Ibn Ruzayq and His Literary Works: A Bibliographical Survey

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is twofold: firstly to deal with the biography of Ibn Ruzayq, Humayd b. Muhammad b. Ruzayq “Salil Ibn Ruzayq” and his relations with the Âi Bú Sa’id dynasty; secondly to study his littery works.

Ibn Ruzayq was born in Muscat sometime in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and his death was in 1291 A.H./1875. He wrote seventeen books which dealt with the following: Maqâmât, poetry, and history. With the exception of al-Fath al-Mubîn, Badr al-Tamâm, al-Sha’â’ al-Shá” and the DiwáSilk al-Farayd. None of his works have been published and exist only in manuscript form, in the different World libraries.

The Diwân Ibn Ruzayq which has been published by The Ministry of National Heritage and Culture of Oman (M.N.H.C.) in 1983 is in fact a selection of his poems taken from his Diwâns.
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1) Maqāmāt
2) Poetry
3) History

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1. The life of Ibn Ruzayq

Ibn Ruzayq's full name was Humayd b. Muḥammad b. Ruzayq b. Bakhtī b. Sa'īd b. Ghassān al-Nakhalī.¹ The last name refers to Nakhal, his family's place of origin which is situated in the western Ḥajar, to the east of Rustaq. He grew up in Muscat, and was known as salīl (decadent of) Ibn Ruzayq, or Ibn Ruzayq, or al-Shā'īr Ibn Ruzayq.

He was born in Muscat where his family lived.² The date of his birth is unknown, but it was probably in the 1780's, since he mentions³ that his house was burnt down in 1801, and he joined in the war between Sd. Sa'īd and his uncle Qays b. Imām Ahmad in 1804, and he also saw the bier of Sd. Ḥamud b. Imām Sa'īd on Friday 8th Rajab, 1206/2nd March, 1792. He was a child at this time and was not allowed to follow the bier to the cemetery. Furthermore he completed his diwān Suluk al-Farady in Dhū al-Qa'dah, in 1221/1806.⁴ Ibn Ruzayq is unlikely to have been less than twenty years old when he joined Sd. Sa'īd against Qays, and he already had his own house and apparently was independent. He died at Muscat in 1291/1873.⁵

He lived at Muscat where his family had lived since the reign of Imam Sayf b. Sulṭān II. His father worked at the Muscat custom house.⁶ This position was hereditary in the descendants of the family of Ruzayq, the grandfather of Ḥumayd (Ibn Ruzayq).⁷

There had been amicable relations between Ruzayq's family and the Āl bū Sa'īd Dynasty since the reign of Imam Ahmad b. Sa'īd, the founder of the Āl bū Sa'īd state.⁸ Ruzayq b. Bakhtī had been a friend of Imām Ahmad since the latter was Wāli of Ṣuḥār in the 1730's.⁹ The friendship began when Ruzayq advised Ahmad not to meet Imam Sayf b. Sulṭān at Muscat. The story is that
Imam Sayf appointed Aḥmad as Wāli of Suhār, and Aḥmad became famous for his generosity. People obeyed him willingly and appreciated the justice of his administration. When Imam Sayf II noticed this, he had doubts about the intentions of Aḥmad and summoned him to Muscat. When Aḥmad arrived at Muscat, he met Ruzayq before he saw Imam Sayf, and Ruzayq informed Aḥmad about the hostile intentions of Imam Sayf II. Thus he was able to return unharmed to Suhār. Contacts between Aḥmad and Ruzayq increased from the beginning of the reign of Aḥmad. Imam Aḥmad did not forget the advice of Ruzayq. He retained Ruzayq in office at the custom house, which Ruzayq had held under Imam Sayf II. On Ruzayq’s death Imam Aḥmad appointed Ruzayq’s son, Muḥammad, and wrote a letter of appointment assigning the post to Ruzayq and his children. This document was dated 25 Rabi’ I, 1160/27 April, 1747, but it was burnt in 1801\(^{10}\).

