANSLATION

Al-Sāji' b. Ḥamām related the following : I came to Māridīn² with a company of people who were going there, to see its fortress which is veiled in clouds, on whose board the pawns of the stars are drawn up in line. Having the shining stars it could dispense with pearls, and in the evening, by reason of its leading inhabitants there was a moon in all its regions.³

When you look at everything, you see that all things are fine.

On fol. 81a Ibn Abū Ḥajala introduces the *maqāma* thus : " The epilogue, mentioning the chess *maqāma* which I composed in the name of the sultān Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ, governor of Māridīn, and attached to the *maqāmas* which I composed in the name of the sultān Al-Malik (f. 81b) al-Nāṣir Ḥasan, Allah most high have mercy on his youth and appoint his drink from the pure wine which is sealed " (cf. Qur'ān, lxxxiii. 25).

¹ fols. 105a to 106a. There it is called *Al-maqāma al-Mārdānīya*.

² This is the Arabic pronunciation of the name of the town which is properly Mārdīn. In the Arabic text it rhymes with *wāridīn*. Māridīn is a rock fortress in Upper Mesopotamia. Cf. *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, iii. 273 ff. ; G. Le Strange, *The lands of the eastern Caliphate* (Cambridge, 1930), p. 96.

³ The moon is commonly used as a figure for beauty, but here it is used as a figure for brightness. The town was illuminated by its distinguished men who shone like moons in every quarter.

I entered it when the *mu'adhdhin* was beginning to cry, "Come to salvation",¹ and I mingled with its boon companions as water is mingled with wine. I reached the topmost step in its high eminence and looked down on the world from its most remote elevation.²

A town in whose land I was near the sky when I alighted in the region of its generous host.

If its fish were to appear in the river of the Milky Way, I could catch it from there quickly by hand.

I began to repair to every quarter in it and go round in it like the rook on the board, among shy women and distinguished men. A young cup-bearer was treating the large cup as small, looking steadily at the boon-companion, saying in the course of conversation over some old wine,

The only pleasures which remain are the conversations of noble people over wine,

and reciting,

I see that the province of the kingdom of the good one (*al-ṣāliḥ*) who is sultān attracts with kindness him who is remote.

Many a well of water in his preserve says to me, "The only source of comfort is Ṣāliḥ".

Now while we were in the period of Spring and the season for reciting poetry to a company, the sound of the trump arose by which the bright blooms shone forth,³ and we went out to pluck the blossom of flowers, separating ourselves with a company which was making a tour for some purposes.

We went out to stay three days, but it was so pleasant that we stayed there a month,

some playing chess and others backgammon.⁴

¹ One of the phrases in the call to prayer.

² Cf. Le Strange, loc. cit. "All the buildings rose one above the other in steps, and the roads were stairs". See Yāqūt, *Kitāb mu'jam al-buldān* (ed. Wüstenfeld), 6 vols. (Leipzig, 1866-73), iv. 390.

³ The reference is to the last trump which heralds the resurrection, with which the appearance of the flowers in spring is compared. Cf. Qur'ān, xxiii. 103; xxxix. 68; lxix. 13.

⁴ The Persian term is used here for "backgammon" because it rhymes with *shaṭranj* (chess), whereas the Arabic word *nard* does not.

They moved to the wine like a rook and turned back, and the wine was making them move like queens.¹

[This took place] in everyone with a lofty soul and high aim, who prolonged drinking wine, and saw on his red board what Zarqā' of Al-Yamāma did not see.²

I hand him the glass of silver and receive it of melted gold.³

So without doubt I make gain in the mutual giving, as though in my transaction I were a usurer.

We had no sooner extinguished the fire [of thirst] with the pure wine and begun to cast lots about chess in the public road, when there approached us

A shaikh of ours from Rabi'at al-Faras, plucking at his beard from confusion,⁴ who in wiles exceeded Abū Zaid,⁵ who had on him the mark of the lords of the Path⁶ and a patched garment like an old chessboard. He said, "O you liberal ones with fastidious souls, do you not see my altered state and my leaning wall? Poverty has mounted on my exposed position, and the pawns in my file, who are the children, have become unable to recognize the value of the pieces and to get the attention of the king.⁷ Their pawn in its devouring is a queen, their mother like the bishop devours whatever there is, and the position is cramped. I am a man of many years whose bones have become weak, who is bereft of everything, and whose soul has despaired of existence.