Sultān b. Aḥmad depended on the assistance of Muḥammad b. Ruzayq before he entered Muscat in 1792. He wrote a letter asking Muḥammad b. Ruzayq to tell the merchants and notables of Muscat to be reassured.\(^{11}\) Muḥammad was able to do so, and after Sultān had occupied Muscat, he depended on Muḥammad b. Ruzayq to obtain supplies for Sultān’s army. Sd. Sultān trusted in Muḥammad and took his advice. Ibn Ruzayq was a cultured man, and left a record of the subjects he studied.\(^{12}\)

The ʿulamāʾ he studied under were:

12. His father, Muḥammad b. Ruzayq.

Ibn Ruzayq had a respectable position in society\(^{13}\), and his literary work was praised by ʿulamāʾ such as al-Sālimī al-Sālimī and al-Kharūṣī Nāṣir b. Jāʿid b. Khāmis. It is recorded of al-Kharūṣī that he was in such awe of Ibn Ruzayq’s literary talents, that when he sent a letter with a poem in praise of Ibn Ruzayq to Nāṣir b. Sulaymān al-ʿAbidān he requested him not to show the poem to Ibn Ruzayq.\(^{14}\)
Ibn Ruzayq enjoyed a reputation as a genealogist and historian, as a grammarrian and a prosodist. During the governorship of Sd Muḥammad b. Sālim b. Sulṭān (1928 - 30) over Muscat, he was a manager for the market of Muscat. He had two uncles and one aunt. His uncles were captured by the Persians in 1743. He also had one brother called Ruzayq. The details of Ibn Ruzayq's family are as follows:

1. Ibn Ruzayq's ascendants are known only by name, apart from his father and grandfather.

2. Ruzayq I is first mentioned during the reign of Imam Sayf II. There is no record of his life before A.H.1149. One opinion is that he was a slave of the Ya'āribah dynasty. He worked at the Muscat custom house during the rule of Imam Sayf II. He had good relations with Imam Aḥmad, the founder of Āl bū Sa'īdī state, when the latter was governor of Šuḥār. He died at the end the reign of Imam Aḥmad b. Sa'īd. (see al-Fath - pp. 331, 351f. and 365).

3. To the best of our knowledge, Ruzayq I left one daughter, and one son. She died during the reign of Sd. Sa'īd b. Sulṭān (see Sabā'īk, fol 32a.) and the son was called Muḥammad.
(4) Ruzayq I had two sons, who were captured by the Persians during their expedition over Quriyāt in 1843. (see al-Fath, p. 342).

(5) Muhammad b. Ruzayq, the author’s father, replaced his father at the Muscat custom house. He supported Sd. Sulṭān b. Aḥmad in capturing Muscat after the death of Sd. Ḥamad b. Imam Saʿīd in 1792. He became the adviser to Sd. Sulṭān. He died some time between A.H. 1208 and 1216/1793 and 1801 (see al-Fath, pp. 352, and 418 f.).

(6) Ruzayq II had one son called Surūr. There is no record of him except that his brother Ḥumayd comforted Ruzayq II when Ruzayq II’s wife died in 1232 (see Sabāʾik, fol. 342a).

(7) No details of the lives of Surūr and his son Sulaymān have survived.

(8) Sulaymān left two sons, Sālim and Saʿīd, the former lived in Barkā', while the latter lived in Nakhal and was a broker at the market of Barkā'.

2 - The Literary Works of Ibn Ruzayq

Ibn Ruzayq wrote a number of books on various topics. These books can be divided into three categories:

i  - Maqāmāt

He wrote كتاب علم الكرامات المنصرم إلى نسق المقامات K. 'Ilm al-Karāmāt al-Mansūb ala Nasaq al-Maqāmāt which included 60 maqāmāhs. This is now lost, but the first (Maqāmah al-Shādhāniyyah) is included in K. al-Fatḥ al-Mubīn.

ii - Poems

With the exception of A below, none of the following works has been published, and they only exist in manuscript form, except number H below which is lost:

A  - Sūlak al-fīrād fī mdh al-jamāl tawīn b. ʿAbd al-Malik b. Sulṭān

Silk al-Farayd fi Madh al-Sayyid al-Ḥamayd Thuwaynī b. Saʿīd b. Sulṭān
This exists at Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire, Ms 4215 Part ii. It is written in alphabetical order. It was completed on Tuesday, 12th Rajab 1262 / July 1846. It was published by the M.N.H.C. in 1997 in three volumes, edited by Muhammad ʿAli al-Sulaybī.