¹ The queen moved diagonally and only one square at a time, whereas the rook moved as in our game. Cf. *JRAS.* (1852), p. 59; H. J. R. Murray, *A History of Chess* (Oxford, 1913), pp. 225 f.

² Zarqā' is a woman of Arab legend who had the reputation of being able to see anything three days' journey away. There is a story of an attacking army carrying trees so as to deceive her, a story which has its counterpart in *Macbeth*.

³ The glass looks like silver, but when it is filled with wine it looks like gold.

⁴ This verse is a quotation from a couplet composed in satire of Ḥarīrī, who was a slow and painstaking writer, although he represented his chief character as one who could extemporize. Cf. T. Chenery, *op. cit.* pp. 28 f.

⁵ The hero of Ḥarīrī's *maqāmas*.

⁶ I.e. the Ṣūfīs.

⁷ The manuscript has *shāt* (ewe), but this was often used by the common people for *shāh* (king). Cf. Murray, *op. cit.* p. 224 n. The pawns (*bayādiq*) are foot-soldiers. Here the fanciful idea seems to be expressed that the pawns are wandering about aimlessly, receiving no oversight from the king.

Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps, and perhaps he who has bound the wards¹ may loosen them."

Al-Sāji' b. Ḥamām said : Now we were delighted by his chess phrases with his abstruse references in the manner of Al-Fāḍil² and his speech which played with artistic allusions, so we ordered him to sit down and get what was desired and receive the dīnār of the one who was beaten. Then when he sat down to watch the game he got up, and we resolved to get up. The old man was afraid on this account that the gold would be lost, so to arrange the board he swore, "By the earth and what spread it out and by a soul and what fashioned it,³ if you appoint me the two stipulated amounts I will win at it from two sides".⁴ I said, "Neither Al-Māwardī⁵ nor Ṣaṣṣa⁶ the Indian makes such a claim as yours. Now do not wager on a refractory she-camel⁷ so that your soul may be lost over a game." He replied, "You are ignorant of my worth, because they trained me in the clamour of desperate war.

You will know on the boards, when we meet the swift horses, of what kind I am. So you keep to the [she-camel] which is pasturing at large, for the seeker of herbage will not lie to his people,⁸ and in butting there the

¹ The word means "knots". See Murray, op. cit. p. 223, where he says, "In the other MSS. I find the verb *'aqada* used repeatedly of two *firzāns*, or *firzān* and *baidaq*, in the sense of 'unite', 'tie together', 'place so that two pieces mutually defend one another'." He therefore translates the noun *'uqda* as "ward". *Firzān* = Q; *baidaq* = P. The excerpt in the Berlin manuscript ends with this verse.

² The reference is probably to the *qāḍī* Al-Fāḍil Abū 'Alī 'Abd al-Raḥīm b. Bahā' al-Dīn al-Lakhmī al-'Asqalānī al-Miṣrī (529-596 = 1135-1200), *wazīr* of Saladin, who had a great reputation as an author.

³ Qur'ān, xci. 6 f.

⁴ He will play a game with both colours and win both games. There may also be a suggestion that, since he is poor, someone should provide his stake.