B  - Diwān Ṣalwat al-ʿAnām fī Ṣad Ḥamām al-Ḥamayd Aḥmad b. Saʿīd

This also exists at Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire, Ms 4215 part i. It was completed in Dhū al-Qaʾdah, 1221 / Jan 1807.
Sabā’ik al-Lujayn al-Ma‘rūf Bi Qurat al-‘Ain
This exists in the British Library, Ms Or. 6563. This copy was completed in 1243/1827. The MS consists of three parts:

i - Poems.
   These are in alphabetical order, and were written on various occasions. Ibn Ruzayq praises in this diwān some 27 men, such as Sayyid Sālim b. Sultān and his son, Muḥammad b. Nāşir al-Jabri. He also elegizes some 17 men and women, such as his father, his aunt Thunayn b. Nāşir b. Khalaf b. Zāmil al-M‘awāli who died in Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1241 and Muḥannā b. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Ya‘arubi who died in 1219. There are also lampoons, a poem of consolation and polemics.

ii - Riddles from fols 374a to 377a
   These include riddles about coins, stars, etc.

iii - Letters from fols 377a - 393a.
   He wrote a number of letters to friends and important persons. This diwān contains 19 of them. One is addressed to him and the rest were written by him, between 1240 and 1243.

This exists in the British Library, Ms Or. 6563. The Ms was completed in 1243/1827. It includes diwān Sabā’ik al-Lujayn from the fols 344a to 373a.

This exists in the library of Sh. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, the adviser to His Majesty the Sultān, MS 110.

This also exists in the library of Sh. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, the adviser to His Majesty the Sultān, MS 221.
H - Diwan Jawahir al-Ash'ar wa Faraydat al-Afkar.

This is lost. Ibn Ruzayq describes this diwan as "having many topics which please all sorts of people who appreciate poetry."  

iii - History

With the exceptions of F, G, and H below, none of the following works has been published, and they only exist in manuscript form:

A - al-Sahifah al-Qahtaniyyah.

This exists in Rhodes House, Oxford MS Afr. S.3.  

B - al-Sahifah al-'Adnaniyyah.

The MS exists in the British Library MS Or 6569. Autograph copy is dated 15 Dhul-Hijjah 1258/1842. It contains 9 chapters, in the fourth of which the author mentions the following 5 Omani poets:

- Rashid b. Sa'id b. Bilhasan al-Rawahi (Ya'aribah's rule).
- Sulayman b. Ahmad al-Mufaddal (d. 1227/1812)
- Rashid b. Sa'id b. Muhammed al-Jaylani.

In chapter V under the heading "Their Famous Heroes" he mentions the following:

- Muhammed b. Nasir al-Ghafiri (d. 1140/1727).

C - al-Qasidah al-Nuraniyyah fi Manaqib al-'Adnaniyyah.

The second volume exists only in the British Library, MS Or 6565.  The first is lost. The second volume has a line-by-line commentary. The modern history of Oman is dealt with in section 6 of chapter IV under the heading of "The war between Bil'arab b. Nasir al-Yaarubi and his companions on the one hand and Muhammed b. Nasir al-Ghafiri on the other." The section covers the battles of Farq, al-Qasim and al-Hafri, al-'Awamir, al-Sudayrah, and Su'hur.

D - al-Sirat al-Jami'ah.

It exists in Rhodes House, Oxford. A photocopy is in the Library of the M.'N. H. C. (MS 77).

E - al-Sirah al-Jalilah al-Musamma Sa'd al-Saidiyah.
The MS exists in Cambridge University Library MS Add. 2893, part III. It includes Diwan Rashid b. Khamis al-Habsi from 161b to f. 191a (= fols 31); The copy was completed by Salim b. Sa'id on 27 Shawal 1271/June 1855.