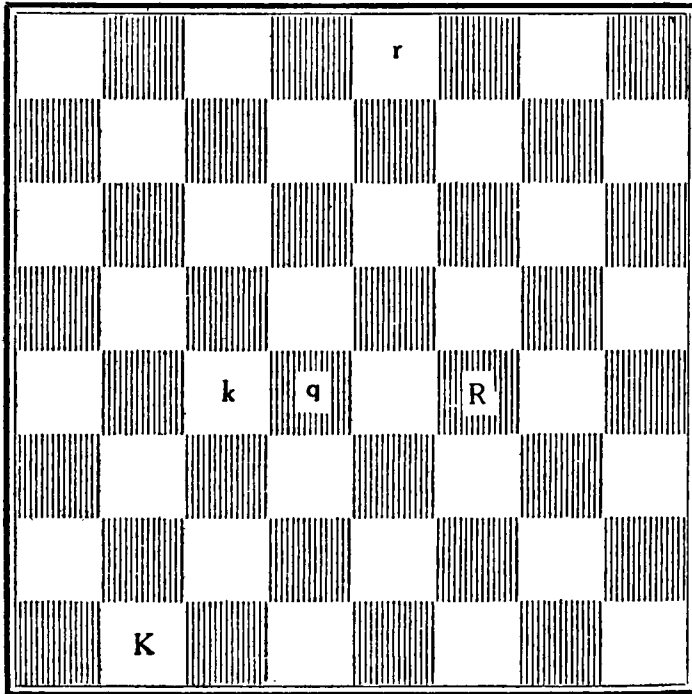
⁵ A chess master in the time of the 'Abbāsīd Caliph Al-Muktafi (289-295 = 902-908). Cf. Murray, op. cit. p. 199.

⁶ The reputed inventor of chess. See Murray, op. cit. Index.

⁷ The first of a number of proverbs quoted in this *maqāma*. Cf. G. W. Freytag, *Arabum Proverbia*, 3 vols. (Bonn, 1838-43), ii. 501.

⁸ Ibid. ii. 525. The proverb indicates that even a habitual liar will not lie to his people on the subject of suitable pasture, as it is as much in his interest as in theirs. Sāji' is being told to attend to matters on which he can be expected to speak the truth.

hornless ram is overcome.”¹ Thereupon he tucked up his skirt and clad himself with night as with a garment.² Then he took the black pieces and said, “For some matter or other he who rules is made ruler”.³ Then when I intended to repulse him



Capitals represent white and small letters black.

and began to ward him off, he moved the king beside the queen⁴ and said, “An obstacle has been placed between the ass and the leaping”.⁵ Taking possession of the two stipulated amounts and being refreshed with the gold, he said, “He who removes the veil has abandoned deceit.”⁶ O lords of the cavalry and of intelligence pouring forth like a flood,

¹ Cf. G. W. Freytag, *Arabum Proverbia*, 3 vols. (Bonn, 1838-43), ii. 88. A poor player has no hope of beating a master. In the *maqāma* the word *thamma* (there) is added to the usual form of the proverb to supply a rhyme to *ajamma* (hornless).

² Ibid. i. 661. Freytag says, *Proverbium monet, ut parati simus et diligentiam in quaerendo adhibeamus*. See also Lane, *Lexicon*, pp. 871, 1595.

³ Freytag, op. cit. ii. 450. No one is put in a high position without possessing qualities to justify it. In a game of skill like chess one becomes a master only because of his ability.

⁴ This is a difficult phrase. I give this translation with some hesitation, but it at least makes sense and fits in with the position in the diagram. R cannot check K because Q is interposed. I have consulted Mr. H. J. R. Murray about this position, and he agrees that it is a winning one for black.

⁵ Cf. Freytag, op. cit. ii. 251.

⁶ For a somewhat different form of the proverb cf. ibid. i. 210.

Is there now among you one who will come forward, or will contend in playing it ?
 I will show him in it what will suffice concerning every principle and exponent.
 Many positions have I crossed with my cavalry to the enemy.
 To him my land is sacrosanct except when he is passing through.
 The flesh of my ewe¹ is mutton, but the ewe of other people is a goat."

Al-Sāji' b. Ḥamām said: When he composed his verses extemporaneously and made a display of hopping around² I considered him, and lo, he was our shaikh Abul Riyāsh, the rook of the board and the stirrer up of dust in every region. My conjecture about him was correct, and I got security for myself from him. Then I said, "Do what you like with the people, for I have no power to deal with you today.

Neither is my heart a target for the ladies, nor are my fingers a mount for the rooks."

Now while he was assaulting like Al-Ṣūlī³ and investigating the subject of the stakes like one versed in the fundamentals,⁴ the full moon of the region and the king of the board hastened to him⁵ and the wager was settled. They proceeded to the board where the battle was to take place, with the condition that each hand should get what it won, each ewe what milk it gave, and each soul what it acquired.⁶ They both began to make their opening moves with their army and move forward their camp. Our friend got ready for him, marched upon him with his cavalry

¹ There is probably a play here on *shāt* (ewe) and *shāh* (king).

² *Abdā hauqalat al-hajl*. The verbal noun *hauqala* means *walking quickly and with short steps*. For an example of hopping to indicate pleasure, cf. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Cairo, 1313 A.H.), i. 108. *Hauqala* also means *repelling*, and *hajal* means *partridge*. The phrase might therefore be translated as "made clear the repelling (defeat) of the partridge", Ibn Abū Ḥajala thus punning on his own name.

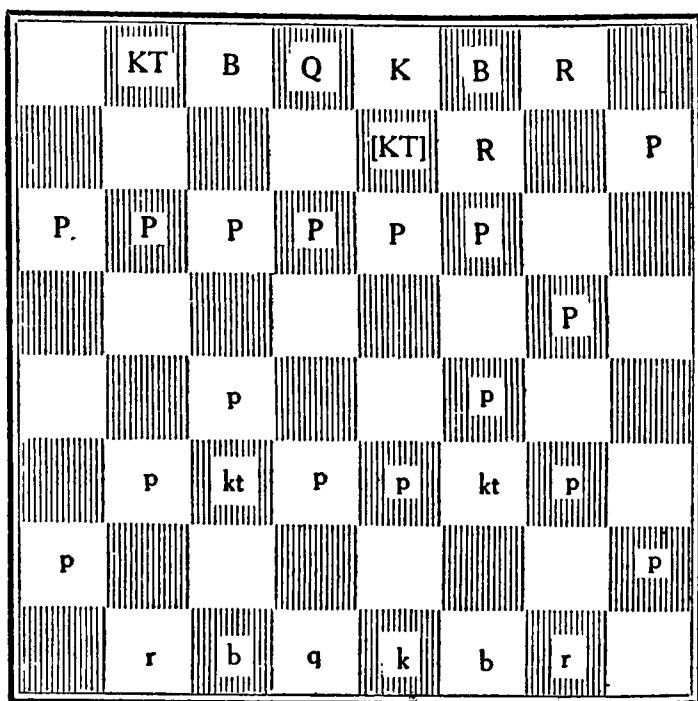
³ A famous chess player who defeated Māwardī. He died in 335/946. Cf. Murray, op. cit. Index; *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, iv. 541 ff.

⁴ A reference to the bases of Muslim jurisprudence.

⁵ The full moon, which is commonly used as a figure of speech for beauty, is here used to indicate the leading player of the neighbourhood, as is also the phrase "king of the board". There is a play on *badr* (full moon) and *badara* (hastened).

⁶ This last phrase is based on Qur'ānic language. Cf. ii. 281; iii. 24, 155; xl. 17; xlv. 21. There is also a play on words, as *nafs* (soul) is a name given to the K. Cf. Murray, op. cit. p. 224.

and his infantry, became completely hostile to him, and made the pawns of the *sayyāla*¹ run like a flood.



Capitals represent white and small letters black.

Abul Riyāsh countered him with the *mujannah*² opening by spreading out the wings. He brought the rooks round to the knights' squares, each rook making straighter to its goal than a dove,³ quicker to run off than an ostrich,⁴ rarer than the *anūq*'s eggs,⁵ and more disobedient than a fiery steed.⁶ His pawn was a star in clouds and his rook an eagle in high places. The

¹ One of the favourite openings. The position after the twelfth move is illustrated by the red (white) pieces in the diagram. Cf. Murray, op. cit. p. 237. For an analysis of this opening by Lajlāj, see ibid. pp. 263 ff. In the manuscript a Kt. has been omitted.

² Another favourite opening, illustrated by the black pieces after the twelfth move. Ibid. p. 248. Analysis by Lajlāj, ibid. pp. 248 ff. Šūlī considered no opening better than these two. Ibid. p. 239.

³ Cf. Freytag, op. cit. ii. 896.

⁴ Ibid. iii. 515.

⁵ Ibid. ii. 148. The *anūq* is said to be a species of vulture which lays its eggs in inaccessible places. The proverb does not seem to be very appropriate, but may be used to indicate that the rooks cannot be attacked.