الشاعر الشائع بلمعان في ذكر أئمة عمان
al-Shu'ā' al-Shā'ī bi-lama'ān fi Dhikir al-A'immat 'Umán.47
The copyist is unknown, but according to the editor he may in fact be the author. It was published by the M.N.H.C. in 1978 and reprinted in 1984, edited by 'Abd al-Mun'im 'Amir. The book contains 148 verses of poetry. It has a line-by-line commentary. 25 Imams are mentioned by Ibn Ruzayq. Library of the M.N.H.C. The MS has the date A.H. 1156 which is obviously incorrect, as the author was not yet born.48

الفتح المبين في سيرة السادة الروعهدين
There are four existing MSS of this book. It was published in A.D. 1977 and reprinted in 1984. It was written between A.H. 1271 and A.H. 1273, probably in 1272. It was translated into English by the Rev. George Percy Badger, and this version was published in 1871. The translator mistakenly regarded the word “Ibn” as a name; thus he gave the author’s name as “Salii”, and made the author’s father, Muhammad b. Ruzayq, his brother. In fact “Salii” simply means “descendant of”.49

بدر التمام في سيرة السيد الههام مجيد بن سلطان
Badr al-Tamām fi Sirat al-Sayyid al-Ḥammām Sa'id b. Sultān.
There are five existing MSS of Badr al-Tamām, all of which exist as appendices to copies of K. al-Fath al-Mubin fi sirat al-Sadah al-Bū Sa'idiyin.

1 - Cambridge University Library Add. MSS, 2892.50 this copy belonged to the Rev. George Percy Badger F.R.G.S.,51 a chaplain in the presidency of Bombay. Badger spoke Arabic and Persian, and was appointed to report on the matters in dispute between Sd. Thuwayni b. Sa'id b. Sultān, the sovereign of Oman (1856 - 66), and his brother, Sayid Majid b. Sa'id the ruler of Zanzibar (1856 - 70). Sd. Thuwayni presented Badger with K. al-Fath al-Mubin when the latter visited Oman in 1860. That part of the volume, which includes Badr al-Tamām, covers folios 207 to 261 of the MS, which has 263 fols, with 24 lines to a page. There are about 12-15 words in a line; written surface 25x25cm. The MS was copied by Sulaymān b. Sa'id b.
Mubárak b. 'Abdàliáh b. Mubárak b. Sálim al-Nazáwi, descended from the awlád Khátim.\textsuperscript{52}

Sulaymán finished the copy on Tuesday 24th Rabi’i, 1275/30th November, 1858, i.e. only two years after the composition of the work, which was written in 1273/1856. It should be noted that the date given in the margin of folio 262a in a European hand is incorrect. It was written at the request of Sayyid Muhammad b. Sálim b. Sultán. The MS is written in naskhi, with catchwords, and has a few marginal and interlinear notes and glosses in both Arabic and English. It is in good condition, but damp-stained. Folio numbers have been provided in a European hand, but for convenience sake separate pagination for \textit{Badr al-Tamám} has been used here.

2 - Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS 4853,\textsuperscript{53} 210 fols. \textit{Badr al-Tamám} starts from folio 170 and covers 37 fols. Written surface is 35x20 cm., about 27 lines to a page. Each line has between 12-15 words. It was copied by Ráshid b. Sayf b. Ḥasan b. Sa’id b. Ráshid b. Ḥámayd b. Sálim b. 'Ali b. Musábíb al-Ḥámaydí at the request of sayyid Barghash b. Sa’id b. Sultán the ruler of Zanzibar (1870-88). It is dated 14th Shawwál 1292/Saturday, 13th November, 1875. It is in good condition with catchwords. The copyist underlined important names or events, and sometimes capitalized important names. Some lines have been erased in fol 178 B (lines 2, 17, and 18) and fol. 202b (lines 12), owing to repetition. The copyist has provided the tashkil for some words. Punctuation has been provided in the form of O.

3 - Strasbourg, bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire, Ms 4224,\textsuperscript{54} Fol 223; written surface is 23x20.5 cm., 27 lines to a page, in naskhi with catchwords, copied in Zanzibar for Karl Reinhardt,\textsuperscript{55} the interpreter at the German Embassy in Zanzibar. Reinhardt also worked in the German Embassy in Cairo. He presented this library with 42 books. Dated 19th Jumádá II, 1309/Saturday 10th January, 1892, headings in red. It is in good condition with binding of red leather with illuminations. It was copied from the original copy in the Sultán’s library in his palace in Zanzibar.