⁶ Freytag, op. cit. ii. 148 gives *a'azz min al-ablaq al-'aqūq*, "rarer than a pregnant piebald stallion". For a verse combining this with the previous proverb, see *Tāj al-'Arūs*, s.v. *balaq*. In the *maqāma* the author obviously hints at the proverb, but he does no more than that.

spaces between them became cramped, the battle was fought at close quarters, the war became vehement, and they entered the first category of blow and counter blow. Abul Riyāsh then began sometimes to stop him and sometimes to raise his hopes when he was offering him a gambit, and recite,

I trample with my cavalry every land of a warrior in which I scorn the soul of the enemy who vanishes.

I honour my soul, and if I scorn it, it will never indeed be honourable to anyone after me.

Then our friend began to repulse him at one time and recite to him at another,

Do you covet my cavalry for a black one, since your squares have become cramped in spaces because of it ?

To give hope of it is like [giving hope of] the Pleiades when they appear ; but how far are the Pleiades from an inferior one who is an opponent !

Then when every star of Abul Riyāsh's pawns set and he feared that the sword would reach the bone,¹ he crushed him with his roan knight and made the black king taste death by the sword (lit. the red death). He won from his desperate (lit. blue) foe the yellow dīnār, and began to laugh like the white petals of the camomile on the green verge of the road.

Another then advanced towards him and soon killed him with the bishop, moving the knight well both forwards and backwards, with the result that the king was mated on the spot. His senses and their striving were of no avail, and he was put in the wrong both when he used them jestingly and seriously, after having made much of their abundance.²

We ask from Allah most high the forgiveness of all our sins on the day when every soul will come to contend for itself.³ Verily He is bountiful and gracious.

¹ In the manuscript a board is drawn out here, but the position has not been filled in.

² When Abul Riyāsh is beaten for the second time, his boasting is made to look foolish. He had applied his wits to mockery of his opponents and to serious play, but all had come to nothing.

³ The reference is to the Day of Judgement.

816
105a
حكى الساجع بن حمام قال : قدمت في رفقة¹ وارين، إلى ماردين،
لأرى قلعتها التي تبرقت بالغيوم، واصطفّت برقتها يادق النجوم، فاستغنت²
بالدراري عن الدرر،³ وأمست⁴ بوجوه سكّانها في كلّ ناحية من وجهها
قمر.

فإذا⁵ نظرت إلى الوجود بأسره شاهدت⁶ كلّ الكائنات ملاحا
فدخلتها ونجم المؤذن في طالع الفلاح، وامترجت⁷ بندمائها⁸ امتراج⁹ الماء بالراح،
105b فنلت¹⁰ | بطالعتها الدرجة العليا، واشرفت¹¹ من عدوتها القصوى على الدنيا.
بلد قربت¹² من السماء بأرضها لما حللت بأفق¹³ آدبها¹⁴ الندى
لو¹⁵ لاح في نهر المجرة¹⁶ حوته لأخذته¹⁷ منها سريعا باليد
82a فجعلت آوى بها إلى كلّ بقعه، وأجول بها جولان الرخ في الرقعه،
ما بين ظبي¹⁸ ككاس،¹⁹ وكبير أناس. وساق صغير، يستصغر الكأس الكبير،
ويديم ملاحظة النديم، ويقول في الحديث على الشراب القديم،
وما بقيت من اللذات إلّا أحاديث الكرام على المدام. وينشد
أرى الصالح السلطان إقليم ملكه يقرب²⁰ بالإحسان من هو نازح
فكم عين ماء في حماه يقول²¹ لي ألا كلّ ما قرّت²² به العين صالح
فينا نحن في إبان الربيع، وفصل²³ إنشاد المقطوع على القطيع، إذ هبت
نفخة الصور، وأشرقت به كواكب النور، فخرجنا لنقطف من الزهر نور²⁴،
82b ونقاطع²⁵ بالقطيع الدائر على الهموم | الدّوره.²⁶

- وأمسكت⁴ R الدور³ R فاستغنت² R فاستغنت² B رفقه¹ R
يد ما بها⁸ R وامرخت⁷ R وامرجت⁷ B بمشاهدت⁶ B وادا⁵ B
نافق¹³ R قريب¹² R واشرفت¹¹ R قنلت¹⁰ B امتراج⁹ R
طى¹⁸ B, R لاحت¹⁷ R المجبة¹⁶ B ولو¹⁵ B نادبها¹⁴ B
فصل²³ B om. قرب²² B, R تفول²¹ B تقرب²⁰ R كاس¹⁹ B
الدوزه²⁶ R ويقاطع²⁵ R ويقاطع²⁵ B بوزه²⁴ B

خرجنا على أن المقام ثلاثة فطاب لنا حتى أقمنا به شهرا

ما بين لاعب شطرنج، وصاحب شش وينج.¹

مشوا إلى الراح² مشى الرخ³ وانقلبوا⁴ والراح² يمشى بهم مشى الفرازين
من كل ذي نفس سامية وهمّة عالية يديم شرب المدامه، ويرى في رقعة⁴
الحمراء ما لم تره زرقاء اليمامة.

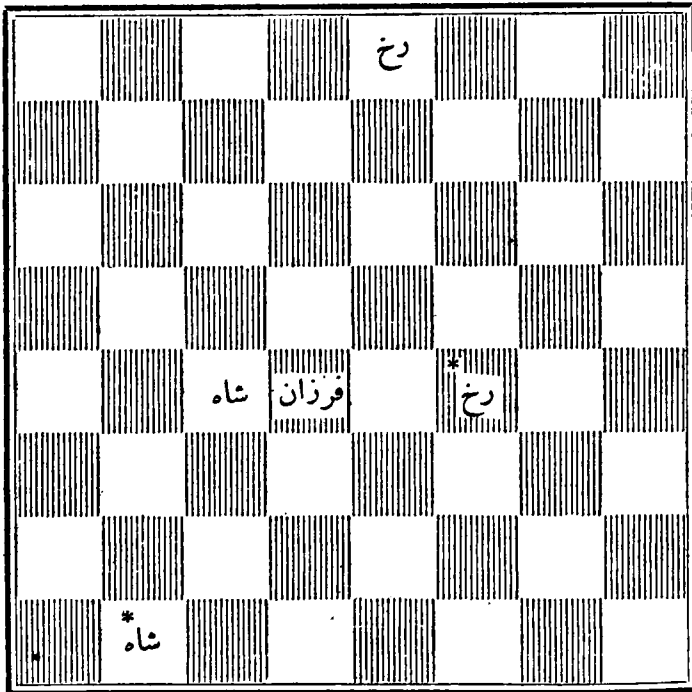
أعاطيه الزجاجة من لجين وآخذها من الذهب المذاب
فأكسب لا محالة في التعاطي كأننى في معاملتى مرابى
فما كان إلا أن أطفأنا⁵ الحريق بالرحيق، واخذنا في القراع بالشطرنج
106a على قارة⁶ | الطريق،⁷ إذ قدم⁸ علينا

83a. شيخ لنا⁹ من ربعة الفرس ينتف¹⁰ عنونه¹¹ من¹² الهوس
يزيد في الكيد،¹³ على أبى زيد، عليه سيما أرباب الطريقه، ومرقعة كرقعة¹⁴
الشطرنج العتيقه. فقال: يا ذوى¹⁵ الأريحيه، والنفوس الأبيّه،¹⁶ أما ترون
حالى الحائل، وحائطى المائل، قد ركب الفقر كشفى، وأصبحت يادق
الأولاد من صفى، لا يعرفون من القطع وزنها،¹⁷ ولا يملكون من الشاة
أذنهاء، فيبدقهم فى أكله فرزان،¹⁸ وأمهم كالفيل تأكل ما كان، ويضيق
المكان، وقد كبرت¹⁹ سنّى، ووهن العظم منى، فقاطعتنى²⁰ البيض والسود،
وأيست²¹ نفسى²² من الوجود.²³

طافنا R⁵ رقعه R⁴ وانصرفوا B³ الراح R² وينج B¹
عثنونه R¹¹ تنتف R¹⁰ B om.⁹ قد مر R⁸ الطريق B⁷. A page in B begins with this word. At the
bottom of the previous page the word written to indicate what follows is
الايه R¹⁶ بادوى B, R¹⁵ لرفعه B¹⁴ الكبد R¹³ R om.¹²
فما طعتنى B²⁰ كرت R¹⁹ فرزان R فران B¹⁸ ورنها R¹⁷
الوحد B²³ نفسى B²² واسبب B²¹