4 - Al-Damám, National Library of ARAMCO, MS IR 953.\textsuperscript{4} two volumes.

5 - Basrah, Centre for Arab Gulf Studies at University of Basrah, There is a photocopy at the Library of the Centre for Arab Gulf Studies at the University of Basrah. It has been obtained from Yaman.\textsuperscript{57}
NOTES

1. The writer has been able to interview a number of prominent 'ulamā' in Oman in order to obtain information on this subject.
2. Ibn Ruzayq, al-Fath, pp. 331, 351f.
3. Ibid. p. 325.
10. Ibid. pp. 351f.
11. Id. p. 418.
12. See section 2 Ibn Ruzayq's Works.
13. The reader is referred to Ibn Ruzayq's Diwān, Sabā'ik al-Lujayn. See also Tuhfat al-‘Ayān by al-Sālimī and 'Umān 'lbr al-Ta'rīkh by al-Siyābī, who both relied on Ibn Ruzayq's literary work.
15. Ibn Ruzayq, al-Ṣaḥḥah al-‘Adnānīyyah, fol. 477a; al-Shu'ārā' al-Shā'i', (Introduction vii).
21. The Diwān Ibn Ruzayq which has been published by the M.N.H.C. in 1403/1983, is in fact a selection of his poems taken from his diwāns. This diwān is in two parts: the first part is Madh of Sayyid Sālim b. Sultān, the second Muḥammad b. Sālim b. Sultān. It contains 79 poems (39 in the first part and the remainder in the second part). It was compiled by Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Mun'im Khafājah. The compiler claims that the author was Muḥammad b. Hamad b. Ruzayq, but the publishers discovered that the name of the author was incorrectly given and inserted a correction in the published volume. The compiler's introduction to this diwān, has been physically removed from all published copies.
23. Details of this diwān given in the Catalogue Critique des Manuscrits Arabes..., by Kussaibi Nazih are incorrect. He gives the title as Diwān Silīk al-Faraydī fi Madh al-Sayyīd al-Ḥamayd Aḥmad b. Sa'id b. Sa'id b. Sultān b. lmām Aḥmad b. Sa'id al-Bū Sā'īdī [d. 1196/1782] Sultān of Zanzibar and Oman, and his grandson Sālim b. Sultān, Muḥammad b. Sālim and Thwawini b. Sa'id. This title is inaccurate because Sa'id b. had no son called Aḥmad b. Sa'id it probably refers to lmām Aḥmad b. Sa'id, whose full name is Aḥmad b. Sa'id b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Bū Sā'īdī, the founder of the Al Bū Sā'īdī state. The reference to lmām Aḥmad as Sayyīd and Sultān of Zanzibar and Oman is incorrect: In fact this title was adopted by his grandsons at the beginning of the nineteenth century (see Badger, History, p. 377, appendix A. Kelly, Britain, p. 12 ff.). Finally there is a difference between Silīk al-Faraydī and Salwāt al-inām because the latter was copied by Sayyīd 'Alī b. Ḥāshim al-Ṣhīrī (see Ibn Ruzayq, Sabā'ik al-Lujayn, foils 83a. and 429a.) in 1241/1825 and also foils 39 a.
25. Ellis, A.G. and Edwards, A descriptive list of the Arabic Manuscripts Acquired by the Trustees of the British Museum since 1894, 1912. p. 60.
35. It has 829 pages; 10 lines to a page.
36. The present writer has been unable to gain access to this diwán. The information given is based on a personal interview with the adviser to the Sultán of Oman. It has about 50 poems. It was copied by Málík b. Ĥmâyár b. Sultán al-Ya’rúbi in 1251/1835.
44. Ellis, A.G. and Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
46. *Qáʾimah Mukhtútáh bi b’ad al-Mukhtútát*, p. 64.
47. The only MS exists in Cambridge University Library MS 184 (see Ibn Ruzayq, *al-Sha’a’*, p. xii [introduction].)
48. *Qáʾimah Mukhtútáh bi b’ad al-Mukhtútát*, p. 64.
51. *Qáʾimah Mukhtútáh bi b’ad al-Mukhtútát*, bi Dár al-Mukhtútát, at the M. N. H. C.