فلعلها ولعلها ولعلها ولعل من عقد العقود يحلها¹.
 قال الساجع بن حمام: فطرنا من ألفاظه الشطرنجية، بدقاته الفاضليه،
 836 وكلامه | اللاعب على النكت الأدبيه، فأمرناه بالقعود لينال المطلوب، ويأخذ
 دينار المغلوب. فلما قعد حول الدست قام، وعزمنّا على القيام، فخاف
 الشيخ بهذا السبب، ذهب الذهب، فأقسم من تسوية² الرقعة بالأرض وما
 طحاها، ونفس وما³ سواها، لئن جعلتم لى الجلعين، لأغلبن فيه من وجهين.
 فقلت ما يدعى دعواك الماوردى، ولا صصة الهندي، فلا تراهن⁴ على
 الصعبه، فتروح روحك فى لعبه. فقال جهلت مقدارى لأننى ربونى فى وعى⁵
 الحرب⁶ الزبون⁷.

ستعلم فى الرقاع إذا لقينا جياذ الخيل⁸ فى أى⁸ أكون.
 فعليك بالمهمله، فإنه لا يكذب⁹ الرائد اهله¹⁰، فعند النطاح ثم، يغلب



The star indicates white.

¹ B ends here. ² R سوبه [M] ³ ما R ⁴ راهن R ⁵ الوعى R
⁶ الحرب R ⁷ الرنون R [M] ⁸⁻⁸ اى فى R ⁹ يكذب R ¹⁰ مهله R

الكبش الأجم، ثم إنه شمر ذبلاً،¹ وأدّرع ليلاً، فأخذ السود، وقال لأمر ما
84a يسود من يسود. | فلماً قصدت لدفعه، وأخذت في منعه، ضرب الشاه
بالفرزان، وقال حيل بين العير والنزوان، فحاز² الجميلين، وأصبح بالذهب
قرير العين، ثم قال ترك الحدّاع، من كشف القناع، فيا أرباب الحيل،
والأذهان السيّالة كالسيل،

هل فيكم الآن بارز في لعبه أو مبارز
أريه فيه³ حساباً في كلّ أصل وبارز
فكم قطعت بخيلي إلى العدو مراكز
أرضي عليه حرام إلّا إذا كان جائز
ولحم شاتي ضائي وشاة³ غيري ماعز

84b

قال الساجع بن حمام: فلماً ارتجز⁴ وارتجل،⁵ وأبدى⁶ حوقلة⁷ الحجل،
تأملته فإذا به شيخنا أبو الرياش رخّ الرقعة، ومشير النقع⁸ في كل بقعه،
فصحّ فيه حدسي،⁹ وأخذت¹⁰ منه الأمان على نفسي، فقلت دونك والقوم،
فلا طاقة لي بك اليوم،

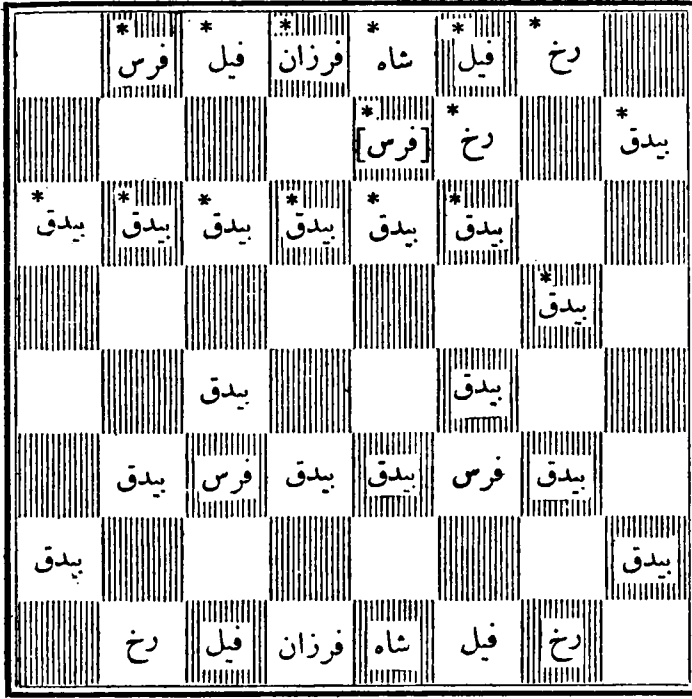
فغير فؤادي للغواني¹¹ رميةً وغير بناني¹² للرخاخ ركاب
فيناه يصول كالصولي، ويبحث في باب الرهين بحث¹³ الأصولي، إذ بدر
85a إليه بدر البقعه، وشاه الرقعة، فمقد الرهان، وتقدّم إلى رقعة | الميدان، على
أنه لكلّ يد ما¹⁴ ضربت، ولكلّ شاة ما حلبت، ولكلّ نفس ما كسبت.
فأخذ كلّ منهما في تعية¹⁵ عسكره، وتقليم¹⁶ معسكره، فاعتدّ صاحبنا لأجله،

وارتجل R⁵ ارتجز R⁴ وشاه R³ فحاز R² ديبلا R¹

واخذت R¹⁰ [M] خديني R⁹ اليفع R⁸ حوفله R⁷ وابدأ R⁶

[M] ويقديم R¹⁶ بعينه R¹⁵ وما R¹⁴ بحث R¹³ ساني R¹² للعواني R¹¹

وزحف عليه بخيله ورجله، فال عليه كل الميل، وأجرى يادق السالة كالسيل.



The star indicates white.

856 فقابله أبو الرياش من تعبئة¹ المجنح² بنشر الجناحين، وحلق بالرخين، إلى موضع الفرسين، من كل رخ أهدي من حمامه، وأنفر من نعامه، أعز من بيض الأنوق، وأعظم من العقيق في العقوق. فييدقه نجم في سحاب، ورخه عقاب في عقاب. فضاقت بينهما المحال، والتحم القتال، فقامت الحرب على ساق، ودخلا³ في أول باب من طق إلى طاق. فجعل أبو الرياش تارة يزرمه، وآونة يطعمه⁴ حين يطعمه، وينشد

أدوس بخيلي كل أرض محارب أهين بها نفس العدو الذي يردى وأكرم⁵ نفسي إن أنتهها⁶ وحقك لم تكرم إلى أحد بعدى

فجعل صاحبنا تارة يبعده، وآونة ينشده،

[M] والزم⁵ R يطمه⁴ R ودخلا³ R المجنح² R بعينه¹ R

أهينها⁶ R

86a أطمع¹ في² خيلي بأدهم مذ³ غدت بيوتك منه ضيقات المنازل
وتطعيمه⁴ مثل الثرياً⁵ إذا بدا وأين الثرياً⁶ من [حق]ير⁶ منا زل
فلما غرب من يادق أبي الرياش كلّ نجم⁷ وخاف من وصول السكين
86b إلى العظم،⁸ | حطمه بفرسه الأشقر، وأذاق الشاه الأسود الموت الأحمر. ففاز⁹
من عدوه الأزرق بالدينار الأصفر،¹⁰ وجعل مثل نعر¹¹ الأقاح الأبيض يضحك
على شارب الطريق الأخضر. فتقدم إليه الثاني فما كان بعد قليل، حتى
قتله¹² بالفيل، فأحسن في سوق الفرس وردّها، وماتت منه الشاه في جلدّها
فبطلت¹³ منه الحواس وكدها، وأخطى في هزلها وجدها، بعد أن تخير¹⁴ في
عدّها.

ونسأل الله تعالى غفران ذنوبنا كلّها يوم تأتي كلّ نفس تجادل عن
نفسها إنه جواد كريم.

الثريا R⁵ وتطعيمه R⁴ مد R³ من R² انطمع R¹
الثريا R⁵ Here a board is marked off, but no position has
been entered. ففاز R⁹ محم R⁷ [M] ير R⁶
قتله R¹² تعبز R¹¹ الاصفر R¹⁰ ففاز R⁹ [M] ير R⁶
فبطلت R¹³ تخير R¹⁴